

OVERVIEW ON SIN

I. INTRODUCTION

A. What is sin ?

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1. Is it going against God's commandments ?
 - a. Not exactly
 - b. The Ten Commandments weren't there until Moses
 - c. Adam sinned against a direct command from God
 - d. What were the sins that happened between Adam and Moses ?
 - e. What are the sins committed by Christians not under the Law ?

B. Understanding what sin is

1. Scripture expresses "grace" by two specific words in the OT and one in the NT
2. But sin is expressed by eight basic words in the OT and 12 in the NT
3. (1 Jn 3.4) > sin = lawlessness

C. But the general understanding is all we need for this study

"Sin is a very serious matter, and is taken seriously by God, though men often make light of it. It is not only a transgression of the law of God, but an attack on the great Lawgiver Himself, a revolt against God. It is an infringement on the inviolable righteousness of God, which is the very foundation of His throne (Ps. 97:2), and an affront to the spotless holiness of God, which requires of us that we be holy in all manner of living (1 Pet. 1:16)

Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*

II. IMPUTED SIN

A. Definitions

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1. "Impute" - "to attribute or reckon or ascribe something to someone"

Ryrie's Basic Theology

a. Examples

(1) Ps 32.2

"How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not
impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no deceit ! "

(2) Rom 5.13

"for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed
when there is no law"2. Three basic imputations

a. **Adam's sin imputed to THE RACE** (Rom 5.12-21)

b. **Man's sin imputed to Christ** (2 Cor 5.19, 1 Pet 2.24)

c. **Christ's righteousness imputed to believers** (2 Co 5.21)

2. We will concentrate on Adam's imputed sin to the race

B. "I wasn't there – it's so unfair!"

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1. Concern for serious Christians

a. A 2002 survey

- (1) 74 % rejected the idea of an original sin
- (2) Only 52 % of evangelicals held to the doctrine

2. Some key interpretations of Rom 3.23 & 5.12-21

a. Interpretation # 1

- (1) Rom 3.23 "All have sinned ..."
- (2) From *A New Testament Commentary*, Allen, Leslie C.

"'Sinned' refers to actual sins (cf. 3:23) viewed as an individual expression and endorsement of Adam's representative act."

- (3) In other words, Adam represented the entire race when he sinned
- (4) But babies die, and have not sinned
- (5) Rom 5.15-19 Paul says Adam's sin caused the penalty over all

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b. Interpretation # 2

- (1) "all are sinners" or "all are sinful" = a state of condition
- (2) But the verb "have" in Rom 3.23 is active, not a noun
- (3) William G. T. Shedd, in *Dogmatic Theology*, states that the phrase would require "to be" added to it

c. Interpretation # 3 = The most fitting to Romans 3.23 and 5.12-21

- (1) All sinned when Adam sinned
- (2) Note from A. Berkeley Mickelsen in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*

"The tense of the verb indicates a distinct historic entrance.... Physical death came to all men but not because they were all in the process of individually sinning. All men did sin (except for infants dying in infancy) experientially. But Paul is not talking about that here. The sin of all is centered in that of the one man Adam."

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(a) Penalty of Adam's sin was physical death to the race

i) vs 12

- (1) "entered" > Gk *eiselthen* i.e. sin went through the world's front door = Adam
- (2) "spread" > Gk *dielthen* i.e. death went through the entire human race

ii) vs 19

- (1) "were made" > Gk *kathisemi* = "stand constituted as"
- (2) Became sinners as a result of Adam's sin

iii) Bottom line = entire human race considered to have sinned in Adam's sin

3. Deeper into Interpretation # 3 -
Understanding the relation between Adam & the human race

- a. How did all humans sin when Adam did ??
- b. Two viewpoints

(1) Federal or Representative View

(a) Basis: Concept of a Covenant

- i) Hosea 6.7
- ii) Covenant of Works = a basic theological theme

- (1) God started it with Adam
- (2) Contains a promise of benefits based on a condition, and a penalty if the condition is breached

Hodge, *Systematic Theology*

"God made to Adam a promise suspended upon a condition, and attached to disobedience a certain penalty. This is what in Scriptural language is meant by a covenant."

