

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

INTRODUCTION

Man calls it an accident; God calls it an abomination.

Man calls it a blunder; God calls it a blight.

Man calls it a defect; God calls it a disease.

Man calls it a chance; God calls it a choice.

Man calls it an error; God calls it an enmity.

Man calls it a fascination; God calls it a fatality.

Man calls it an infirmity; God calls it an iniquity.

Man calls it a luxury; God calls it a leprosy.

Man calls it a liberty; God calls it lawlessness.

Man calls it a trifle; God calls it a tragedy.

Man calls it a mistake; God calls it a madness.

Man calls it a weakness; God calls it a willfulness.

What is this mysterious thing, so downplayed and on occasion actually denied by man, but utterly denounced by God? By actual count it is referred to over 700 times in the Word of God.

In a nutshell, one's concept of the holiness of God is directly connected to and governed by his understanding of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. The aim of this doctrinal study is to allow the student to clearly see both the purity of the one and the perversion of the other.

The word *sin* is found hundreds of times in the Bible in both Old and New Testaments. Its first mention is in Genesis 4:7, where it is said to have been lurking at the door of the world's first murderer, Cain. The second reference is found in Genesis 18:20, where it causes the fiery and fearsome destruction of Sodom. The final mention is in Revelation 18:5, where it brings down the full wrath of an angry God upon the political and economic systems of this entire world.

What is this deadly and damnable thing that is so hated by God and so harmful to man? The very word carries with it the hissing sound of a vicious viper.

Some 20 centuries ago the angel Gabriel appeared to a troubled carpenter named Joseph to reassure him of the purity of Mary. "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:20-21).

Approximately 30 years after this angelic announcement, this babe, who had now grown into strong manhood, was publicly introduced by John the Baptist in the following manner: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29b).

From these verses we are told that the basic reason for the incarnation of God's Son was to deal with this terrible thing called sin.

I. The Definition and Meaning of Sin

The biblical concept of sin comes from a study of words used in both Testaments for sin. The terms are numerous, compared to the words for grace in the Bible. Only three words are needed to express grace (*chen* and *chesed* in the Old Testament and *charis* in the New). By contrast, there are at least eight basic words for sin in the Old Testament and a dozen in the New. Together they furnish the basic concepts involved in the doctrine.

Sin may properly be defined by using all these descriptive words for its various forms as recorded in the Old and New Testaments. Such a definition would be accurate though lengthy. Indeed, it might be a good idea to define it thus: sin is missing the mark, badness, rebellion, iniquity, going astray, wickedness, wandering, ungodliness, crime, lawlessness, transgression, ignorance, and a falling away. (Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, pp. 209, 212)

The two most commonly used words for sin in the entire Bible are the words *chata* and *hamartia*.

A. The Old Testament word *chata*

In all of its forms this basic word for sin occurs about 522 times in the Old Testament. Its basic meaning is to miss the mark and is equivalent to the Greek word *hamartano*. But missing the mark also involves hitting some other mark; i.e., when one misses the right mark and thus sins, he also hits the wrong mark. The idea is not merely a passive one of missing, but also an active one of hitting. It is

used of moral evil, idolatry, and ceremonial sins. Some important references include Exodus 20:20; Judges 20:16; Proverbs 8:36; and 19:2. (Ibid., p. 211)

B. The New Testament word *hamartia*

This is the most frequently used word for sin, occurring in its various forms about 227 times. When a writer wanted one inclusive word for sin, he used this one. The metaphor behind the word is missing the mark, but, as in the Old Testament, this is not only a negative idea but includes the positive idea of hitting some wrong mark. When it is used in the Gospels it almost always occurs in a context that speaks of forgiveness or salvation (Matt. 1:21; John 1:29). Other instructive references include Acts 2:38; Romans 5:12; 6:1; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; James 1:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 1:7; 2:2; Revelation 1:5. (Ibid., p. 211)

Various theological definitions would include:

“Sin is lack of conformity to the moral law of God, either in act, disposition, or state.” – A. H. Strong

“Sin is a transgression of, or want of conformity to the divine law.” – Charles Hodge

“Sin may be defined ultimately as anything in the creature which does not express, or which is contrary to, the holy character of the Creator.” – James Oliver Buswell, Jr,

“Sin is a restless unwillingness on the part of the creature to abide in the sphere and limitation in which the Creator, guided by infinite wisdom, had placed him.” – L. S. Chafer

II. The Origin of Sin

A. The origin of sin into the universe – According to five key biblical passages of Scripture, a powerful angelic creature named Lucifer once (perhaps before the creation of the earth) led a wicked revolt against Jehovah God himself in an insane attempt to dethrone the rightful King, the Lord Jesus Christ. While this treachery proved unsuccessful, it did, nevertheless, introduce into the universe a new evil element hitherto unknown. This perverted principle was sin. Lucifer degenerated into the devil and became, therefore, the source and strength of sin.

1. According to Isaiah – “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High” (Isa. 14:12-14).
2. According to Ezekiel – “Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching’” (Ezek. 28:12-18, NIV).
3. According to Jesus – “And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven” (Luke 10:18).
4. According to 1 John – “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).
5. According to Revelation – “And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born” (Rev. 12:3-4).

- B. The origin of sin into the world – While an angel introduced sin into the universe, it was a man who invited it into the world. In the Old Testament Moses describes the act historically, and in the New Testament Paul describes it theologically.
1. The historical account
 - a. The temptation of Adam and Eve – “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:16-17).
 - (1) That they doubt God’s Word – “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Gen. 3:1).
 - (2) That they deny God’s Word – “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:4-5).
 - b. The transgression by Adam and Eve – “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Gen. 3:6).
 2. The theological account – ‘Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned’ (Rom. 5:12). “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22).

