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## *“Everyone Is In The Same Boat!”*

The Doctrine of Sin

### Various Passages

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**S**in 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.

#### *The Awfulness of Sin.*

“The awfulness of sin comes not wholly from the fact that it is a disobedience of God, but as well from the certainty that it is a doing of violence to the soul itself in the loss of power, the decay of love, the enfeebling of will and the general atrophy of the nature. The thing effected by our indulgence is not alone the book of final judgment, but the present fabric of the spirit.

~ HENRY DRUMMOND <sup>1</sup>

With Adam’s disobedience, sin entered the world, and with the fall comes the distortion and depravity of the crowning achievement of God’s creation: humanity. So we end up with Sin and sins and the crowning glory of God’s attributes, His mercy and love demonstrated on the cross. To understand sin, we must understand God’s view of sin.

This is the struggle of a fallen world. Humanity wants to define sin or even rejects its reality. For many who decide to believe there is a God, they believe their acceptance is a matter of works. If they do the right stuff, or if their good works outweigh their bad, then they will get to heaven. Unfortunately, this has nothing to do with the reality of the world in which we live.

As in the previous doctrinal studies, the material is drawn primarily from Through the Bible in One Year <sup>2</sup>, and supplemented from Willmington’s Guide to the Bible <sup>3</sup>.

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**I Introduction:** We need to step back to the lesson on Satan to see the origin of sin. The source of sin is pride. It was Lucifer’s pride which led to his fall and his transformation to the entity known as Satan.

*“You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”” (Isaiah 14:13-14).*

God was the one who called Lucifer’s actions sin. Satan was forever cut off from God. For him, there has never been and never will be an opportunity to turn back.

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<sup>1</sup> McClure, J. B., ed., The Ages Digital Library, “*Pearls From Many Seas*,” Ages Publisher, Albany, OR, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> Stringfellow, Alan B., ed., Through the Bible in One Year, Vol. 3, Great Truths of the Bible, Copyright © 1981 by Virgil W. Hensley, Inc., Publisher, Tulas, OK, p. 93-98.

<sup>3</sup> Willmington, H. L., Willmington’s Guide to the Bible, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL., 1981, p. 718-726.

***“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.” ... “How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!” (Ezekiel 28:16; Isaiah 14:12).***

It was Satan’s pride that lead him to believe he could rise to the level of God and be worshipped. He appealed to Eve’s pride in tempting her to disobedience and he succeeded. But he underestimated humanity. Instead of worshiping him, people worship themselves.

**II The Definition and Meaning of Sin:** Willmington identifies two Greek words as those which most closely define the word sin. The first is:

*“ Hamartema — “to miss a mark.” Here sin may be pictured as any attitude or act of man which does not hit the bull’s eye of God’s glory target. This meaning is strongly brought out by Paul in Romans 3:23: <sup>4</sup>*

***“ ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”***

*“ Parabasis— “to overstep a forbidden line.” According to this definition, sin occurs when man deliberately (or accidentally) steps over the line of the law of God.” <sup>5</sup>*

***“Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.” ... “For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker” (1John 3:4; James 2:11).***

**III The Universality of Sin:** To the world, these are some of the most offensive teachings of scripture. Sin is universal. All sin. All are lost. All will be judged. The issue isn’t “I’m basically a good person.” God’s standard is sinlessness, and no one meets this standard.

***“But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin’ (Galatians 3:22).***

As we mentioned last week, the world we live in reflects the destructive power of sin. This isn’t the world God created. It is the world that is a product of how sin has altered God’s perfect creation. And sin is the bottom line to the question, “How could something like the World Trade Centre happen?” The answer to all of the world’s ugliness is sin.

**IV The Aspects of Sin:** Stringfellow identified seven specific aspects to sin. <sup>6</sup>

*A Sin is “transgression” which is overstepping the law, the divine boundary. There was sin before the law, but no transgression.*

***“Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. And they have even taken some of the things under the ban and have both stolen and deceived. Moreover, they have also put them among their own***

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 718.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Stringfellow, p. 100-101.

*things.” ... “And it shall be that the one who is taken with the things under the ban shall be burned with fire, he and all that belongs to him, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has committed a disgraceful thing in Israel.” ... “Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness” (Joshua 7:11, 15; 1 John 3:4).*

B. Sin is “*iniquity*” which is an act inherently wrong—wrong morality.

*“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices” ... “And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man”” (Colossians 3:5-9; Mark 7:20).*

C. Sin is “*disobedience*” which is rebellion against authority.

*“Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 5:6).*

D. Sin is “*missing the mark*” which is a failure to meet the divine standard of God.

*“... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).*

E. Sin is “*trespassing*” which is placing self-will into the sphere of divine authority, intruding on the will of God.

*“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins” ... “For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Ephesians 2:1; Matthew 6:14).*

F. Sin is “*ungodliness.*”

*“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness” ... “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly” (Romans 4:5, 5:6)*

G. Sin is “*unbelief*”

*“Immediately the boy’s father cried out and began saying, “I do believe; help my unbelief.”” ... “And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief” (Mark 9:24; Matthew 13:58).*

**V The Effect of Sin:** We have already discussed the general effect of sin. Because of sin, the glorious image that was humanity became totally depraved. Additionally, the world fell. As a result, among other things that became distorted our view of spiritual things was damaged.

