

The Biblical Doctrine of Sin, *with some observations concerning moralism.*

Sin is transgression of God's law: it is hatred and enmity toward God.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (1 Jn. 3:4).

Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Rom. 8:7).

Every human is a sinner.

What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one (Rom. 3:9-12).

What *is* man, that he should be clean? and *he which is* born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. How much more abominable and filthy *is* man, which drinketh iniquity like water? (Job 15:14-16).

Man's depravity is total in its extent: sin lies in the heart of man and touches everything he is and does.

And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:20-23).

And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually (Gen. 6:5)

And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins . . . (Eph. 2:1).

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).

And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved (John 3:19-20).

An high look, and a proud heart, *and* the plowing of the wicked, *is* sin (Prov. 21:5).

Sin is congenital. Man is a sinner from the womb.

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me (Ps. 51:5).

The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies (Ps. 58:3).

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:6).

Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others (Eph. 2:3).

Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him (Prov. 22:15).

Sin contaminates even the good works of the regenerate.

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin (Rom. 7:14-25).

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).

Sin is deceitful.

The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jer. 17:9).

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:12-13).

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death (Prov. 16:25).

He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered (Prov. 28:26).

For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me* (Rom. 7:11).

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts . . . (Eph. 4:22).

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another (Titus 3:3).

God is angry with sin and with sinners.

God *is* jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and *is* furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth *wrath* for his enemies (Nah. 1:2).

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36).

For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man (Ps. 5:4-6).

The regenerate still sin and are in need of daily forgiveness.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors (Matt. 6:12).

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us (1 Jn. 1:8).

The sins of believers grieve the heart of God.

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30).

Externals will not change a sinful heart.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (Gal. 6:15).

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh (Col. 2:23).¹

The only remedy for sin, for its guilt and its pollution, is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:9-10).

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal. 6:14).

Some Applications with Respect to Moralism

- Moralism is any ethical system that substitutes human rules for God's law and external remedies for God's grace.
- Moralism is sin: it is self-righteousness, spiritual pride, and spiritual tyranny; it is a rejection of the biblical doctrine of sin and of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Moralism is deceitful: it pretends to be holiness and Spirituality; it is actually the religion of the flesh.
- Moralism produces open rebellion in those who do not conform to its requirements or, in those who do, secret wickedness sugared over with the appearance of righteousness.
- Moralism can provide a hiding place for very wicked men practicing very wicked things.
- Those who have been duped by moralism are usually shocked, even traumatized, when their leaders turn out to be corrupt men practicing corrupt things.
- Those who flee one system of moralism will inevitably seek refuge in another until they repent of their moralism.

¹ These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh (NKJV).