III. The Nature of Sin

- A. Sin is not eternal – In the third century A.D. a Persian philosopher named Mani developed a school of thought called Manichaeism. In essence, this taught that there are two dual eternal and impersonal principles which exist side by side in this universe. One is the principle of good, and the other the principle of evil. This false philosophy would therefore spell God with two *os* and omit the letter *d* from devil.
- B. Sin is not merely the absence of good – Some teach that as darkness is merely the absence of light, sin is simply the nonpresence of goodness. This is unscriptural, for sin is as real and positive to the soul of man as cancer and leprosy are to his physical body.
- C. Sin is not simply the weakness or frailty of the human flesh – This false view would see sin as mere frailties of the flesh such as hunger, thirst, and weariness.
- D. Sin has no standard of its own – Sin must derive its measurements from that which is positive or good. One may assume good apart from evil (which indeed was true historically), but evil cannot exist apart from good. By its very nature sin (evil) must oppose and pervert something good. Every sin is, in reality, a perversion of some good principle.
- E. Sin and evil cannot really manifest themselves as such, but must (to some extent) be disguised as good – For example, Hitler’s stated reason for the systematic slaughter of Jews and East Europeans was for the “protection and good” of his own people, Germany. A rebel feels free to rape and burn in order to “awaken the conscience” of a careless society unconcerned about the “plight” of his particular minority group. A hijacker threatens and terrifies an entire passenger plane to “correct” the wrongs a certain government may have done in holding some “innocent” political prisoners. Thus, even in a sin-cursed world, evil dare not expose itself in the raw, as the vicious and vile wolf it really is, but is forced to assume in some form the garb of a sheep.
- F. Sin must not only disguise itself *as* the good, but must also actually connect itself *to* the good – In itself it has no unifying power. Here sin may be likened to a virus, and the good to a healthy cell.

Much research is now going on concerning the nature and makeup of a virus. Some believe it is a bridge between the living and non-living. A virus contains DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid), that necessary genetic code of all living organisms, but it has no sugar or fat molecules, nor does it possess nucleotides or amino acids. It can play dead like a crystal for a long duration. Upon being revived, it fastens to the wall of a living cell like a mosquito, driving a tubular shaft in and injecting its own DNA genes. These genes take over the total function of the cell, gathering free-floating nucleotides, and produce copies of the original virus. The virus even secretes an enzyme which breaks down existing cell DNA and uses this for itself.

When several hundred virus DNAs have been assembled, the cell is milked dry. Then the original virus (outside the cell wall) secretes a final enzyme which dissolves the cell wall. An army of virus particles march forth, each seeking new cells to invade, leaving behind the empty broken husk of what had been, an hour before, a healthy, living cell. The operation is simple, ruthless, and effective.

Therefore (as we have already said), sin must disguise itself *as* and connect itself *to* the good. But not so with the good, which has no connection whatsoever with evil, and cannot disguise itself but must be manifested by its true nature.

- G. Sin often must strive against itself – For example, a miser is at variance with a spendthrift. A proud stoic will view with contempt a glutton. A promiscuous heterosexual is sickened at the sexual perversions of a homosexual.

But this is not so with the good, where all its elements and attributes complement and do not contradict each other. Love, grace, truth, wisdom, righteousness, and justice are all the closest of friends. Thus, good has only one enemy, the evil; but any given evil has two enemies, the good and another conflicting evil. A classic example of this was seen during World War II, when the two most wicked men on earth hated each other with a passion seldom seen. These two bitter enemies were Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin.

- H. Sin on some occasions is to be distinguished from evil – For example, sin is not always the exact same thing as evil. We often refer to cyclones, floods, fires, earthquakes, and such as evil, and well they may be. But these cannot be called sin. This fact should be understood, as many Christians have been troubled and confused over the words of God in Isaiah 45:7, where we read: “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.”

Here the Hebrew word *ra* is used, which can also be translated “calamity.” Thus, while we read of God creating evil, the Scriptures assure us he does not create sin. “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor. 5:21). “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2). “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). “Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pet. 2:22). “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin” (1 John 3:5).

- IV. The Universality of Sin – The indisputable fact that all men are sinners is attested to by the following five sources:

- A. The testimony of history – It has been estimated that some 40 billion human beings have lived (or are living) upon this earth since Adam. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that perhaps one third of these 40 billion people lost their lives at the hand of another human being. Hundreds of millions of living flesh-and-blood creatures have been stabbed, stoned, strangled, shot, gassed, bombed, burned, buried alive, hung, and drowned by other living flesh-and-blood creatures.
- B. The testimony of conscience – How often has man’s built-in “sin gauge” smote him to despair and even to suicide over his sinful actions. This club of conscience strikes all men, regardless of their brains, brawn, bloodstream, or banking powers. Thus, while the voice of conscience can be defiled, it cannot be denied.
- C. The testimony of religions – Louis Berkhof writes the following:

