

**Chapter 24: Sin:** What is sin? Where did it come from? Do we inherit a sinful nature from Adam? Do we inherit guilt from Adam?

**A. The Definition of Sin (p. 490)**

1. Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature. (Exo 20:1-17, Exo 20:17)
2. *Desire* to steal or commit adultery=sin in God's sight  
→ Desire to sin=sin (Mat 5:22, Mat 5:28)
3. → Not correct to say that all feelings, attitudes are morally neutral (Psa 19:14, Gal 5:20, Rom 5:8, Eph 2:3)
4. Other suggested definitions: Sin is selfishness
  - a. Some truth in this definition (Phi 2:3): 1) Scripture does not define sin this way, 2) Much self-interest is good, approved by Scripture. (Mat 6:20) → Even seeking salvation, 3) Much sin is not selfishness in the ordinary sense, 3a) Selfless devotion to a false religion (e.g., Buddhism), 3b) Selfless devotion to secular political, educational goals, 4) This view might lead us to think: wrong for God to seek own glory (which he does)
  - b. Scriptural view of sin (1Jo 3:4)

**B. The Origin of Sin (492)**

1. God is not to be blamed for sin (Deu 32:4, Job 34:10)
  - a. Wrong to blame God for sin (Angels/humans sinned by willful, voluntary choice) (Gen 18:25, Jam 1:13)
  - b. He ordained that sin would come about through the *voluntary* choices of moral creatures (NOTE: Not dualism: 2 powers in universe: good/evil—Eph 1:11)
  - c. The sin of Adam and Eve (Gen 3:1-19—The Fall)
    - i. Struck at the basis for knowledge (What is true?): 1) God: If you eat, you will die, 2) Serpent: you will not die, 3) Eve: Decided to doubt God's words (conduct experiment to see if true) or (decided: not true)
    - ii. Struck at the basis for moral standards (What is right?): 1) God: Do not eat fruit, 2) Serpent: Eat the fruit (be like God), 3) Eve: Trusted her own evaluation of what would be right (1. Good for food, 2. Delight to the eyes, 3. Desired to make one wise).
    - iii. Gave different answer to the question (Who am I?): 1) God: Adam and Eve were creatures, 2) Adam and Eve: To be like God
  - d. All sin is ultimately irrational: Did not make sense for Satan to rebel against God or for Adam and Eve to think disobeying God would bring gain (Psa 14:1, Pro 10:23)

**C. The Doctrine of inherited Sin (493)**How does sin of Adam affect us?

1. Inherited Guilt: We are counted guilty because of Adam's sin (Rom 5:12-14, Rom 5:18-19)  
*Is it just for God to act this way?*
  - We have all *also* committed many actual sins
  - If we were in Adam's place → we also could have sinned
  - If it is fair for Adam's sin, then should also say: "It is fair for Christ's righteousness" (Rom 5:19)
2. Inherited Corruption: we have a sinful nature because of Adam's sin (Psa 51:5, Eph 2:3)  
(NOTE: This does not mean that all human beings are as bad as they could be)  
→ even unbelievers do much good
  - a. In ourselves, we have a total lack of spiritual good before God  
→ Every part of our being is affected with sin—intellect, emotions, decisions, hearts, goals, motives, even physical bodies (Rom 7:18, Jer 17:9)
  - b. In ourselves, we have a total *inability* to do spiritual good before God (Rom 8:8, Joh 15:5, Heb 11:6, Eph 2:1)

**D. Actual Sins in Our Lives (498)**

1. All people are sinful before God (Psa 14:3, Psa 143:2, 1Ki 8:46, 1Jo 1:8-10)
2. Does our ability limit our responsibility? (Eph 2:1, Mat 5:48)  
—Pelagius (taught in Rome AD 383-410, later in Palestine)  
Are infants guilty before they commit actual sins?
  - a. Is there an "Age of Accountability"? (Psa 51:5, Psa 58:3)
  - b. Infants who die: Can they be saved?

- i. It must be entirely on the basis of Christ's redemptive work and regeneration by the work of the Holy Spirit within them.
  - ii. It certainly is possible for God to work in a special way to bring regeneration (Luk 1:15, Psa 22:10)
  - iii. It is God's pattern throughout Scripture to save the children of those who believe in Him (2Sa 12:23, also see Gen. 7:1, cf. Heb 11:7; Jos. 2:18; Ps. 103.17; Mark 10:13-16; John 4:53; Acts 2:39, 11:14, 16:31, 18:8; 1Cor. 1:16, 7:14; Tit. 1:6)
3. Are there degrees of sin?
- a. Legal guilt: any one sin makes us guilty (Gen 2:17, Rom 5:16, Jam 2:10-11)
  - b. Results in life and relationship with God: Some sins are worse than others (Joh 19:11, Eze 8:6, Eze 8:13, Eze 8:15, Mat 5:19, Mat 23:23, Mat 23:23, Lev 4:2, Lev 5:17, Num 15:30)
4. What happens when a Christian sins?
- a. Our legal standing before God is unchanged (Rom 8:1, 1Co 15:3)
  - b. Our fellowship with God is disrupted and our Christian life is damaged (Eph 4:30, Heb 12:6, Heb 12:10, Rev 3:19)
    - i. Westminster Confession of Faith: "God's fatherly displeasure" Mat 6:12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
    - ii. Our Christian life and our fruitfulness in ministry is also damaged (Joh 15:4, 2Ti 2:20-21, Rom 6:16, 1Pe 2:11)
    - iii. We suffer the loss of heavenly reward (1Co 3:15, 2Co 5:10)
    - iv. The danger of "Unconverted Evangelicals": A consistent pattern of disobedience to Christ with a lack of the fruit of the Holy Spirit is a warning signal (Gal 5:22-23, 1Jo 2:4)
5. What is the unpardonable sin? (Mat 12:31-32, Mar 3:29-30, Heb 6:4-6, Different Views: 1) Could only be committed while Christ was earth, 2) Unbelief continues until the time of death, 3) Serious apostasy by genuine believers, 4) Usually malicious, willful rejection and slander against the Holy Spirit's work attesting to Christ, and attributing that work to Satan. (Mat 12:24). If you are afraid that you have committed this sin, you haven't.

#### **E. The Punishment of Sin (509)**

- 1. Punishment of sin serves as *deterrent* against further sinning and as a *warning* to those who deserve it but not the primary reason
- 2. Primary Reason → *God's righteousness demands it so that he might be glorified in the universe that he has created.* (Jer 9:24, Rom 3:25-26)

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