- (b) Adam represents the whole race
- (c) No one in the human race actually committed a sin when Adam committed that first sin
- (d) When he sinned, God viewed all humans as involved, and his sin caused the condemnation of the whole race
 - i) The penalty on failure was death, which Adam passed on to all his descendants

(2) The Seminal or Realistic view

- (a) *Merriam Webster Dictionary* "containing the seeds of later development"
- (b) Charles Ryrie,
Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth

This view "...sees Adam as containing the seed of all his posterity so that when he sinned, all actually sinned."

(c) Examples

- i) Achan's sin (Josh 7.24-26)
 - (1) He took battle spoils that were dedicated to the Lord
 - (2) He AND his family AND his possession were all destroyed
- ii) Levi paid Melchizedek tithes before he was born
 - (1) (Heb 7.9-10) Levi paid Melchizedek the tithe through Abraham because he was in Abraham, his progenitor
- (d) Therefore, since we were all in Adam at the time he sinned against God's covenant, we all sinned

c. Summary: Note difference between Imputed Sin & Inherited Sin

(1) Imputed Sin

- (a) It was directly transmitted to me from Adam, since I was in Adam when he sinned
- (b) This was a judicial decision of God
- (c) It did not involve my parents
- (d) Its specific penalty is physical death (Rom 5.12-14)
- (e) Its remedy is Christ's righteousness imputed to me on belief in His effectual sacrifice for me

(2) Inherited Sin

- (a) Change in mankind's nature caused by Adam's sin

Paul S. Karleen, *The Handbook to Bible Study*

"The sin of Adam resulted in a polluted human nature, passed down from generation to generation"

Samuel M. Jackson (Ed.)

The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge

"... human nature in its entirety was in Adam when he sinned, that his sin was the act of human nature, and that in this sin human nature fell; that is, lost its freedom to the good, becoming wholly sinful and producing sinners"

- (b) This is the sin nature passed on to me by my parents (Eph 2.3)
 - i) We inherited Adam's full fallen nature
- (c) Somewhat like the DNA they passed on to me
- (d) Its specific penalty is spiritual death (the polluted human nature)
- (e) Its remedy is redemption through Christ and God's gift of the Holy Spirit to guide us

III. PERSONAL SIN IN GENERAL

A. Mankind's disposition to sin attested to by Scripture

1. Paul gives a thorough summary in Rom 3.9-18
2. Specific examples of sin are given in other NT passages
 - a. Lying (1 Jn 1.6)
 - b. Prejudice (James 2.4)
 - c. Sensuality (1 Cor 3.1-4)
 - d. A fuller list (Gal 5.19-21)
 - (1) Note in vs 21 "practice" > Gk **pras-so** = exercise, be busy with

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B. Practical proof that original sin was passed to all humans

1. We see it in ordinary life every day

"Certain new theologians dispute original sin, which is the only part of Christian theology which can really be proved"

G.K. Chesterton

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2. Even non-Christian scholars recognize it

"I think Christianity is spot on about original sin - how could one think otherwise when the world's most civilized and advanced people (the people of Beethoven, Goethe, Kant) embraced that slime-ball Hitler and participated in the Holocaust ?"

Michael Ruse, Atheist Darwinist

3. One researcher reports that every genocide researcher and genocide survivor concludes that those committing these horrors are the average member of society

Hannah Arendt, Auschwitz survivor, at Adolph Eichman's trial ...

"...there were so many like him, neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal..."

