DOCTRINE OF SIN (Part 2)

Adult Bible Institute | Nov. 1, 2026 | *ECD 256-264*

Sin – *any lack of conformity to the moral standard of God in act, attitude, and nature. "Disobeying God".*

Importance of Studying the Doctrine of Sin:

- A defective view of sin results in a defective view of salvation
- It will exert a tremendous influence on our philosophy of ministry
- We must know how to "troubleshoot" sin and help others do the same in order to gain victory

4 Biblical Examples of Excusing/Avoiding Sin *(TES, Theology II, Justin McKitterick)*:

1. **Gen 3:11-13** ~ Blame Shifting ~ *"the woman you gave me…the serpent deceived me…"*
2. **Jer 6:14** ~ Ignoring/Denying Sin ~ *"…saying 'peace, peace' when there is no peace…"*
3. **Is 5:20** ~ Redefining Sin ~ *"…Woe to those who call evil good and good evil"*
4. **Rom 1:32** ~ Celebrating Sin ~*"…giving hearty approval to those who practice [evil]"*

- The need to NOT trust ourselves with sin (to grow suspicious of our own hearts)
  - Heb. 3:12-13 ~ … *exhort each other so that you are not hardened by the deceitfulness of sin…*

6 Reasons Why Studying the Doctrine of Sin is Difficult *(TES, Theology II, Justin McKitterick):*

1. *Sin is an unpleasant subject…*
2. *Sin is a foreign concept to many people…*
3. *There is little understanding of the holiness of God and His standards of authority…*
4. *People go to great lengths to avoid shame and guilt…*
5. *There is diminishing understanding of personal culpability…*
6. *There is little attention focused upon the inner man…*

I. Old Self and New Self

a. Key Texts: Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10 **~** *lay aside <u>the old man</u> and put on <u>the new man</u>*
b. The Old Man in Adam bears the Infection of "Original Sin"
   - "Original Sin" ~ *original sin speaks of both **imputed guilt** and the **inherited corruption** of Adam's sin to all human persons apart from Jesus (TES, Theology II)*
c. The "New Man" in Christ is being renewed and transformed in relation to sin (Col. 3:9-10)

II. Total (Natural) Depravity

a. **Sin's Comprehensive Effects**: *the pollution and corruption of all aspects in a person.*
   - Gen. 6:5; Titus 1:15; Eph. 4:17–18; Jer. 17:9; Mk. 7:21-23; Rom. 1:21
b. **Sin's Incapacitating Effects:** *the complete inability of a person to please God.*
   - Rom. 8:7-8; Jn. 6:44; 1 Cor. 2:14; Jn. 15:5; Isa. 64:6; Jer. 13:23; Matt. 19:25; Eph. 2:1
c. **Sin's Universal Effects:** *<u>all</u> humankind are conceived and born as sinners.*
   - 1 Kgs. 8:46; Ps. 51:5; Ps. 14:3; Rom. 3:23

III. SIN ISSUES

A. Are some Sins Worse than Others?

i. *"All sins are <u>the same</u> in that each renders a person guilty and worthy of God's wrath."* (p. 258).
ii. Even the smallest act of sin makes one just as guilty as the most shocking of sins (Jas. 2:10).
iii. However, God's Word presents sin as incurring *<u>greater and lesser consequences.</u> (Jas. 3:1)*
iv. So, *"there is both **a quantitative** and **qualitative** aspect to sin and punishment"* (p. 259).
   - Every sin is guilty of the same *quantitative* judgment (eternal suffering).
   - However, some sins result in a different *qualitative* judgment (a stricter judgment).
v. Warning: "greater knowledge brings greater responsibility" (p. 268).
   - Matt. 11:20-24; Luke 12:47-48; Heb. 10:26-27

B. The Unpardonable Sin (Matt. 12:31-32)

i. Context: *The Pharisees attributed Jesus' signs to the power of Satan (12:22-24).*
   - *this was their way of "getting around" the clear revelation of the Messiah*

ii. Nature of the Sin: *a willful, blasphemous, final (unrepentant) rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

iii. Conclusion: *not a specific act that is unpardonable, but unrepentant hardness of heart.*

iv. Hope: *"if we confess our sins, <u>He is faithful and righteous</u>* ***to forgive*** *and* ***cleanse****…! (1 Jn. 1:9)*