The history of religions and of philosophy testify to it. The history of religions testifies to the universality of sin. The question of Job, “How shall a man be just with God?” is a question that was asked not merely in the realm of special revelation, but also outside of it in the Gentile world. (Job 9:2) The heathen religions testify to a universal consciousness of sin and of the need of reconciliation with a Supreme Being. There is a general feeling that the gods are offended and must be propitiated in some way. There is a universal voice of conscience, testifying to the fact that man falls short of the ideal and stands condemned in the sight of some higher Power. Altars reeking with the blood of sacrifices, often the sacrifices of dear children, repeated confessions of wrong-doing, and prayers for deliverance from evil – all point to the consciousness of sin. Missionaries find this wherever they go. The history of philosophy is indicative of the same fact. Early Greek philosophers were already wrestling with the problem of moral evil, and since their day no philosopher of name was able to ignore it. They were all constrained to admit the universality of it, and that in spite of the fact they were not able to explain the phenomenon. There was, it is true, a superficial optimism in the 18th century, which dreamt of the inherent goodness of man, but in its stupidity flew in the face of the facts and was sharply rebuked by Kant. Many liberal theologians were induced to believe and to preach this inherent goodness of man as gospel truth, but today many of them qualify it as one of the most pernicious errors of the past. Surely the facts of life do not warrant such optimism. (*Systematic Theology*, pp. 239 – 240)

- D. The testimony of the Scriptures

1. General statements concerning the sinfulness of man – “For there is no man that sinneth not” (1 Kings 8:46a). “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Prov. 20:9). “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9a). “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Eccles. 7:20). “All we like sheep have gone astray” (Isa. 53:6a). “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away” (Isa. 64:6).

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin” (Gal. 3:22a). “For in many things we offend all” (James 3:2a). “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:10).
2. Personal statements concerning the sinfulness of man – On at least eight separate occasions in the Bible an individual is forced to utter those three tragic but true words, “I have sinned.”
 - a. Pharaoh – “And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked” (Exod. 9:27). “Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you” (Exod. 10:16).
 - b. Balaam – “And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me: now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again” (Num. 22:34).
 - c. Achan – “And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done” (Josh. 7:20).
 - d. Saul – “Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly” (1 Sam. 26:21).
 - e. David – “And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die” (2 Sam. 12:13). “And David’s heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly” (2 Sam. 24:10).
 - f. Job – “I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?” (Job 7:20).
 - g. The Prodigal Son – “And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son” (Luke 15:21).
 - h. Judas – “Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that” (Matt. 27:4).

A double tragedy is seen here, for out of these eight confessions, it would seem only three really were sincere and experienced the forgiveness of a gracious God. These three are David, Job, and the Prodigal Son.

- E. The testimony of our children – The good must be taught to our children. The bad they know already. Sharing is not natural, but selfishness is.

V. The Exceeding Wickedness of Sin – There are two unfathomable areas that even the most spiritual believer can but penetrate slightly. One is the lofty heights of the Creator’s holiness. The other is the fearful depths of the creature’s sinfulness. Scripture offers three major proofs and illustrations of the exceeding wickedness of sin.

- A. The angelic proof – consider a kindly and highly experienced craftsman creating a magnificent figure out of nothing. Upon its creation this figure is given life, covered with dazzling precious gems, and equipped with a beautiful musical system. The craftsman then places his newly created being over all the universe, to rule (under him) and to enjoy. Millions of other created beings look to this creature for guidance. His only responsibility is to faithfully serve his wise and wonderful Creator. But one dark day, for absolutely no reason whatsoever, this privileged being who had received so much from the craftsman, viciously lashes out against his benevolent benefactor and leads a wicked rebellion to drive him from the very universe he originally created.

What base and perverted ingratitude all this would display. And yet, such was the case when Lucifer rebelled against his mighty Creator, Jehovah God. The depths and depravity of this sin, in light of its background, can never be comprehended by any creature, angelic or human. (See Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:11-19.)

- B. The human proof – L. S. Chafer writes:

One individual, the first of the human creation, committed one sin and that sin being apparently so innocuous men are prone to ridicule the thought that God would notice it at all; yet that one sin is, according to divine estimation, sufficiently evil to cause the degeneracy and depravity of the unfallen person who committed the sin, and to cause uncounted millions of his posterity to suffer in the flesh and die, and the vast majority of them to spend eternity in the realms of woe. (L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, vol. II, p. 252)

C. The divine proof

1. As seen by the price paid by the Savior

The Son of God suffered to an infinite degree and died on the cross because of sin. There was no other way whereby redemption could be secured. However, had there never been but one sin committed in this world, the same depths of suffering and death by the Son of God would have been required as a righteous ground for divine forgiveness of that one sin and the justification of that sinner. (Ibid., p. 252)

2. As seen by the price to be paid by the unrepentant sinner – “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41).

Undoubtedly the most difficult aspect of hell to comprehend is its eternal duration. Why could not the torment of even an Adolf Hitler be over after several billion years of suffering? A partial answer has to do with the awesome holiness of God. Any attempted attack against this holiness (as sin is) demands an eternal payment of some sort. Thus, when a sinner rejects the paid price effected by the crucified Savior, he must then spend all eternity paying for it himself.

VI. The Sources of Sin – We have previously discussed the origin of sin, but what are its present-day sources? What causes both unsaved and saved people to sin? Dr. Charles Ryrie observes that the poisonous waters of sin can proceed from one of three polluted fountains:

A. The world – “Satan’s world stands in opposition to God’s people and promotes Satan’s purposes. So the world system is a source of sin when anyone conforms to it (John 15:18-19).”

1. Its description – “Satan stands as its head and controlling force. Its chief characteristic is counterfeiting, though Satan will use any tactic he can in order to defeat the believer. Often borderline issues are the most difficult to discern and decide.”

