

Are All **Sins** the **Same**?

Rev. Ryan French

**4 WHOSOEVER
COMMITTETH SIN
TRANSGRESSETH ALSO
THE LAW: FOR SIN IS THE
TRANSGRESSION OF THE
LAW. 5 AND YE KNOW
THAT HE (JESUS) WAS
MANIFESTED TO TAKE
AWAY OUR SINS, AND IN
HIM IS NO SIN.**

1 John 3:4-5

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JAMES 2:10

For whosoever shall keep the
whole law and yet offend in one
point, he is guilty of all.

"One sin, small or great, makes a man a sinner and brings him under condemnation."

-The Ryrie Study Bible.

Although all sin before God is serious and deserving of eternal punishment, Scripture distinguishes between degrees of sin. In this sense, not all sin is equal in terms of its effects, consequences, and degree of punishment on the person, others, the Church, and society. Because of Adam's violation of God's command (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-6), sin results in the penalty of both spiritual and physical death (Rom. 6:23). Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2) so that apart from Christ, we stand condemned (Romans 8:1), under God's wrath (Romans 1:18-32), and needing God to act in sovereign grace to provide a Redeemer for us. Sin before God, no matter what sin it is, leads to our status of guilty, polluted, and far from God (Ephesians 2:1-3). On this point, James 2:10 can now be legitimately used: "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it." Before God, breakage of any point of the law is to break all of it. Or, Paul can say: "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them" (Galatians 3:10; Deuteronomy 27:26).

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All sins are sinful, but not all sins are of equal magnitude. Some sins are truly more sinful than others.

Examples from the Bible:

Jesus answered him (Pilot), "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin (John 19:11, ESV)."

Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye (Matthew 7:3, ESV)?

But I say unto you (Capernaum), That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee (Matthew 11:24).

And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous (Genesis 18:20).

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Breaking one commandment results in our condemnation before God.

Why?

The answer is because of whom we have sinned against. God is holy (Exodus 3:5–6; 15:11; 19:23; Leviticus 11:44; 19:1; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 99:3, 5, 9; Isaiah 6:1; 57:15; Ezekial 1–3; Hebrews 12:28; 1 Peter 1:15–16; 1 John 1:5; Revelation 4). Because all sin is against Him, and because God's will and nature is the moral standard of the universe, He cannot and does not overlook our sin—no matter what our sin is. His eyes are too pure to look on evil; He cannot tolerate wrong (Exodus 34:7; Romans 1:32; 2:8–16). Our sins separate us from Him so that His face is hidden from us. In God's holy reaction to sin and evil (Romans 1:18–32; John 3:36), God stands against and punishes all sin. Where there is sin, the holy God confronts His creatures in their rebellion, otherwise, God is not the holy God He claims to be.

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**God's holiness and justice are
inseparable and highly
retributive.**

Why?

God is not like a human judge who passes judgments based on a law external to him; instead, the One true God is the law (Genesis 18:25). When God judges, He remains true to His own perfect, moral demands, which means that He remains true to himself. Sin, then, is not against an abstract principle or impersonal law; instead, sin is against the personal God who is holy and just. David, in his famous confession, acknowledged this point. Although David, in his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband, has sinned against many people, even the entire nation of Israel, David rightly confessed: "Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight" (Psalm 51:4).

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Quick Review

- All sins are sinful, but not all sins are of equal magnitude.
- Some sins are truly more sinful than others.
- Jesus alone was born without imparted sin and lived a sinless life.
- One sin, great or small, brings us under condemnation.
- God's holiness and justice are incompatible with sin.
- On numerous occasions, Jesus affirmed that some sins are more grievous than others (John 19:11, Matthew 7:3, Matthew 11:24).

● The Meaning of Sin

"Sin is the lack of conformity to God's character. The only yardstick by which transgression can be measured is God's holy character. We can never fully understand sin until we have a deep understanding of God's character. The meaning of sin is failing to satisfy God's requirements. The meaning of sin not simply failing to meet God's commandments, but rather, sin works against our own best interests by participating in immoral behavior. Because sin is so awful, angels who have sinned will never be able to escape the Lake of Fire. Because sin is so dreadful, Adam and Eve's single transgression resulted in the deterioration, corruption, and immeasurable suffering of all humanity. Because trespass is so vile and offensive, the sinless Son of God endured agonizing torture and death on the cross to save all humanity from eternal damnation."

