

## Lesson 22-24 The Doctrine of Sin

*“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”* Romans 5:12, 14

### I. What do we mean by the term “sin”?

Most people do not like to use the term “sin” when talking about certain behavior. They like to use other words that tend to minimize the failure aspect of their lives. They talk about sin issues as sickness. Unfortunately, our ultimate salvation from sin is dependent upon our proper acknowledgement of sin followed by genuine repentance.

A. First, it is important to understand what sin is not.

1. Sin is not an accident. Sin entered the world through a willful act of disobedience (Rom. 5:19).

*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.* Romans 5:19

2. Sin is not weakness of the flesh. Christ Himself shared our weaknesses but He did not sin (Heb. 4:15). He was tired, hungry and vulnerable to grief.

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.* Hebrews 4:15

3. Sin is not a necessity for the believer (Rom. 6:1-23).

*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.* Romans 6:12-14

4. Sin is not excusable (Ezek. 18:4-20).

*The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.* Ezekiel 18:20

Adam and Eve tried to offer an excuse for sin or blame someone else, but God

held all accountable for their own actions.

- a. Man would like to find someone to blame (i.e. parents, teachers, society, etc.).
- b. Man would like to call it “indiscretion” (error in judgment).
- c. Scholars would like to label it “ignorance.”
- d. Others would like to call it “moral weakness.”
- e. No matter what you call it, everyone will have to stand before God and give an account.

B. Second, it is important to see what the various words for sin mean in the Bible. The following are the English equivalents of the original Greek and Hebrew words.

1. To miss the mark (Judg. 20:16).

This is the most common meaning in both the Old and New Testaments (Gen. 4:7; Ex. 9:27; Lev. 5:1; Num. 6:11; Ps. 51:2, 4; Pro. 8:36; Is. 42:24; Hos. 4:7; Rom. 3:23; 5:12). It is most commonly translated “sin.”

*But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; all those who hate me love death.” Proverbs 8:36*

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... Romans 3:23*

2. To be bent, twisted or crooked (Ex. 20:5; Lev. 5:1; Ps. 32:5; Is. 5:18; 53:5-6).

It is usually translated “iniquity.” God made us to function as a “straight stick,” but we have perverted our way and become “twisted” from our God-ordained function.

*I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Psalm 35:5*

3. To have the habit of evil (Job 16:11; 20:29; 34:8; Ps. 82:2; Pro. 16:12; Is. 57:20-21; Mal. 2:6). It is usually translated “wicked” or “wickedness.”

*But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. “There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”*

*Isaiah 57:20-21*

4. To rebel against authority (Ps. 51:3; Pro. 28:2; Is. 1:2; II Th. 2:4,8). It is usually translated “lawlessness.”

*For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be*

*found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge. Psalm 51:3-4*

5. To cross over or go beyond a line (Ps. 17:3; Hos. 6:7; 8:1; Mt. 15:2-3; Rom. 4:15). It is usually translated “transgression.”

*“Set the trumpet to your mouth! He shall come like an eagle against the house of the LORD, because they have transgressed My covenant and rebelled against My law. Hosea 8:1*

6. To wander from the path (Num. 15:22; I Sam. 26:21; Ps. 119:118; Pro. 28:10; Is. 28:7; Ezek. 34:6). It is usually translated “err” or “go astray.”

*Whoever causes the upright to go astray in an evil way, he himself will fall into his own pit; but the blameless will inherit good. Proverbs 28:10*

7. To fall when one should have stood (Mt. 6:14; Rom. 5:15-20; 11:11-12; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:13; Jam. 5:16). It is often translated “offense” or “fault.”

*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.*

Galatians 6:1

*Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

James 5:16

8. To neglect to hear or to disobey (Mt. 18:17; Rom. 5:19; II Cor.10:6; Heb. 2:2-3). It is most often translated “disobedience.”

*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous. Romans 5:19*

9. To be ignorant of what should have been known (Heb. 9:7).

*But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people’s sins committed in ignorance.*

Hebrews 9:7

C. Third, it is important to see the various ways that the Bible defines sin.

1. Proverbs 21:4 - *“A haughty look, a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked are sin.”*

Ultimately nothing that fallen man does is pleasing to the Lord. Our sacrifices must come out of right relationship and humility before the Lord.

2. Proverbs 24:9 - *“The devising of foolishness is sin.”*

We can sin in thought as well as action. We are defiled by our thought-life (Mt. 15:18-19; Pro. 23:7).