2. Our defense – “A number of things serve as the believer’s defense against the counterfeit of the world – the armor (Eph. 6:13-18), knowledge of Satan’s strategies (2 Cor. 2:11), sobriety, vigilance (1 Pet. 5:8). Perhaps faith should be placed at or near the top of the list. Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4-5), the faith which identified us with Christ’s work on the cross. Since every believer has such faith, he has an adequate defense against the world. Yet such faith needs to be constantly exercised to realize victory (1 Tim. 6:12).”

B. The flesh

1. The concept – “The flesh is that principle of sin within all of us. Some equate the sin nature and flesh. The flesh produces works (Gal. 5:19), is characterized by lusts and passions (v. 24; 1 John 2:16), and it can enslave the believer (Rom. 7:25). In it is nothing good (v. 18), for the presence of the new life in Christ makes all that is associated with the flesh old and useless. This includes blatantly evil things as well as amoral things and sometimes things that might be good in themselves but which bring no pleasure to God because they are works of the flesh.”

2. The control – “The flesh can only be controlled by actualizing our co-crucifixion with Christ. We have crucified the flesh, that is, been separated from its domination by our association with Christ’s dying unto (Gal. 5:24). We can experience victory not by eradication of the flesh but in walking in dependence on the Spirit to control it (v. 16).”

C. The devil – “Christ was acutely aware of the power, program, and procedures of Satan. Some have tried to suggest that the Lord really did not believe in the reality of Satan but was accommodating the ignorances of the people when He taught about Satan. However, He spoke of Satan on occasions when there was no need to unless He believed Satan actually existed (e.g., Luke 10:18). Our Lord acknowledged Satan as the ruler of this world (John 12:31), the head of his own kingdom (Matt. 12:26), the father of rebellious people (John 8:44), the father of lies (v. 44), the evil one who opposes the reception of the Gospel (Matt. 13:19), the enemy who sows tares among the good seed (v. 39), and thus the one who causes people to do these things which he promotes.”

1. His strategy is planned. “Satan devises methods, uses strategies, and employs all the craftiness of a superhuman creature to trap the believer (2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:11).”
2. His strategy is persistent. “He continually stalks the believer, waiting for the right moment to attack (1 Pet. 5:8).”
3. His strategy is powerful. “The believer must wrestle in hand-to-hand combat against Satan, never underestimating his power (Eph. 6:12; 1 John 4:4; Jude 9)” (Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, pp. 216, 231 – 232).

VII. The Kinds of Sin

A. A general listing – As might be expected, there are many types of sin recorded in the Word of God, all of which are tragically illustrated by various individuals. Here is a general alphabetical listing:

1. Adultery (2 Sam. 11:4)
2. Anger (Num. 20:7-11; Matt. 5:22)
3. Anxiety (Phil. 4:6; 2 Kings 6:15)
4. Apostasy (Jude)
5. Arrogance (Exod. 5:2)
6. Attempted genocide (Esther 3)
7. Backbiting (Rom. 1:30; Psa. 15:3)
8. Backsliding (Prov. 14:14; Jer. 3:14)
9. Betrayal (Gen. 37:28; Luke 22:3-4)
10. Bitterness (Job 10:1; Heb. 12:15)
11. Blasphemy (Luke 22:65; Rev. 13:1)
12. Bloodletting (2 Kings 11:1; 21:16)
13. Boasting (Prov. 25:14; James 3:5)
14. Brazenness (Num. 24:6; Dan. 5:1-4)
15. Bribery (1 Sam. 8:3; Amos 5:12)
16. Brutality (2 Kings 15:16)
17. Carelessness (Exod. 4:24-26)
18. Carnality (1 Cor. 3:1-4)
19. Child abuse (Matt. 18:6, 10)
20. Cursing God’s anointed (2 Sam. 16:5)
21. Compromise (Judg. 2:2; 1 Kings 22:1-4)
22. Conspiracy (2 Sam. 15:12; Acts 23:12-13)
23. Covetousness (Josh. 7:1, 20-21; Luke 12:15)
24. Crucifying Christ (Acts 2:23)
25. Deceit (Gen. 12:12-13; 27:18-19)
26. Defrauding (Mark 10:19; 1 Cor. 6:8)
27. Delaying (Acts 24:24-25)
28. Denying Christ (Matt. 26:69-75)
29. Despising authority (2 Pet. 2:10-12)
30. Despising God’s message (Jer. 36:22-25)
31. Despising God’s messengers (Matt. 23:31-34)
32. Discouragement (1 Kings 19:4; 1 Sam. 27:1)
33. Dishonesty (2 Cor. 4:2)
34. Disloyalty (2 Sam. 15:31)
35. Disobedience (Gen. 2:17; 3:5; 1 Sam. 15:19, 22)
36. Divisiveness (Prov. 6:19; 1 Cor. 1:11-13)
37. Doublemindedness (James 1:5-8)
38. Doubt (Matt. 14:31; 1 Tim. 2:8)
39. Drunkenness (Gen. 9:20-21; Gal. 5:21)
40. Dullness of hearing (Heb. 5:11-14; of seeing, 2 Pet. 1:9)
41. Enticement (Gen. 39:7, 10; Prov. 1:10)
42. Envy (1 Sam. 18:8-9; Gal. 5:21, 26)
43. Extortion (Matt. 23:25; 1 Cor. 5:10-11)
44. Faithlessness (Matt. 17:17; John 20:27)
45. False accusation (Gen. 39:13-15; 1 Kings 21:10-13)
46. False piety (Matt. 6:1-8, 16-18)
47. Fear (Prov. 29:25; Rom. 8:15; 1 John 4:18)
48. Foolish talking (Eph. 5:4; Titus 3:9)