C. Sin Leading to Death

i. 1 Jn. 5:16 ~ John mentions two types of sin: *sin NOT leading to death; sin leading to death.*

ii. I believe John is talking about sin in general, not a specific act of sin.

iii. The Bible teaches that the "default mode" of sin is that it leads to death (Rom. 6:23; Jas 1:15)

iv. John's "big reveal" is actually a comfort that believers are no longer under that death curse!

v. Believers, although they struggle with sin, it is NO LONGER sin leading to death! (1 Jn. 3:14)

vi. Sin leading to death, then, is (similar to discussion above): *unrepentant unbelief.*

D. Are there Mortal and Venial Sins?

i. In Roman Catholic teaching, there are two categories of sins: *Mortal Sins* and *Venial Sins*
   - Mortal Sins: *serious and intentional sins that result in the loss of justification before God*
     - Remedy: *sacrament of penance*
   - Venial Sins: *less serious and unintentional sins that do NOT result in a loss of justification*

ii. Biblical Evaluation: *these categories are man-made errors that are foreign to the biblical text.*
   - Also foreign to the text is the idea that works of penance can justify a man
   - The Bible teaches justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone! *SDG!*

iii. The Roman Catholic View of a Believer's Assurance:
   - Cardinal Bellarmine called the doctrine of assurance, *"a prime error of heretics."*[1]
   - Council of Trent (1545-63): *"[a] believer's assurance of the pardon of his sins is* ***a vain and ungodly confidence****".*[2]

iv. The Biblical View of a Believer's Assurance:
   - 1 Jn ~ *that you may <u>KNOW</u> that you have eternal life (5:13); that our <u>JOY</u> may be complete! (1:4)*
   - Romans 8 ~ *NO condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (v. 1*); *the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (v. 16); nothing can separate us from the love of God! (vv. 38-39)*

E. Sin and the Christian

i. The Bible does not teach the possibility of 'sinless perfection' in this life, rather it describes the Christian life as an ongoing battle against sin and a process of sanctification (Gal. 5:17).

ii. Reasons for Believer's to Take Sin Seriously
   - It harms our communion with God (1 Jn. 1:6)
   - It diminishes our usefulness in the mission of Christ (2 Tim. 2:21)
   - It brings God's discipline (Heb. 12:6)
   - It will bring loss when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:15)
   - It damages our relationships with others (1 Thess. 4:6)

F. The Coming "Man of Sin"

i. 2 Thess. 2:3-10 talks about the coming "Man of Lawlessness"—the Antichrist—*"who will be the consummate embodiment of sin and evil"* (p. 261).

ii. He will exalt himself, oppose God, declare himself to be God, he will work in Satan's power, deceive and destroy many…

iii. ***<u>BUT</u>****, 'lo his doom is sure, one little word shall fell him!' Literally, Christ will slay him with the breath of His mouth when He returns and cast him into hell! (2 Thess. 2:8)*

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[1] John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1-3 John,* p. 53. NOTE: this is MacArthur citing J.C. Ryle, *Holiness* [1877, 1879; reprint Moscow, Idaho: Charles Nolan, 2002], 123.

[2] Ibid., 53.

G. God and the Problem of Evil

i. There is no real "problem" of evil for God—He is in perfect control (Rom. 9; Job 38-40).

ii. Helpful Considerations for Us as We Wrestle with This:

- man is the culpable cause of moral evil (sin) (Gen. 2:15-17; Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12; 9:14)
- man is also culpable for natural evil *("cursed is the ground.."* Gen. 3:17)
- God has NOT left man without HOPE! (Gen. 3:15)
- Christ is the Man of Sorrows who understands our suffering (Isa. 53:3)
    - He was the recipient of the greatest act of injustice, and what did He do? *He kept entrusting Himself to the One who judges righteously! (1 Pet. 2:21-23).*
- God WILL one day perfectly judge and make all things right (Rom. 8:28; Rev. 21:4)