3. I John 3:4 - *“Sin is lawlessness.”*

Behind all sins is the sin of idolatry, which reveals man’s ambition to put himself in the place of God and so to be his own Lord.

4. I John 5:17 - *“All unrighteousness is sin.”*

Unrighteousness involves violation of God’s moral law and ethical standards (Rom. 1:18, 24-32; Jam. 2:10).

5. James 4:17 - *“To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

Knowing to do good and not doing it is sin. We are responsible for what we know (Mt. 25:37-45; 23:3-4, 23; Luke 12:47-48).

6. Romans 14:23 - *“Whatever is not from faith is sin.”*

Faith is submission to God’s government, a yielding to His authority and a compliance with His revealed will.

- D. Fourth, it is important to have a clear statement in regard to sin based on the biblical definitions. Martin Luther provides such a definition in his large catechism.

*“Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of any law of God given as a rule to the reasonable creature.”*

## II. Where did sin originate?

- A. Sin entered the universe through Satan (Ezek. 28:11-19; Is. 14:12-17; I John 3:8; John 8:44).

*You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. Ezekiel 28:15*

*He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. I John 3:8a*

1. There was no sin prior to the transgression of Satan.
2. Satan’s sin was the sin of choosing his own will over God’s will--the sin of self-will (Is. 14:13-14).

*For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'* Isaiah 14:13-14

Notice the five "I wills" in the Isaiah passage which correspond to the following:

- Self-ascendancy
- Self-exaltation
- Self-enthronement
- Self-centeredness
- Self-sufficiency

3. Satan's sin was the worst sin ever in that he sinned without a tempter.
4. God had nothing to do with the entrance of sin (Jam. 1:13). God can do nothing that would violate His moral attributes (Tit. 1:2).

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.* James 1:13

- B. Sin entered the human race through Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 5:19; I Tim. 2:14).

*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.* Romans 5:19

### **III. What is the extent of sin?**

#### **SIN HAS AFFECTED THE ENTIRE CREATED UNIVERSE!**

- A. It has affected the heavenly places (Heb. 9:23; Eph. 6:11-12).

*Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.* Hebrews 9:23

*For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.* Ephesians 6:12

- B. It has affected the natural earth (Gen. 3:17-18; Rom. 8:22). The earth was cursed as a result of man's sin.

*For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Romans 8:22*

- C. It has affected the animal kingdom (Gen. 9:2; Is. 11:6-9). Man and animals were in harmony prior to the fall. It was only after the flood that things changed.

*The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.*

- D. It has affected the entire race of mankind.

1. This fact is declared by the Scriptures (Ps. 14:1-3; Rom. 3:23; Gal.3:22).

*But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Galatians 3:22*

*But the Scriptures have declared that we are all prisoners of sin, so the only way to receive God's promise is to believe in Jesus Christ. –NLT*

2. This fact is attested to by the people of the Lord (Job 40:4; Is. 6:5; Luke 5:8).

*“Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” Isaiah 6:5*

3. This fact is testified to by the unsaved. Every man has a witness in his conscience of his own sinful condition (Rom. 2:14-15). They may do different things to deal with the inner feeling, but all sense that it is true.

*...for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them). Romans 2:14-15*

- Seneca declared, “We have all sinned, some more and some less.”
- Ovid wrote, “We all strive for what is forbidden.”
- Goethe confessed, “I see no fault in others which I myself might not have committed.
- A Chinese proverb reads, “There are two good men: one is dead and the other is not yet born.

4. The natural earth itself testifies that something is out of order in the universe (Rom. 8:22).

*“It might seem natural to suppose that every time a man sins that he would know a little more about sin, its nature, and its methods. Actually the exact opposite is true. Every time he sins, he is making himself less and less capable of realizing what sin is, less likely to recognize that he is a sinner. The ugly thing (and this, I feel sure, has never been sufficiently grasped), the really diabolical thing about sin is that it perverts a man’s judgment. It stops him from seeing straight.”--  
James S. Stewart*

#### **IV. What is the penalty for sin? Is it too severe?**

- A. The ultimate penalty for all sin is eternal death (Gen. 2:17; Ezek. 18:4; Mt. 25:46; Rom. 6:23; 5:12).

*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23*

- B. The worst aspect of the penalty is banishment from the presence of the Lord (II Th. 1:7-9; Gen. 3:24; 4:16).

*These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power... II Thessalonians 1:9*

- C. This penalty is just because:
  1. Man’s sin, no matter how great or small, reflects disloyalty and disobedience.
  2. Sin reflects man’s rebellion against God’s authority over him.
  3. Man sinned in full knowledge of the penalty to be incurred.
  4. In man’s sin, the condition of his heart is revealed--ambitious, ungrateful, rebellious and unbelieving.