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Some facts about personal sins

1. Personal sin is universal

- a. (Rom 3.23, Jam 3.2a > Gk **all** = the whole)
- b. (Rom 3.8-9) No one is outside of personally sinning

2. Many personal sins are committed deliberately

a. Note 2 Cor 10.5

- (1) "...speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God...".
 - (2) Man believes his reasoning is better than God's
- b. (Jam 4.17) Not doing God's prescribed will is also a sin
 - c. (Matt 5.27-28) Many sins originate in the mind, a sin in and of itself, if it is entertained



3. Personal sins are classifieda. Jesus stated that Caiaphas had greater sin than Pilate

Jn 19.11

"Jesus answered, 'You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.' "

- (1) Caiaphas had more knowledge and opportunities to know the truth than Pilate
- (2) Therefore, Caiaphas had the greater guilt in driving Jesus to the cross
- (3) So Caiaphas had the greater sin, and Pilate had the lesser sin

b. Sins of defiance greater than sins of ignorance(1) Old Testament rules

- (a) Don't be in defiance of God and His commands
(Num 15.30-31)
 - i) Defying God results in expulsion from Israelites
 - ii) An extreme example immediately follows
(Num 15.32-35) Working on Sabbath > death penalty
- (b) Sins of ignorance require a sin offering when the sin becomes known
 - i) (Lev 4.1-3)
 - ii) Some examples (Lev 5.1-4) > Guilt offerings

(2) New Testament contrasts sins made with considerable knowledge against sins of little knowledge

- (a) (Lk 12.47-48)

(3) Grave sins

- (a) Unpardonable sin (Matt 12.31-32), (Mk 3.29)
 - i) Slander God, Himself vs Jesus in His human form, which could be done ignorantly
- (b) Sin unto death (1 Jn 5.16, Rom 6.16, 1 Cor 11.29-30)
 - i) Sin so severe that God punishes with physical death
 - ii) e.g. Ananias and Sapphira ... (Acts 5.1-9)
 - iii) Priests Nadab and Abihu (Num 3.4)
 - (1) Offered "strange fire before the Lord"

4. Personal sins are not transmitted to others

a. Classic questions verse: (Deut 5.9b)

b. Contra (Ezek 18.20)

c. Contradiction within Scripture ?

- (1) General fact: sins committed by the father often produce circumstances that fall on the children

(2) More specific answer

- (a) Note Deut 5.9b "...of those who hate Me,..."
- (b) Scholars believe this phrase belongs to the children, not to the fathers who sinned
- (c) The children are punished for their own sins, as is any sinning individual

D. Personal sin's results

1. The key result is loss of fellowship
2. Unbeliever
 - a. Loss of fellowship with God
 - b. Eternal if the unbeliever doesn't accept Christ's payment for sin
3. Believer
 - a. Loss of the pleasure of fellowship with Christ & within His family
 - b. Not regained until the sin is confessed to Christ

E. Personal sin's remedy

1. Forgiveness is the remedy
 - a. For the unbeliever (Eph 1.7)
 - b. For the believer (1 Jn 1.9)

IV.**SUMMARY OF THE ASPECTS OF SIN***[Chart from Ryrie]***V.****SIN AND THE CHRISTIAN****A. Can the believer sin ?**

1. Two common errors concerning the believer and sin
 - a. # 1: The believer has been perfected on accepting Christ
 - (1) The believer doesn't sin because the root of sin (the sin nature) was removed when his sins were paid for
 - (a) Believer cannot be perfect until the resurrection
(Prov 20.9, 1 Jn 1.8)
 - (2) Modified view: The sin nature remains, but the believer can avoid practicing sinning
 - (a) Perfect Christian living means avoiding sinning AND perfectly conforming to God's will (1 Jn 1.10)
 - (3) Instead, the comparison is between biblical immaturity & maturity
 - (a) (1 Cor 3.1)
 - (b) (1 Cor 14.20, Heb 6.1)
 - (c) (Col 1.28) "complete in Christ" > Gk *teleion* = spiritual maturity
 - b. # 2: Believer is not bound by the law (antinomianism)
 - (1) But the believer IS bound by law of Christ (Gal 6.2, 5.14, Jn 13.34-35)

2. THE TRUE expectation for the believer
- a. It is not perfection or total freedom from a law
 - b. It is to walk in the light (1 Jn 1.7)
 - (1) God is the Light, is holy, and sets the standard (1 Pet 1.16)
 - (a) But we have seen that no human can be perfect in this life
 - (2) So how does the believer walk in the light ??
 - (a) (1 Jn 3.24) Note the key concept of abiding
 - (b) (Jn 7.17) "...is willing to do...he will know..."
 - (c) (Jn 15.5) Abiding is in Jesus
 - i) The believer has the Holy Spirit abiding in him = Jesus' Spirit
 - ii) If the believer adheres to the Word, the believer will abide
 - iii) The believer is able to abide because of the Spirit, if the believer is willing
(1 Jn 2.6, 3.6)
 - iv) The believer's part is to respond to the Light, God's part is to guide and grow the believer
 - v) As the believer responds, the light grows and challenges the believer further > spiritual maturity
 - (3) The requirement of the believer is to walk in the light !

