

SIN

Lawlessness (1 John 3:4) or transgression of God's will, either by omitting to do what God's law requires or by doing what it forbids. The transgression can occur in thought (1 John 3:15), word (Matt 5:22), or deed (Rom 1:32).

Mankind was created without sin, morally upright and inclined to do good (Eccl 7:29). But sin entered into human experience when Adam and Eve violated the direct command of God by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:6). Because Adam was the head and representative of the whole human race, his sin affected all future generations (Rom 5:12-21). Associated with this guilt is a corrupted nature passed from Adam to all his descendants. Out of this perverted nature arise all the sins that people commit (Matt 15:19); no person is free from involvement in sin (Rom 3:23)...

...Sin is not represented in the Bible as the absence of good, or as an illusion that stems from our human limitations. Sin is portrayed as a real and positive evil. Sin is more than unwise, inexpedient, calamitous behavior that produces sorrow and distress. It is rebellion against God's law-the standard of righteousness (Ps 119:160).

Since God demands righteousness, sin must be defined in terms of mankind's relation to God. Sin is thus the faithless rebellion of the creature against the just authority of his Creator. For this reason, breaking God's law at any point involves transgression at every point (James 2:10).

Violation of the law of God in thought, word, and deed shows the sinfulness of the human heart. Sin is actually a contradiction to the holiness of God, whose image mankind bears. This depraved condition is called "original sin" because it comes from Adam and characterizes all persons from the moment of their birth.

The moral depravity of mankind is total in that "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (Rom 8:7). Apart from Christ, all are "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1). But this does not mean that people behave as wickedly as they might, for God restrains the outworkings of the sinful heart. At times He even helps sinners to do things that conform to the law (Gen 20:6). The corruption of sin is not developed or expressed to the same degree in every person. Neither is it expressed in the same way in any person at all times.

Sin involves the denial of the living God from whom human beings draw their life and existence (Acts 17:28); the consequence of this revolt is death and the torment of hell. Death is the ultimate penalty imposed by God for sin (Rom 6:23)...

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Sin

– is "any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God" (1 John 3:4; Rom 4:15), in the inward state and habit of the soul, as well as in the outward conduct of the life, whether by omission or commission (Rom 6:12-17; 7:5-24). It is "not a mere violation of the law of our constitution, nor of the system of things, but an offence against a personal lawgiver and moral governor who vindicates his law with penalties..."

... The moral character of a man's actions is determined by the moral state of his heart. The disposition to sin, or the habit of the soul that leads to the sinful act, is itself also sin (Rom 6:12-17; Gal 5:17; James 1:14,15)...

...Adam's sin (Gen 3:1-6) consisted in his yielding to the assaults of temptation and eating the forbidden fruit. It involved in it, (1) the sin of unbelief, virtually making God a liar; and (2) the guilt of disobedience to a positive command. By this sin he became an apostate from God, a rebel in arms against his Creator. He lost the favor of God and communion with him; his whole nature became depraved, and he incurred the penalty involved in the covenant of works.

Original sin. "Our first parents being the root of all mankind, the guilt of their sin was imputed (*passed on*), and the same death in sin and corrupted nature were conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation." Adam was constituted by God the federal head and representative of all his posterity, as he was also their natural head, and therefore when he fell they fell with him (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor 15:22-45). His probation was their probation, and his fall their fall. Because of Adam's first sin all his posterity came into the world in a state of sin and condemnation, i.e., (1) a state of moral corruption, and (2) of guilt, as having judicially imputed to them the guilt of Adam's first sin. (*Note that we believe that children and so-called "imbeciles" are not held responsible (unto punishment) for their condition of inherited sin*).

"Original sin" is frequently and properly used to denote only the moral corruption of their whole nature inherited by all men from Adam. This inherited moral corruption consists in, (1) the loss of original righteousness; and (2) the presence of a constant proneness to evil, which is the root and origin of all actual sin.

It is called "sin" (Rom 6:12,14,17; 7:5-17), the "flesh" (Gal 5:17,24), "lust" (James 1:14,15), the "body of sin" (Rom 6:6), "ignorance," "blindness of heart," "alienation from the life of God" (Eph 4:18,19). It influences and depraves the whole man, and its tendency is still downward to deeper and deeper corruption, there remaining no recuperative element in the soul. It is a total depravity, and it is also universally inherited by all the natural descendants of Adam (Rom 3:10-23; 5:12-21; 8:7)...