#### **V. What is the root of sin?**

- A. Self-will (Is. 14:12-14)
- B. Pride (Pro. 16:18)

*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*

C. Covetousness (Rom. 7:7; I Tim. 6:10)

*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

I Timothy 6:10

D. Unbelief (Rom. 11:20; Heb. 3:12, 19; 4:6, 11). The one sin everyone in hell will have in common is “unbelief.”

## VI. What is the process of temptation and sin?

A. Temptation is the act of enticement to do wrong by the promise of short term pleasure or gain.

B. Discovering the origin of temptation will determine the action taken to overcome temptation.

1. We can be tempted or drawn away by our own lusts (Jam. 1:14), in which case we are to exercise self control (Gal. 5:22-23).

*But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:14-15*

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.<sup>24</sup> And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.<sup>25</sup> If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-25*

2. Satan is also referred to as a tempter who entices us to sin (Mt. 4:3; I Th. 3:5), in which case we are to resist the devil, put on the armor of God, and stand strong in the Lord (Eph. 6:14-18; Jam. 4:7; I Pet. 5:9).

3. While God might allow a trial or test, He never tempts anyone to sin (Jam. 1:12-13). The devil and his henchmen are the ones who do the tempting.

C. Understanding the normal process of temptation will help us to be more aware of Satan's devices and, hence, better able to resist (II Cor. 2:11; Jam. 1:14-15).

James describes a seven step process:

1. Tempted.

This refers to a seed planted by the father of lies (John 8:44).

2. Drawn Away by Own Lusts.

The seed cannot conceive unless there is an egg with which to unite (Mt. 5:27-28).

3. Enticed.

This refers to the attraction of the two previous steps. To be enticed is “to be drawn on by exciting hope and desire.”

4. Conception.

This is the joining of the seed and the egg to begin the germinating process (Job 15:35; Acts 5:4).

*They conceive trouble and bring forth futility; their womb prepares deceit.”*

Job 15:35

*They conceive trouble and evil, and their hearts give birth only to deceit.”*

–NLT

*While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” Acts 5:4*

5. Formation.

This is the time before the eventual bringing forth when one is dwelling on it, mulling it over in the mind and fantasizing about it. Its essence is a time of feeding the conceived idea so that it grows stronger.

6. Birth/Bringing Forth.

This is the outward manifestation of that which to this point has only been inward (Ps. 7:14).

*Behold, the wicked brings forth iniquity; yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood. Psalm 7:14*

7. Death.

This is the final outcome of all temptation (Pro. 16:25). All sin leads to tragic consequences.

*There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*

- D. Overcoming temptation is a personal responsibility for every believer (Rom. 6:12-14).

*Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts.<sup>13</sup> And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.* Romans 6:12-14

1. Build a strong spiritual life through prayer and involvement with other mature believers (Eph. 6:10-18; I Cor. 15:33).

*Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."* I Corinthians 15:33

2. Avoid harmful influences including questionable entertainment, television and other amusements that will arouse improper desires (I John 2:15-17).

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.<sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.<sup>17</sup> And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

3. Know the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit and stand on its declarations (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12).
4. Flee from temptation (II Tim. 2:22). Never take for granted your ability to resist. Pride always comes before a fall (Pro. 16:18; I Cor. 10:12-13).

*Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.* II Timothy 2:22

*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

I Corinthians 10:12-13

5. Resist the devil and submit to God (Jam. 4:7). The more one resists temptation the stronger one becomes, the more one yields to temptation the weaker one becomes in relation to it (Rom. 6:11-14).

## **VII. What is the remedy for sin?**

- A. The only remedy for sin is the application of the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ that was accomplished at Calvary (See the Doctrine of Jesus Christ).
- B. The only remedy for sin in man is to exercise faith (the opposite of unbelief) in the redemptive work of Christ (Heb. 11:6).

- 1. I must conform my will to His will (Mt. 16:24-25; Rom. 12:1-2).

*Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*

Matthew 16:24-25

- 2. I must humble myself and acknowledge His lordship, submitting to God-ordained authority in my life (Luke 14:11; Mt. 18:4; I Pet. 5:5-6).

*... and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." <sup>6</sup>Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, <sup>7</sup> casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. <sup>8</sup>Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. I Peter 5:5-8*

- 3. I must seek first the Kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33).
- 4. I must be born again (John 3:3-5).