VI.**FORCES ACTING AGAINST WALKING IN THE LIGHT**

- A. The world
1. Satan controls the world system (cosmos)
 2. Its chief operating mode is counterfeiting
 3. The believer's defenses
 - a. The armor (Eph 6.13-18)
 - b. Being aware of Satan's worldly schemes (2 Cor 2.10-11)
 - c. Watching for Satan's actions among us (1 Pet 5.8)
 - d. Faith in Jesus' victories (1 Jn 5.4-5)
 - e. Believer must fight actively against Satan's actions and temptations (1 Tim 6.12)

B. Our flesh**1. What is "the flesh" ?**

- a. "The physical aspect of human beings, which distinguishes them from God and is therefore frequently used in the NT as a symbol of human sinful nature in contrast with God's perfection."

Martin Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes*

b. Does the believer still have the "flesh" ?

- (1) Paul lamented it (Rom 7.18-21)

c. The flesh can produce sinful works if believer allows it

- (1) It can enslave the believer (Rom 7.25)
- (2) Gal 5.19-26 gives a list of the products of the flesh

2. How can the believer prevent the flesh from causing sin

- a. (Gal 5.24) Believer must "crucify the flesh"

b. How does the believer do that ??

- (1) (Rom 6.6) Believer must recognize the old self was crucified with Christ, and he/she is no longer a slave to sin

- (2) Commentator Neander in
Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible, Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D

"The act by which they have crucified the flesh with its lust, is already accomplished ideally in principle. But the practice, or outward conformation of the life, must harmonize with the tendency given to the inward life"

- (3) So the believer, when tempted to sin, must recognize his/her freedom in Christ and ACT ON IT !

c. Sin's draw

- (1) John Owen commented best on this

- (a) Puritan theologian of the mid 1600's, focused intensely on sin

(2) Key thought on sin's draw

"Sin aims always at the utmost; every time it rises up to tempt or entice, might it have its own course, it would go out to the utmost sin in that kind. Every unclean thought or glance would be adultery if it could; every covetous desire would be oppression, every thought of unbelief would be atheism, might it grow to its head. Men may come to that, that sin may not be heard speaking a scandalous word in their hearts – that is, provoking to any great sin with scandal in its mouth; but yet every rise of lust, might it have its course, would come to the height of villainy: it is like the grave that is never satisfied."

C. The Devil

1. Satan has a planned strategy and is a powerful adversary
(Eph 6.11-12, 1 Jn 4.4)
2. His attacks are relentless (1 Pet 5.8)

VIII. FORCES AIDING THE BELIEVER IN WALKING THE LIGHT**A. Knowing/memorizing God's Word (Ps 119.11)**

1. So that the Spirit will bring it mind if you are tempted

B. Counting on/praying for Christ's intercession for us

1. (Heb 7.25)
2. (Jn 17.15-17) Christ's continuous High Priestly prayer for His children

C. The Holy Spirit in us

1. Empowering our position in Christ - Gal 5
2. Teaching/wisdom about complexities of sin
(1 Cor 2.9-10)
3. Coaching and conveying prayer (Rom 8.26)
4. Providing enabling powers to serve (1 Cor 12.4,11)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**A. Scriptural Guarantees**

1. If we do sin ... (1 Jn 1.9)
2. Our protections from sin (Rom 8.38-39)

B. In this divided world (include Christ's church), sin is a unifier

(Pastor Rivers)

1. We are all broken and need Jesus
2. Differences tend to divide, but Christ's blood is the unifier