49. Formalism (2 Tim. 3:5)
50. Fruitlessness (Hos. 10:1; John 15:2)
51. Gluttony (Prov. 23:21; Matt. 11:19)
52. Hatred (Gen. 27:41; 37:5; Titus 3:3)
53. Homosexuality (Gen. 19:5; Rom. 1:24-27)
54. Hypocrisy (Matt. 7:5; 23:28)
55. Idolatry (Exod. 32:6a; Judg. 2:12; 1 Kings 16:33)
56. Immorality (Exod. 32:6b; Judg. 16:1; Matt. 5:27-32)
57. Incest (Gen. 19:33-36)
58. Indulgence (1 Sam, 3:13)
59. Ingratitude (Rom. 1:21)
60. Intrusion into the priest's office (1 Sam. 13:9; 2 Chron. 26:16)
61. Irresponsible stewardship (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:11-27)
62. Judging (Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 4:5; Matt. 7:1-5)
63. Lack of mercy (Matt. 18:23-35)
64. Lack of natural affection (Rom. 1:31; 2 Tim. 3:3)
65. Laziness (Titus 1:12; 2 Thess. 3:10)
66. Leaving first love (Rev. 2:4)
67. Legalism (Gal.)
68. Living in the flesh (Gal. 3:3)
69. Lust (1 John 2:15-17)
70. Lying (1 Sam. 21:2-3; Prov. 17:22; Eph. 4:25)
71. Malice (Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 4:31)
72. Materialism (2 Tim. 3:1-2; Rev. 3:15-19)
73. Mocking (Gen. 21:9; 2 Kings 2:23; 2 Pet. 3:3-4)
74. Murder (Gen. 4:8)
75. Murmuring (Exod. 14:10-12; 16:7; 17:2-3)
76. Offering human sacrifices (2 Kings 17:17)
77. Partiality (James 1:2-4)
78. Polygamy (Deut. 17:17; 1 Kings 11:1-11)
79. Polluting God's house (Jer. 7:1-11; John 2:13-16)
80. Prayerlessness (1 Sam. 12:23; Luke 18:1-8)
81. Presumption (Josh. 7:3; 9:14-15)
82. Pride (Prov. 16:18; 2 Chron. 26:16)
83. Propheying falsely (1 Kings 22:11-24; Rev. 2:20)
84. Prostitution (Gen. 38:15; 1 Cor. 6:15)
85. Rape (2 Sam. 13:14)
86. Rashness (Judg. 11:30-31; 1 Sam. 14:24)
87. Rebellion (Gen. 11:4; Num. 14:4-10; 16:1-3)
88. Revenge (2 Sam. 13:28-29)
89. Robbing God (Mal. 3:8-9; Hag. 1:3-11)
90. Sacrilege (Mark 11:15-18)
91. Scattering the sheep (Jer. 23:1; Ezek. 34:1-10; John 10:12-13)
92. Sedition (2 Sam. 15:1-6)
93. Selfishness (Luke 12:16-19)
94. Self-will (Isa. 14:12-14; 2 Pet. 2:10)
95. Self-worship (Rom. 1:25)
96. Slander (Prov. 10:18; 2 Sam. 19:27)
97. Strife (Gen. 13:7; Prov. 17:19; Phil. 2:3)
98. Stubbornness (1 Sam. 15:23; Acts 7:31)
99. Suicide (2 Sam. 17:23; Matt. 27:5)
100. Teaching false doctrine (Matt. 16:6; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 4:3)
101. Theft (Matt. 15:19; Rev. 9:21)
102. Treachery (Gen. 34:13-18, 25-29; 2 Sam. 3:27)
103. Unbelief (Matt. 13:58; Heb. 4:6, 11)
104. Unequal alliance (1 Cor. 5:9; 6:15; 2 Cor. 6:14-18)
105. Unthankfulness (Rom. 1:21; Psa. 103:2)
106. Willful ignorance (2 Pet. 3:5)

107. Wisdom rejecting (Prov. 1:20-29)

108. Witchcraft (1 Sam. 28:7-18; 2 Chron. 33:6; Gal. 5:20)

B. A group listing – Are some sins worse than other sins? While it is true that the Bible teaches in a general sense that to be guilty of one is to be guilty of all sins (James 2:10), it also indicates there are sins of greater degree and sins of lesser degree.

We note the following words of Jesus: “And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:47-48).

Let us consider some of the various kinds of sins as indicated in the Word of God:

1. Sins of ignorance – “Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34a). “Jesus answered [Pilate],... he that delivered me unto thee [the wicked Jews] hath the greater sin” (John 19:11). “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law” (Rom. 2:12). “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:12-13).

2. Sins of infirmity – “Who can understand his errors: cleanse thou me from secret faults” (Psa. 19:12). “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.... For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust” (Psa. 103:10, 14).

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26). “For whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23b). “They then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak” (Rom. 15:1a), “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41).

3. Sins of carelessness – “I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue” (Psa. 39:1a). “Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived” (Deut. 11:16a). “But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak” (1 Cor. 8:9). “Therefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip” (Heb. 2:1).

4. Sins of presumption – “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins” (Psa. 19:13a). “But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled...” (2 Pet. 2:10), “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Rom. 1:32).

5. Sins related to physical and spiritual death

a. Physical death: the sin unto death – “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (1 Cor. 11:30). “There is a sin unto death” (1 John 5:16b).