*“And Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind.” ... “For the good that I wish,*

***I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish” (John 9:39; Romans 7:19).***

Additionally, sin blinds and it hardens the conscience. Paul noted this in Ephesians 4:18-19 when he said:

***“ ... being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.”***

## **VI The Unforgivable Sin:**

***“ And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come” (Matthew 12:31-32).***

I do want to take a moment for an aside and that is to talk about the so called “unforgivable sin.” First, if a person is concerned as to whether he has committed it or not, he hasn’t. The concern itself is proof it hasn’t been committed. Willmington explains the sin this way:

*“ 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. 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. 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. That the sin was dispensational in nature, that it was the sin of ascribing to Satan the earthly miracles performed by our Saviour 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. (See Mt. 12:22-24.)*

Regardless of how one understands this specific issue, there is only one sin that leads to eternal judgment: the rejection of Christ’s shed blood as payment for sin.

**VII The Penalty of and Payment for Sin:** Having defined sin and discussed its effects and implications, the bottom line is to ask: “what is the penalty for sin and how does one escape that penalty?”

We should use this question to challenge the thinking of the lost. Often, in trying to reach the lost so much of the focus is on not offending them. As a result, they don’t receive enough truth to even understand the implications of the gospel.

The point is, once we realize that all of mankind has sinned, then all of mankind will have a penalty to pay. Paul makes this very clear when he said:

***“ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” ... “He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel***

***of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power” (Romans 6:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9).***

The other thing that must be understood, no matter how painful, is that death and judgment are eternal. When scripture speaks of destruction, condemnation, everlasting punishment, we must remember man’s condition is eternal. The only question is, will this eternal condition be sent as eternal life in God’s presence or in eternal death and separation from God? So this is the message for the lost.

***“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.” ... “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.” ... “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son” (Matthew 7:13, 25:46; John 3:18).***

But there are implications to believers over the issue of sin as well. We have eternal life. But we sin and there are consequences to sin. First, we are chastened.

***“... the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son” (Hebrews 12:6).***

And while we are not to sin, and as noted on many occasions, in dependency on the Holy Spirit we can choose not to sin, nevertheless we do. We need to acknowledge our sin. Then we have an advocate.

***“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives” (1 John 1:8-10).***

And so as we said last week, while this is a message of sorrow and pain, the story doesn’t end here. The end of the story is one of promise, joy and finally restoration. It is this message we want to offer to the world.

***“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.” ... “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4).***

And so we are greatly blessed, because we accept the payment for sin. What a blessing it is to offer this same gift to others.

***“... the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23b).***

*God forgave my sin in Jesus' name;  
I've been born again in Jesus' name;  
And in Jesus' name I come to you  
To share His love as He told me to.*

*All pow'r is giv'n in Jesus' name,  
In earth and heav'n in Jesus' name;  
And in Jesus' name I come to you  
To share his pow'r as He told me to.*

*He said, "Freely, freely you have received;  
Freely, freely give.  
God in My name and because you believe,  
Others will know that I live."<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Owens, Carol, The Celebration Hymnal, "Freely, Freely," Word/Integrity, Waco, TX, 1997, #436.

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**I Introduction:**

*(Isaiah 14:13-14; Ezekiel 28:16; Isaiah 14:12)*

**II The Definition and Meaning of Sin:**

*“Hamartema – (Romans 3:23)*

*“Parabasis – (1John 3:4; James 2:11).*

**III The Universality of Sin:**

*(Galatians 3:22)*

**IV The Aspects of Sin:**

*A Sin is “transgression – (Joshua 7:11, 15; 1 John 3:4)*

*B Sin is “iniquity” – (Colossians 3:5-9; Mark 7:20).*

*C Sin is “disobedience” – (Ephesians 5:6)*

*D Sin is “missing the mark” – (Romans 3:23)*

*E Sin is “trespassing” – (Ephesians 2:1; Matthew 6:14)*

*F Sin is “ungodliness.” – (Romans 4:5, 5:6)*

*G Sin is “unbelief” – (Mark 9:24; Matthew 13:58).*

**V The Effect of Sin:**

*(John 9:39; Romans 7:19; Ephesians 4:18-19)*

**VI The Unforgivable Sin:**

*(Matthew 12:31-32)*

**VII The Penalty of and Payment for Sin:**

*(Romans 6:23; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Matthew 7:13, 25:46; John 3:18; Hebrews 12:6; 1 John 1:8-10; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 6:23b)*