



Bosch — 1485

The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things

THE SEVEN
DEADLY - OR
CAPITAL
SINS

PASTOR'S CLASS
MARCH 27 2022

SOME GENERAL REMARKS

- ✿ All sin can be understood as a human disruption of the proper relationship with God. It is when we fail to accept that God is God and we are creatures that sin enters in.
- ✿ Adam & Eve who desire to be arbiters of good and evil.
- ✿ The people of Jeremiah's day who have attempted to be self-sufficient rather than rely on God.

GENESIS THREE

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden?'" 2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.'" 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; 5 for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Gen. 3:8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." 11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."

PSALM 51:1-12

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

Psa. 51:3 For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

4 Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.

5 Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

Psa. 51:6 You desire truth in the inward being;

therefore teach me wisdom in my secret
heart.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than
snow.

8 Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed
rejoice.

9 Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

Psa. 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

JEREMIAH 2

The word of the LORD came to me, saying: 2 Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem,
Thus says the LORD:

I remember the devotion of your youth,
your love as a bride,
how you followed me in the wilderness,
in a land not sown.

3 Israel was holy to the LORD,
the first fruits of his harvest.

All who ate of it were held guilty;
disaster came upon them, says the LORD.

Jer. 2:4 Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of
Israel. 5 Thus says the LORD:

What wrong did your ancestors find in me
that they went far from me,
and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves?

JEREMIAH 2 (CONT.)

- Jer. 2:9 Therefore once more I accuse you, says the LORD,
 and I accuse your children's children.
- 10 Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look,
 send to Kedar and examine with care;
 see if there has ever been such a thing.
- 11 Has a nation changed its gods,
 even though they are no gods?
 But my people have changed their glory
 for something that does not profit.
- 12 Be appalled, O heavens, at this,
 be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the LORD,
- 13 for my people have committed two evils:
 they have forsaken me,
 the fountain of living water,
 and dug out cisterns for themselves,
 cracked cisterns
 that can hold no water.

ROMANS 7:18-25

Rom. 7:18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

Rom. 7:21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR “SIN”

- ✿ A variety of Greek and Hebrew words get translated, “sin.” They represent a wide range of meanings.
- ✿ In *Hebrew* three terms make up the majority of uses:
 - ✿ deficit, failure, or mistake (חַטָּאָה)
 - ✿ recalcitrance and rebellion (רִפְשָׁע)
 - ✿ moral violation (עֲוֹן)

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR “SIN”

- ✿ A variety of Greek and Hebrew words get translated, “sin.” They represent a wide range of meanings.
- ✿ In *Greek* two verbs make up the majority of uses:
 - ✿ to miss the mark (and so not share in the prize), (*ἁμαρτία*)
 - ✿ go astray, deceive, err, seduce, wander, be out of the way(*πλανᾶω*)

THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS

Pride

In Nearly every list Pride is the Great Sin from which the others proceed.

Wrath

Lust

Envy

Gluttony

These three are fueled by interior dispositions.

These three are all related to excess.

Sloth

Greed

“Capital” from Latin *caput* or “head.” These are “capital” because they engender other sins - other vices.

HUGH OF ST. VICTOR

(1096–1141)

De sacramentis christianae fidei

The rational soul in its health is a strong and sound vessel. . . . When the vices enter into it, they spoil . . . and corrupt it in this way: through pride it becomes blown up, through envy it dries out, through wrath it cracks, through acedia it breaks.

Evagrius of Pontus

Friend to the Cappadocian fathers & Melania the Elder
b. 345

On The Vices Opposed to the Virtues

† Gluttony

† Vainglory

† Fornication (lust)

† Jealousy (envy)

† Avarice (greed)

† Pride (hubris)

† Sadness (despondency)

† Acedia (carelessness)

Evagrius of Pontus

Friend to the Cappadocian fathers & Melania the Elder
b. 345

On The Eight Bad Thoughts

† Gluttony

† Vainglory (vanity)

† Fornication (lust)

† Sadness (despondency)

† Avarice (greed)

† Pride (hubris)

† Anger (wrath)

John Cassian will follow this list in his *The Remedies against the Eight Principal Vicious Thoughts*.