As in the case of the unpardonable sin, the sin unto death has been the object of some controversy. The commonly accepted view is that the sin can only be committed by a child of God, and happens when the believer lives such a wretched life that the Father finally reaches down and takes him home to heaven earlier than he normally would have. In other words, just as there is a premature birth, there is a premature death. Evidence of this theory is thought by some to be seen in Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 (here, though, the Corinthian believer apparently repented – see 2 Cor. 2:6-11). Some who hold this theory use it as a theological basis for interpreting such difficult passages as Hebrews 6:4-10; 10:26-30.

b. Spiritual death: the unpardonable sin – “Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come” (Matt. 12:31-32).

Much ink has been spilled over these words. What is this unforgivable and unpardonable sin? Who can commit it? Can it be done today? Two main views have been offered to explain this sin.

(1) First view – The first view is that the sin can be committed by any unbeliever today and occurs when a sinner rejects the convicting voice of the Holy Spirit once too often. At

this point, the Holy Spirit forever ceases to deal with the sinner and he is hopelessly condemned, with no chance of salvation, however he may later desire it. Genesis 6:3 is sometimes offered in support of this theory. “And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.”

However, an examination of the passage shows this meaning is taken completely out of its context. In reality there is no scriptural basis for the first theory.

- (2) Second view – The second view is that the sin was dispensational in nature, that it was the sin of ascribing to Satan the earthly miracles performed by our Savior and therefore cannot be committed today. This theory is generally held by the majority of Bible students and the passage context would seem to support its accuracy.

“Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils” (Matt. 12:22-24).

VIII. Symbols and Metaphors of Sin

A. Metaphors

1. Sin is *poisonous*, like a viper – “They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders’ poison is under their lips. Selah” (Psa. 140:3). “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Matt. 23:33).
2. Sin is *stubborn*, like a mule – “For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt” (Job 11:12).
3. Sin is *cruel*, like a bear – “And behold another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh” (Dan. 7:5).
4. Sin is *destructive*, like a cankerworm – “And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you” (Joel 2:25).
5. Sin is *unclean*, like a wild dog – “As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly” (Prov. 26:11).
6. Sin is *cunning*, like a fox – “And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected” (Luke 13:32).
7. Sin is *fierce*, like a wolf – “But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep” (John 10:12).
8. Sin *devours*, like a lion – “They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion” (Psa. 22:13). “The first was like a lion, and had eagle’s wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man’s heart was given to it” (Dan. 7:4).
9. Sin is *filthy*, like a swine – “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire” (2 Pet. 2:22). (Metaphors compiled by Emery Bancroft, in *Christian Theology*, p. 228.)

B. Symbols

1. A serpent – “Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field” (Gen. 3:1a). “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Matt. 23:33). “That old serpent, called the Devil and Satan” (Rev. 12:9).
2. Leprosy – “He is a leprous man, he is unclean: the priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean; his plague is in his head” (Lev. 13:44).
3. Leaven – “Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6).
4. A woman – “And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof” (Zech. 5:7-8).
 “And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH” (Rev. 17:4-5).

IX. The Consequences of Sin

- A. Upon Lucifer – As Lucifer was the first sinner, he naturally experienced the first terrible results of sin.
1. Immediate consequences
 - a. Lucifer lost his coveted position as heaven’s anointed cherub – “Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee” (Ezek. 28:14-15).
 - b. He became earth’s depraved dragon – “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven” (Rev. 12:7-8).
 2. Future consequences – The devil will someday be forever cast into the lake of fire, a place God himself prepared for the universe’s first sinner. “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41). “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10).
- B. Upon man – When Adam opened the door for sin, two vicious criminals also rushed in and immediately began tormenting the human race. The names of these two terrible gangsters are physical death and spiritual death. In the Bible the theological meaning for death is “separation.”
1. Physical death – God created Adam with the possibilities of living forever (Gen. 2:9). But Adam sinned (Gen. 3:6-7). Therefore Adam had to later experience physical death, that is, the separation of his body from soul and spirit.

“And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died” (Gen. 5:5). “The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away” (Psa. 90:10).
 2. Spiritual death – Because of sin, all unsaved people will someday be forever separated from God in the lake of fire. This is referred to as the second death. “And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:23). “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:41).

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (Rev. 2:11). “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death” (Rev. 20:6, 14). “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).

It should be furthermore stated that, although the second death as mentioned above is still future for the sinner, the Bible nevertheless teaches that all unsaved people right now are considered by God to be dead in trespasses and sins and separated even at this present time from his fellowship (Eph. 2:1-12). Both physical and spiritual death seem to be in the mind of God when he warned Adam about the consequences of sin. The Hebrew of Genesis 2:17 may be translated, “For in the day that thou eatest thereof, in dying thou shalt surely die.”

Cut flowers well illustrate living human beings doing good things but who nevertheless are spiritually dead. Is the blossom that has been cut from the plant alive or dead? At first it is beautiful, fragrant, and in combination with other cut flowers may grace the finest home, church, or occasion. It looks alive; it is useful; but it is in reality dead, for it has been severed from the life of the plant which produced it. At this point the illustration breaks down, for it is not possible to give the flower new and eternal life, something God can do for the one who believes in the Lord Jesus. (Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 219)

In summary it may be said then that sin:

- a. Dulls man’s ears – “For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with

