



Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

TOPIC 5 – THE DOCTRINE OF SIN
LESSON 90 – INTRODUCTION

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BIBLICAL DOCTRINE – JOHN MACARTHUR, PGS. 451-482
SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY – WAYNE GRUDEM, PGS. 490-514

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Sin Denied

- ▶ The universal sinfulness of man is obvious and verifiable. Throughout history, societies have consistently acknowledged man's natural sinfulness. Since the Enlightenment, however, Western civilization has become increasingly antagonistic to the reality of sin, especially as it is defined biblically. There are four main reasons for this change:
- ▶ 1. The modern viewpoint is that man is basically good. Human problems then are linked with ignorance, and education, not salvation, is the cure.
- ▶ 2. People are viewed as products of their environment, social upbringing, or psychological drives or deprivations. No one is held morally responsible for their own actions.
- ▶ 3. Moral relativism teaches that there is no right or wrong, good or evil, and that what is true for one may not be true for another.
- ▶ 4. In this age of self-esteem people do not like to think of themselves as evil.

Sin Defined

- ▶ Of the Bible's 66 books (1,189 chapters), only 2 chapters do not mention sin or sinners – Genesis 1 & 2.
- ▶ The study of sin is called "*hamartiology*." The Greek word *hamartia* means "sin."
- ▶ Other words in the Scripture that refer to sin refer to missing the mark, to be in error, to rebel, disobey, trespass, or betray.
- ▶ This is not an exhaustive list, but represents the biblical terms used to demonstrate the multidimensional nature of sin.
- ▶ Augustine taught that pride was at the root of all sin, because it is the motive behind man's attempt to live his life in the power of self.

Sin Defined

- ▶ At its core, sin is a violation of the Creator-creature relationship that we have with God. Man only exists because God made him, and man is in every sense obligated to serve his Creator. Sin causes man to assume the role of God and to assert autonomy for himself apart from the Creator. (MacArthur, pg. 453)
- ▶ Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature. (Grudem, pg. 490).
- ▶ The essence of the first sin of man lay in the fact that Adam placed himself in opposition to God, that he refused to subject his will to the will of God, to have God determine the course of his life; and that he actively attempted to take the matter out of God's hand, and to determine the future for himself. (Berkhof, pg. 206).
- ▶ The progression of sin given to us in Romans 1-3 begins with pride, followed by idolatry (exchanging the worship of God for the worship of creatures (ourselves being creatures)).

Sin Defined

- ▶ Sin is any lack of conformity to God's will in attitude, thought, or action, whether committed actively or passively. The center of all sin is autonomy, which is the replacing of God with self. Always closely associated with sin are its products – pride, selfishness, idolatry, and the lack of peace with God and others as a result. (MacArthur, pg. 454).
- ▶ The Puritan Catechism (compiled by Charles Spurgeon):
 - Q. What is sin?
 - A. Sin is any want of conformity to, or transgression of the law of God.
 - 1 Jn. 3:4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.
- ▶ Sin is to be (by nature), think, or act in a manner contrary to the Law of God.
- ▶ God's Law is based on His nature, so to act contrary to His Law is to act contrary to His nature, contrary to who He is.
- ▶ Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

Sin and the Law

- ▶ Paul demonstrates the universal sinfulness of mankind by appealing to the Law of God, whether the written law given to the Jews (Rom. 2:17-29), or the unwritten law that operates in the consciences of Gentiles, who by their behavior, “show that what the law requires is written on their hearts (Rom. 2:15).
- ▶ Romans 2:12 For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law 13 (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; 14 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, 15 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) 16 in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

Sin and the Law

- ▶ Romans 2:17 Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, 18 and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. 21 You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say, “Do not commit adultery,” do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? 24 For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” as it is written.

Sin's Relationship to Other Doctrines

- ▶ The Doctrine of God – the doctrine of sin is linked to God since sin is against God (Psa. 51:4) and a violation of His law, which is a self-revelation of His character and nature.
- ▶ The Doctrine of Man – the doctrine of sin directly defines mankind as fallen and affects everyone since sin defines every life, corrupting everyone's relationship with God from conception and birth, and brings all to death. Sin impacts our entire human constitution and existence, distorting every aspect of our being, and affecting our ability to fully rule and subdue creation.
- ▶ The Doctrine of Salvation – sinners need to be rescued but are unable to rescue themselves because they are profoundly and pervasively sinful.
- ▶ The Doctrine of Christ – Jesus is the last Adam, the suffering servant, the Messiah, the Seed of woman who conquers sin and all its forms and effects, redeeming believers and restoring creation by His defeat of sin.

Sin's Relationship to Other Doctrines

- ▶ The Doctrine of Angels – both Satan and all the fallen angels sinned against God and were removed from His presence in heaven. No salvation is provided for Satan or the demons who followed him. Holy angels are ministering spirits who serve people who have inherited salvation (Heb. 1:14).
- ▶ The Doctrine of the Church – the church is a community of people saved from sin and serves as the global ambassadors for proclaiming reconciliation for sinners with God through Christ.
- ▶ The Doctrine of Eschatology – the fallen world is dominated by sin and its effects. Through the Second Coming of Christ, Satan and his demons will be bound and ultimately thrown into the Lake of Fire, and sin and its effects will be reversed and removed from creation with the coming of the new heavens and earth.

Next Week

- ▶ Lesson 91 – The Origin of Sin