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● Theological Categories of Sin

- **Imputed Sin:** This refers to the guilt imputed (or passed down) by Adam to all his descendants (Romans 5:12). Every human being is born spiritually dead and under condemnation due to imputed sin (John 3:17).
- **Inherent Sin:** This refers to the sinful nature that every human being inherits from their parents (John 3:6, Galatians 5:17). Our innate talents and weaknesses, like our physical qualities, are a blend of our parents' characteristics. Sin natures are as unique as fingerprints, with no two people alike.
- **Personal Sin:** These are the sins we commit personally based on our decisions. Personal sin is what the Bible means when it speaks of sin. Jesus died to save us from all three categories of sin.

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● Six Levels of Sin

- **Unintentional Sins:** These are the lowest level of sin. We must rely on the Holy Spirit and study God's Word to reveal these sins so we don't keep blindly recommitting them (Psalm 19:10-13).
- **Besetting Sins:** These are deliberate recurring sins that are unique to our unique sinful desires and proclivities. These recurring sins keep us from running a good race. These recurring sins often reveal our idols, the things that we honor above God (Hebrews 12:1-6).
- **Sins Against the Body (God's Temple):** When we commit sexual sin and other sins of impurity, we destroy God's Temple, and we drive the Holy Spirit out from our body (1 Corinthians 6:12-20; 9:16, 2 Timothy 2:19-22).

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● Six Levels of Sin

- **Sinning Unto Death:** When we continue in blatant outward sins, specifically when we call ourselves believers, we are sinning unto death. These sins spoil the worship of our entire gathering. The Bible describes these sin-tarnished worship services as useless (1 John 5:16-17, 1 Corinthians 5:3-13; 7:7-13).
- **Millstone Sins:** When we cause others to sin, we are committing the Millstone Sin. I believe this sin is tied in with the stricter judgment prescribed for Church leaders. Leaders who take advantage of the simple trust of believers, oppress their followers, or teach false doctrines commit this sin.

And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe in Me to fall, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea (Mark 9:42).

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● Six Levels of Sin

- **Unpardonable Sins:** The Bible mentions two sins that have no hope for repentance: 1) taking the Mark of the Beast (Revelation 13:16-18; 14:9-11), and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:29, Luke 12:10). the Mark of the Beast (Revelation 13:16-18; 14:9-11), and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:26-31, Luke 12:10).

26 For if we sin willfully after having received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath accounted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath despised the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:26-29)?

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● Will there be different levels of punishment in Hell?

The Bible affirms there will be varying degrees of punishment in Hell (Matthew 10:15, Matthew 11:22, Matthew 12:36-37, Luke 12:47-48, Romans 2:5, Hebrews 10:26-31). All the lost will suffer for their sin; for some, that suffering will be worse than for others. Hebrews 10:26-31 is one of many compelling passages indicating various degrees of judgment: “...if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (English Standard Version)."

People who do not believe in various punishment levels for individuals in Hell reduce the throne of judgment into a sham where God pretends to be fair. The Bible is clear that God will be so entirely just in His decisions that not one person will claim unfair treatment (1 Peter 1:17, Romans 2:11, Colossians 3:25, Romans 3:19, Revelation 19:1-2). God will judge in absolute righteousness (Acts 17:31). His decisions will not be limited to who goes to Heaven and who goes to Hell. God will also assign punishments in perfect fairness. Every lost soul will receive a personalized sentence directly from their Creator.

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● Heavenly Rewards

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things (their due rewards or punishments) done in his body, according to what he hath done (based on what they have done while in their human bodies), whether it be good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10).

...the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him, actions are weighed (1 Samuel 2:3).

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be (Revelation 22:12).

“Rewards are often spoken of as crowns (1 Corinthians 9:25, 1 Thessalonians 2:19, 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12, 1 Peter 5:4, Revelation 2:10; 3:11; 4:4, 10).”

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