- their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Acts 28:27).
- b. Darkens his eyes of understanding – “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:18).
 - c. Diverts his feet – “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6).
 - d. Defiles his tongue – “Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness” (Rom. 3:13-14).
 - e. Deceives his heart – “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9).
 - f. Devours his intellect – “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14).
 - g. Dooms his soul – “Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezek. 18:4).
- C. Upon nature – After sin, man’s paradise became a wilderness. The roses contained thorns and the docile tiger suddenly became a hungry meat-eater. This will continue to be the case until the curse is lifted during the Millennium. In the New Testament Paul writes about the consequences of sin upon nature:
- “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Rom. 8:19-22).
- D. Upon the holy angels – Man’s sin apparently became an object lesson for angels as their Creator allowed them to enter into his blessed work of redeeming mankind. The following passages seem to bear this out: “For we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men” (1 Cor. 4:9b). “I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels” (1 Tim. 5:21a). “And it [the Law] was ordained by angels” (Gal. 3:19c). “Which things [matters concerning salvation] the angels desire to look into” (1 Pet. 1:12d). “Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (Heb. 1:14).
 - E. Upon God himself – What effect did man’s sin have upon God? It meant that he could no longer rest as he had done when creation was completed. “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made” (Gen. 2:2). It meant that he began his second and greatest work, that of redemption. To this very day, God continues to work in matters of redemption. “But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). “I must work the works of him that sent me” (John 9:4a). “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6b).
- X. The Imputation of Sin – Were the effects of Adam’s fall merely confined to himself, or do they continue somehow to make themselves known in the life of twentieth century man?
- A. The liberal position – The entire story is simply a Hebrew legend.
 - B. The Pelagian position – Pelagius was a British monk who taught that Adam’s sin affected only himself, for God imputes to men only those sins which they personally and consciously perform. Pelagius said the only effect of Adam’s sin on posterity was that of a bad example. The doctrine of Pelagianism was condemned by the Council of Carthage in A.D. 418.
 - C. The Arminian position – Arminius (1560 – 1609) was a professor who lived and taught in Holland. His theory teaches that while Adam’s sin definitely weakened the will of his posterity to remain sinless, it did not, however, destroy the possibility.
 - D. The Augustinian position – Paul Enns writes:

This view is named after Augustine (A.D. 354-430) and has been more recently held by Calvin, Luther, Shedd, and Strong. This view teaches that the statement “all sinned” in Romans 5:12 suggests that all humanity was a participant in Adam’s sin. Just as Levi (although not yet born) paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham in that Levi was “seminally present” in Abraham (Heb. 7:9-10), in a similar way, all humanity was “seminally present” in Adam when Adam sinned and therefore all humanity participated in the sin. Therefore, the sin of Adam and the resultant death is charged to all

humanity because all humanity is guilty. God holds all humanity guilty because all humanity is guilty. (*Moody Handbook of Theology*, p. 312)

E. The federal position

The federal view was originally propounded by Cocceius (1603 – 1669) and became a standard of belief in Reformed theology. It was taught by men like Charles Hodge; J. Oliver Buswell, Jr.; and Louis Berkhof. This view is called the federal view because Adam is seen as the federal head or representative of the entire human race. God entered into a covenant of works with Adam whereby He promised to bless Adam and thereby the entire human race with eternal life if Adam obeyed. Disobedience would bring suffering to the entire human race. As a result of Adam's sin, since he was the representative of the human race, his sin plunged the entire human race into suffering and death. Through the one sin of Adam, sin and death are imputed to all humanity because all humanity was represented in Adam. Charles Hodge defines the view: "In virtue of the union, federal and natural, between Adam and his posterity, his sin, although not their act, is so imputed to them that it is the judicial ground of the penalty threatened against him coming also upon them." (*Ibid.*, p. 312)

Note: Although these two final views are similar, they are not exactly the same.

1. The Augustinian view says that I actually sinned with Adam, even though unborn, being found in his "genetic pool," and thus had his sin imputed to me,
2. The federal view says that although I did not sin with Adam, yet inasmuch as he served to represent me, his sin was imputed to me.

Question: Which of the two views (Augustinian and federal) is supported by the Scriptures? In general, a case can be made for both positions. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom. 5:12, 18).

At this point it will be helpful to read the summaries offered by two well-known theologians.

*With respect to the origin of sin in the history of mankind, the Bible teaches that it began with the transgression of Adam in paradise, and therefore with a perfectly voluntary act on the part of man. The tempter came from the spirit world with the suggestion that man, by placing himself in opposition to God, might become like God. Adam yielded to the temptation and committed the first sin by eating of the forbidden fruit. But the matter did not stop there, for by that first sin Adam became the bond-servant of sin. That sin carried permanent pollution with it, and a pollution which, because of the solidarity of the human race, would affect not only Adam but all his descendants as well. As a result of the fall the father of the race could only pass on a depraved human nature to his off-spring. From that unholy source sin flows on as an impure stream to all the generations of men, polluting everyone and everything with which it comes in contact. It is exactly this state of things that made the question of Job so pertinent, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (Job 14:4). But even this is not all. Adam sinned not only as the father of the human race, but also as the representative head of all his descendants; and therefore the guilt of his sin is placed to their account, so that they are all liable to the punishment of death. It is primarily in that sense that Adam's sin is the sin of all. That is what Paul teaches us in Romans 5:12: "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned." The last words can only mean that they all sinned in Adam, and sinned in such a way as to make them all liable to the punishment of death. It is not sin considered merely as pollution, but sin as guilt that carries punishment with it, God adjudges all men to be guilty sinners in Adam, just as He adjudges all believers to be righteous in Jesus Christ. That is what Paul means, when he says: "So then as through one act of righteousness the free gift came unto all men to justification of life. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:18-19). (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pp, 221 – 222)*

As a matter of fact the representative principle runs through the entire range of human life. Representative action is a sociological fact everywhere and is recognized in all orderly legal systems. For example, it may properly be said, I signed the Declaration of Independence as of the Fourth of July, 1776, I was not there, but my representatives acted as my representatives, and I am implicated in all the consequences of their action. Further, we declared war and entered World War II with the whole nation as of

December 7, 1941. I was not present when the action was taken. I was only listening over the radio, I might have been an unborn child. Nevertheless, my representatives acted for me and as representing me, therefore it was my action, and I am implicated and involved in all the consequences of that action.