...Various kinds of sin are mentioned, (1.) "Presumptuous sins," or as literally rendered, "sins with an uplifted hand", i.e., defiant acts of sin, in contrast with "errors" or "inadvertencies" (Ps 19:13). (2.) "Secret", i.e., hidden sins (19:12); sins which escape the notice of the soul. (3.) "Sin against the Holy Ghost" (q.v.), or a "sin unto death" (Matt 12:31,32; 1 John 5:16), which amounts to a willful rejection of grace.

SIN

Sin is a degeneracy from original good, not an original existence, creation, or generation; not by the Creator's action, but by the creature's defection (Eccl 7:29). As God is love, holiness is resemblance to Him, love to Him and His creatures, and conformity to His will. Selfishness is the root of sin, it sets up self and self will instead of God and God's will.

The origination of man's sin was not of himself, but from Satan's deceit; otherwise man's sin would be devilish and ineradicable. But as it is we may be delivered. This is the foundation of our REDEMPTION (see, and SAVIOUR and ATONEMENT) by Christ. Original sin is as an hereditary disease, descending from the first transgressor downward (Ps 51:5). National sins are punished in

this world, as nations have no life beyond the grave (Prov 14:34). The punishment of the individual's sins are remedial, disciplinary, and deterrent in this world; and judicially retributive in the world to come...

The objections (*to punishment for sin*) are:

1. That, the length of punishment is out of all proportion with the time of sin. But the duration of sin is no criterion of the duration of punishment: a fire burns in a few minutes records thereby lost for ever; a murder committed in a minute entails cutting off from life for ever; one act of rebellion entails perpetual banishment from the king.

2. That the sinner's eternal punishment would be Satan's eternal triumph. But Satan has had his triumph in bringing sin and death into the world; his sharing the sinner's eternal punishment will be the reverse of a triumph; the abiding punishment of the lost will be a standing witness of God's holy hatred of sin, and a preservative against any future rebellion.

3. That the eternity of punishment involves the eternity of sin. But this, if true, would be no more inconsistent with God's character than His permission of it for a time; but probably, as the saved will be delivered from the possibility of sinning by being raised above the sphere of evil, so the lost will be incapable of sinning any more in the sense of a moral or immoral choice by sinking below the sphere of good.

4. That eternal vengeance is inconsistent with God's gospel revelation of Himself as love. But the New Testament abounds in statements of judicial vengeance being exercised by God.

(Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30; 1 Thess 4:6; 2 Thess 1:8) (NIV)

Rom 12:19 "Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord."

Heb 10:30 "For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people."

1 Thess 4:6 "...and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you."

2 Thess 1:8-9 "He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus."

9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

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Original. A term used to denote the effect of Adam's sin upon the moral life of his descendants. It is formally defined as "that whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil" (see Fall). The fact of sin in this sense is plainly declared in the Scriptures (Rom 5:12,19; cf. Gen 3:5; Eph 2:1-3; 2 Tim 2:26; 1 John 3:4). In accord with this is the fact of the universality of sin, also proclaimed in Scripture (Matt 7:11; 15:19; Rom 3:9,23; 1 John 1:8; James 3:2; cf. 1 Kings 8:46; Job 14:4; Prov 20:9) and borne witness to by history and human self-consciousness.

The nature of the connection between the sin of Adam and the moral condition of his descendants is, however, a matter upon which opinions greatly differ.

The chief forms of doctrine have been as follows:

Calvinists. Calvinists have held that the sin of Adam was immediately imputed to the whole human family, so that not only is the entire race depraved but also guilty on account of the first transgression. To sustain this opinion it is argued that Adam was not only the natural but also the representative, or federal, head of the human race. His fall involved the whole race in guilt (see Imputation).

Arminian. The view more generally held is that the effect of Adam's sin upon the moral state of mankind is in accordance with and by virtue of the natural law of heredity. The race inherited proneness to sin. But this proneness to sin does not imply guilt, inasmuch as punishment can justly be inflicted only on account of actual sin, which consists in voluntary transgression. This view is held by many Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and universally by Methodists.

Pelagianism. The doctrine known as Pelagianism denies any necessary connection between the sin of Adam and the character and actions of his descendants. Every human being is by nature as pure as Adam was before his sin. The prevalence of sin is to be accounted for upon the ground of evil example and surroundings. Accordingly it is possible for men to lead lives of such complete freedom from sin that they may stand in no need of redemption or of regenerating grace. This doctrine is repudiated by all evangelical churches.

The recognition of the reality of sin, not only in the sense of actual disobedience, but also in the sense of innate sinfulness, is essential. For only thus can be seen the necessity for a special revelation, and only thus are men prepared to accept the gospel of salvation in Christ.