† Acedia (carelessness)

Pope Gregory the Great

Moral Reflections on the Book of Job

b. 540 – d. 604

Job 39 — Gregory is drawn to the description of God's gift of moral strength, described by the image of the war horse

- (a) An image of the disciple who is fighting to live a good life.**
- (b) He must see the enemy coming, and anticipate his attacks**

Describing the battle scene, Gregory then turns his attention to scripture's reference to "the chiefs," (generals) those who lead the army of the enemy.

4) This is the oldest Western reference to the "seven capital sins"

Pope Gregory the Great

Queen Pride's "generals"

b. 540 – d. 604

Vain Glory

Envy

Sloth (Combination of sadness and *acedia*)

Anger

Greed

Lust

Gluttony

The Devil's Tactics & Strategies to Employ in Response — Taken from *Spiritual Combat* by Father Lorenzo Scupoli (1529-1610)

The Enemy's Tactics

- A) He says that change is impossible.
- B) He says that there is plenty of time to change—later.
- C) He directs our attention to preparing for “great big things” that will never happen.
- D) He convinces us to act rashly and take on too much at once.
- E) He inflates our egos with our progress.

A) Prepare early for the battle. Be prepared to fight every day and at every occasion. Remember Providence.

B) Do not try to do everything at once. Attack the vices one by one, and by degrees. Persevere.

C) Seek out the dominant struggle and concentrate attention there first. Address the others as needed, but return to the dominant one.

D) Be prudent regarding mortification. Use exterior practices sparingly, but always seek interior mortifications.

E) Avoid the luxuries and comforts of life that lead to complacency.

F) Incorporate daily examination of conscience and frequent confession of sins.

General Strategies



PRIDE (SUPERBIA)

VAINGLORY

☀ “Vainglory involves fantasizing about social encounters, a pretense of industriousness, falsehood, author of heresies, desire for privilege, lust for title, slavery to praise, a spirit with many forms, a beast with many teeth; vainglory is intertwined with pride and envy, which support one another, the three-strand vices, threefold poisonous elixir of passions.”

Evagrius- *On The Vices Opposed to Virtues*

VAINGLORY

- ☼ Puffs us up by our successes
- ☼ Leaves our good works empty because they are done for show
- ☼ Makes us sensitive and hostile to criticism
- ☼ Leads to spiritual sadness and resentment

PRIDE

- ✿ Pride is called "...the spiritual cancer" by C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*
- ✿ In the Parson's tale in *The Canterbury Tales* we are told that the root of all seven deadly sins "is pride the general root of all harms."
- ✿ Pride keeps us from salvation because salvation is a gift (Eph. 2:8). Proud people believe that they have earned what they have and are resistant to accepting gifts.

PRIDE

☀ “Where God's Spirit does not reign, there is no humility, and men ever swell with inward pride.” — John Calvin
Commentary on Habbakkuk, Zephaniah, & Haggai

PRIDE

☀ “The new life does not release [someone] from conflict with unbelief, pride, lust, fear. [They] still has to struggle with disheartening difficulties and problems. Nevertheless, as [they] mature in love and faithfulness in [their] life with Christ, [they] live in freedom and good cheer, bearing witness on good days and evil days, confident that the new life is pleasing to God and helpful to others.” - *Confession of 1967* 9.23

PRIDE

- ✿ The humiliation of our neighbor
- ✿ The shameless parading of our achievement
- ✿ Complacency
- ✿ Unwillingness to be found out
- ✿ The spurning of God's help
- ✿ The exalting of one's own efforts

PRIDE - CARNAL & SPIRITUAL

* Carnal

- * Elevates us above other people
- * The habit of imagining we are better than our neighbors
- * It is also the failure to recognize in others the value and genius of their contributions
- * Eschews help from the neighbor

* Spiritual

- * Elevates us above God
- * Is the pride of Genesis 3 – desiring to be the arbiters of “good & evil”
- * Exchanges grace for merit
- * Eschews any help from God