Just so, I became a wicked, guilty sinner in the Garden of Eden. I turned my back upon fellowship with my holy God. I deliberately corrupted the character of godly holiness which God imparted to His creation. I willfully began to spread corruption through the creation over which God had intended me to rule, I was not there, No, but my representative was there, and he acted as such in my place and I was driven out from the garden and excluded from the tree of life.” (J. Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, p. 295)

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- XI. The Reasons for Sin – We have already observed the biblical teachings that God is nowhere pictured as the author of sin. But why did he allow it? Could he not have prevented it? The answer is, of course, that he could have, but chose not to. Why? Several suggestions have been offered along this line.
- A. First suggestion – God created both angels and men as intelligent creatures possessing moral natures that could determine and choose between right and wrong. Had God stopped Lucifer and Adam one second before their sin, he would, in effect, have violated their moral natures and reduced them to mere walking robots.
 - B. Second suggestion – God allowed man to sin so that he might display his grace. Thus, prior to Adam, God was already exhibiting his omnipresence (in being everywhere at once), his omnipotence (in setting the galaxies into motion), and his omniscience (in creating angels). But there was one attribute, one characteristic perhaps closer to his heart than any other, and that was his grace. Where there is no sin there is no need of grace. As Paul would later write: “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20b).
- Why then did God allow Adam to sin? No man knows. But it does not seem unreasonable to believe that part of the answer lies in the above suggestion, that is, for God to display his marvelous grace. Again, in the words of Paul: “Even when we were dead in sins [he] hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved);... That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus” (Eph, 2:5, 7).
- XII. The Christian’s Sin – One of the truly great and far-reaching blessings of salvation is God’s dealings with the subject of our sin. The repenting sinner is immediately and eternally saved from the *penalty* of sin (in the past), provided with victory over the *power* of sin (in the present), and guaranteed final removal from the *presence* of sin (in the future). But what happens when the Christian fails to use the available power and falls into sin? How does God view sin in the life of his child? Is it indeed possible (as some have claimed) to remain sinless from the cross to the crown?
- A. The fact of sin – Let it be said up front that the one claiming sinless perfection ascribes to himself that which neither Paul, nor James, nor John claimed for themselves. Note the testimony of these three apostles:
 - 1. Paul – “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:12). “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Tim. 1:15).
 - 2. James – “For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body” (James 3:2).
 - 3. John – Charles Ryrie writes:

Being a Christian does not free one from sinning. Of course there are some who teach eradication of the sin nature in this life, but the picture and doctrine of the New Testament seem to teach otherwise. In fact, John mentions three false claims which people in his day made in this regard in 1 John 1:8-10.

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:8-10).

Verse 8 speaks of denying the presence of the principle of sin.

Verse 9 speaks of the denial of particular sins.

Verse 10 speaks of the denial of *personally* sinning. (*A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, p. 112)
 - B. The effect of sin – The child of God immediately loses the following eight things upon sinning. The ninth may be lost.

1. The loss of light – “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (1 John 1:6).
 2. The loss of joy – “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit” (Psa. 51:12). “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15:11). “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith” (Gal. 5:22), “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full” (1 John 1:4).
 3. The loss of peace – There are two kinds of peace enjoyed by the believer.
 - a. The peace with God, enjoyed by *all* believers regardless of their spiritual condition (Rom. 5:1).
 - b. The peace of God, enjoyed by *only* those believers living in the center of his will. This is the peace sin causes one to lose.
 4. The loss of love – “But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him” (1 John 2:5). “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17). “No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us” (1 John 4:12).
 5. The loss of fellowship – “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.... If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:3, 6-7).
 6. The loss of confidence – “And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight” (1 John 3:19-22).
 7. The loss of testimony – “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; neither is anyone who does not love his brother” (1 John 3:9-10).
 8. The loss of rewards – “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip” (Heb. 2:1). “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward” (Heb. 10:35). “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward” (2 John 8).
 9. The possible loss of health and even physical life – “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep” (1 Cor. 11:30).
- C. The restoration following sin – How can a “sinning saint” be restored to full fellowship? In essence, he or she must know and apply both the means and the method of God's cleansing and forgiveness.
1. The means is the blood of Christ – “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).
 2. The method is the confession of the Christian – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).
- D. The preventives against sin
1. The role played by the Word of God – “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psa. 119:11). “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7). “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17). “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
It has been often observed that the Bible will keep one from sin, or sin will keep one from the Bible.
 2. The role played by the Son of God – “But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). “I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil” (John 17:15). “Who is he

that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” (Rom. 8:34). “And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:23-25).

3. The role played by the Spirit of God – “Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zech. 4:6).
 - a. As seen through his praying ministry – “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26).
 - b. As seen through his teaching ministry – “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. 2:12).

XIII. The Ultimate and Final Victory over Sin – In three key passages New Testament writers Paul and John describe for us this thrilling victory.

“For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:25-28).

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel” (Heb. 12:22-24).

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful” (Rev. 21:4-5).