

## Doctrine of Sin

The God of the Bible by his very nature is good, perfect, and holy. God created man, the pinnacle of all creation, in his own image and endowed him with freedom for service and fellowship. God was perfectly pleased with his human creation and Adam and Eve enjoyed untainted fellowship and communion with God prior to the fall (Gen.1, 2). God originally created man good and innocent and gave him the moral capacity to choose to do good or evil. Man chose evil (Gen. 3) and sin was introduced into God's good creation. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherited a nature inclined to sin (Rom.5:12-14). When Adam sinned something was taken away from him, his body and soul became corrupt and he began to move toward death. Sin was and is an unnatural and unwelcomed intruder into human existence.

The Bible uses several words to describe sin, for example sin is portrayed as: depravity/corruption (John 17:15, Acts 17:5), guilt (Lev. 4, 1Cor.11:27), godlessness (Rom.4:5), ignorance (Eph.4:18), lawlessness (Rom. 2:12, Heb.10:17), and missing the mark (Jud. 20:16, Mk.3:23). Sin can be either large or small but all sin is a rebellion against God (Isa.1:2, John 3:36). Sin is defined as any act or disposition that displeases God and deserves blame. It is the commission of ungodly acts (thoughts, desires, emotions, words, deeds) and the omission or neglect of righteous acts. The Bible is explicit that sin is universal; no one is innocent and no one is righteous (1Kings 8:46; Psa.143; Rom.3) all of mankind is corrupt (Psa. 51:1-4) and under sin (Gal. 3:22).

Scripture indicates that serious effects are attached to both our sinful condition and the actual sins we commit. Sin has an adverse effect on three different levels: the effect of sin on our relationship to God, the effect of sin on our relationship to others, and the effect of sin on the sinner. First, in regards to his relationship with God, sin brings the wrath of God upon the sinner. God hates sin (Hos.9:15, Jer.12:8) which merits his anger and displeasure (Rom.1:18). Sin produces enmity (Gen.3:7) which results in alienation (Eph 4:18) and hostility (Rom.8:7) whereby sinful man becomes an enemy of God (James4:4). The sinner is in a state of guilt (Ezek.18:20) as a result of violating God's commands and is subject to God's punishment (Heb.10:31). Death is the ultimate consequence of sin (Gen.2:17; Rom.6:23). Sin brings physical death (1Cor.55-56), spiritual death (Eph.2:1-3), and final death when man is eternally separated from God (Matt.25:34-40) and the unregenerate sinner is cast into hell for eternity (Rev.20:14-15). Second, in regards to his relationship to others, sin ushers in alienation from others, disharmony, envy, inability to empathize, rejection of authority, and an inability to love selflessly. Lastly, the effect of sin on the sinner brings bondage (Rom.6:17, John8:34), restlessness, denial, self-centeredness, and delusion (Rom.1:21-22).

The Scriptures clearly teach the universality of sin and death. All have sinned and fall short of God's glory (Rom.3:23) and as a result of that sin all experience death (Rom.5:17; 1Cor.15:21-22). Scripture demonstrates that there is something absent, something missing in the human's nature resulting in an inherent sinfulness and guilt which originated with Adam and has been passed down naturally to all of his progeny (Rom.5:12-14). Because all humanity was present with Adam, his actions were also the actions of the entire human race. Adam's sin, guilt, corruption, and death are imputed to us immediately upon conception, and as a result of that transgression mankind possesses a nature that is destitute of love to God and is prone to

evil. Therefore sin is inevitable. Man does not possess a sinful nature but rather a corrupt human nature. Salvation involves the transformation and healing of that corruption which will continually take place throughout the believer's life. Although justified, the believer will always do battle with sin due to his corrupt nature.

Natural headship raises the question of the status of children who die in infancy as well as the mentally challenged who never obtain a moral consciousness of their relationship to God. Are they guilty of original sin? All children are born in sin, are corrupt by nature, and therefore are children of wrath (Eph.2:3) in need of atonement. However, there are numerous passages in the Bible that refer to relative innocence or the age of accountability (Nu.14:29-31; Deut.1:39) whereby children are considered not guilty due to their inability to recognize evil and choose not to do it. Scripture affirms infant salvation by divine justice and mercy (2 Sam 12:23) and teaches that God will grant them the benefits of atonement due to their lack of knowledge. God judges based upon a person's ability to respond to his son. An infant or mentally challenged person does not have this ability to choose to trust in Christ and are therefore shown divine mercy.

Sin is contrary to the will of God and its presence signifies an invasion of the highest order. Sin is parasitic, a cancer that needs removal. It is universal but it is not normal, it is not the way it should be. We must remain vigilant to the presence and power of sin as well as its devastating impact upon human beings. The reality of our depravity should foster a desperate dependence upon God to intervene graciously in the midst of our polluted existence. Believers must strive to live a life of faithfulness, acknowledging our sinfulness, practicing repentance, and calling upon the Lord's salvation. Christians should be ever mindful that the goal of our

existence is to be transformed into the image of Christ (Roam.8:29). The will of God is for our identities to be transformed from sinner to saint.