

HAMARTIOLOGY (16)

There are certain things that will not only bring the condemnation of God, but also the condemnation of society (i.e. **I Peter 4:15**).

Both of these factors clearly establish that sin may be greater or lesser. Condemnation for murder is much greater than condemnation for speeding. God-ordained government determines this to a great degree; however, God's Word also sets forth the same principle (**I Corinthians 6:18**). It is also clear from the Word that self-judgment and discipline are keys to keep from moving into the "greater" sin areas (**I Corinthians 11:31**). In some areas, at some time, every believer will fail, which is precisely why God gave the provision of **I John 1:9**. However, **a central key to keeping sin from escalating to a greater level is immediate self-judgment and confession**. Without an honest self-analysis, one's lesser sin has the potential to become a greater sin.

Sin Area #7 - Personal sin as it relates to one's spiritual condition:

(Spiritual Condition #1) - Sin may be committed by an unbeliever.

1. The unbeliever may be a heathen. **Romans 1:21-22**
2. The unbeliever may be moral. **Romans 2:1-16**
3. The unbeliever may be religious. **Romans 2:17-29**

(Spiritual Condition #2) - Sin may be committed by a believer.

1. The believer may be spiritual / mature. **I Corinthians 2:15; Hebrews 5:14**
2. The believer may be carnal / fleshly. **I Corinthians 3:1**
3. The believer may be a babe / new believer. **I Corinthians 3:1; Hebrews 5:13**

Sin Area #8 - Personal sin as it relates to judgment:

(Sin Judgment #1) - Personal sin may be judged in this life. **I Corinthians 11:29-32**

(Sin Judgment #2) - Personal sin, if not faced, will be judged in eternity. **II Corinthians 5:10**

It should be observed that the primary focus of God's judgment in this life is specifically aimed at the believer. When God judges a believer in this life it is actually a proof of sonship (**Hebrews 12:5-11**).

Sin Area #9 - Personal sin as it relates to God's forgiveness.

(Relational Way #1) - Sin may be unforgiven.

If sin is not faced and dealt with in the prescribed manner of the Word of God, God will not just overlook it and it will not be forgiven.

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(Relational Way #2 - Sin may be forgiven .

There are two key theological areas that must be understood concerning forgiveness of sin:

Area #1 - Forgiveness as it relates to the unbeliever .

The unbeliever will only find forgiveness of sin in Jesus Christ (**Colossians 1: 13, 14**). In other words, the unbeliever will never be freed from sin or guilt by confession or sorrow or remorse or tears. The only way sin and guilt will be removed is by inviting Jesus Christ into one's life. Jesus Christ is the righteousness of God and the forgiveness of God; and without Him in a person's life, no matter what a person does or how emotional one may be, there is no forgiveness.

Area #2 - Forgiveness as it relates to the believer .

The believer is altogether in a different relationship with God. When the believer sins, the only place to find forgiveness is by confession (**I John 1:9**). **Confession of sin for the believer is not for the purpose of restoring salvation; it is for the purpose of restoring fellowship with God.** God cannot have intimate fellowship with a believer when sin is a barrier; so confession is God's prescribed method of maintaining intimate fellowship with God in the aftermath of sin.

QUESTION #11 – In what ways are all people sinners?

This matter is extremely important because it clearly establishes the depraved and damnable position all people are actually in prior to having faith in Jesus Christ. There are three ways that people are sinners:

Way #1 - People are sinners by nature . **Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:3**

Every parent - both father and mother - passes their sin nature to their children. Every child inherits a sin nature from mom and dad, and this sin problem may be traced clear back to Eden (See also **Genesis 8:21; I Corinthians 7:14.**)

Way #2 - People are sinners by practice . **Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23**

Practically speaking, every human being has personally and practically sinned. Every person has "gone astray" from the true pure ways of God. This has happened at various times in a person's life. It is this very point that enables God to honestly and accurately say, "They have all turned aside" (**Psalm 14:2-3**).

Way #3 - People are sinners by imputation . **Romans 5:12-21**

What this means is that God has judicially declared and decreed and calculated that all people are sinful in the sin of Adam.

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This is one of the most important doctrines in the entire Bible, for it clearly establishes that man, in and of himself, cannot ever be right with God because of God's judicial decree. No human would ever have a chance of spending eternity with the Holy God, because God has decreed that every human is a sinner in Adam. Although the depths of this subject will be examined under the heading of Soteriology - The Doctrine of Salvation - it is important to come to terms with an important theological concept called imputation.

The word "impute" literally refers to a judicial, mental, calculation. It is the idea of making a judicial and mental calculation in regard to a person. This is a legal term - that of a judge judicially declaring a judgment concerning someone.

An excellent illustration of imputation is found in **Philemon 1:18**. Here the imputation is seen in that Paul asks Philemon to judicially calculate the wrong previously done by Onesimus and to put that wrong to his account. This could only be done by judicial, mental calculation.

In the Bible there are three major imputations:

(Imputation #1) - Adam's sin is imputed to all men. **Romans 5:12**

According to the judicial calculation of God, we have all sinned in Adam.

(Imputation #2) - Our sin is imputed to Jesus Christ. **Isaiah 53:5-6; II Corinthians 5:21 Galatians 3:13; I Peter 2:24**

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, God the Father judicially decreed that He died for the sins of the world. It is this judicial calculation that makes people in the world savable.

(Imputation #3) - Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer. **Romans 3:25-26; 4:5 / 5:16-19; II Corinthians 5:21**

At the moment a person believes on Jesus Christ, God judicially calculates that this one is His child and considers the righteousness of His own Son to be the righteousness of the one who believes. Once this imputation or judicial decree is made by the mind of God, it cannot ever be undone.

This doctrine of imputed sin is very important to the subjects of guilt, death, and justification. In other words, imputed sin establishes universal guilt. Imputed sin explains individual death. Imputed sin makes possible personal justification.

Although people are sinners by nature and by practice, the one that has the most profound theological significance to salvation is the truth that all people are sinners by imputation.

What this very personally and practically means is that all people have been judicially declared and decreed by God to be sinners, and they have been charged by the judicial calculation of God with the sin and guilt of Adam. It makes no difference how good a person may think he is; he has been declared a sinner in Adam, and it is this critical imputation that makes it potentially possible to be declared righteous in Jesus Christ.