

DOCTRINE OF SIN

1. DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION:

A. **Sin** is defined as the following:

- (1) “**Lawlessness, the** transgression of the law (or standard of God). (1 John 3:4)
- (2) “**All unrighteousness.**” (1 John 5:17)
- (3) Committing “...*any of the commands of the Lord which are not to be done.*” (Levit. 4:2, 13, 22, 27)
- (4) “*Whatever is not from faith...*” (Rom. 14:23b)
- (5) **A right or good thing** to do which is known and is **not done**, sometimes called a “sin of omission.” (James 4:17)

B. A **known sin** is any transgression or violation of God’s law involving human cognizance, a “sin of cognizance.” (Levit. 4:28; 1 John 1:9a; Example: Adam’s disobedience - Rom. 5:12, 14-18 with Gen. 2:17; 3:6, 11)

C. An **unknown sin** is any transgression or violation of God’s law in which the act is committed in ignorance of God’s law, a “sin of ignorance.” (1 John 1:9b, “all unrighteousness:” 1 Tim. 2:14, with Gen. 3:13)

- (1) Because of free will, volitional involvement, ignorance is no excuse for committing a sin or sins.
- (2) **PRINCIPLE:** Ignorance is no excuse for violating of the law of God.

D. The word **sin**, found in the singular, is also used in the Bible to describe **the nature or principle (or law) of sin**, (Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 8:2; 7:14, 20, 23, 25)

- (1) This “**sin**” nature or principle is sometimes called our “**old sin nature**” (OSN) from the “**old man**” of Rom. 6:6a, from the “**sin**” of Rom. 7:17, and from **the “nature”** of Eph. 2:3. **SEE:** Doctrine of the Old Sin Nature
- (2) The apostle Paul speaks of this “**sin**” nature, OSN, in the following ways:
 - (a) As **indwelling** us. (Rom. 7:17, 20)
 - (b) As being “**in the members**” of our bodies and waging war against the principle (or law) of our minds. (Rom. 7:23; 6:13)
 - (c) As “**the body of this death.**” (Rom. 7:24)
 - (d) As “**our body of sin.**” (Rom. 6:6b)
 - (e) As “**reigning**” (or ruling) **in our mortal bodies.** (Rom. 6:12; 13)
 - (f) As “**our old man.**” (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9)
 - (g) As being “**in the flesh.**” (Rom. 7:5; cf. Rom. 8:6, 7)
 - (h) As being “**fleshly (or carnal), sold under bondage to sin.**” (Rom. 7:14 with 1 Cor. 3:1, 3)
 - (i) As “**the flesh.**” (Eph. 2:3; Gal. 5:17)

- (3) This “**sin**”, that is our OSN, produces all of our personal sins. (Rom. 7:20b)
Every member of the human race possess an OSN:
- (a) The “**natural man**” - ψυχικός - psuchikos - (Greek adj.) - “**soulish man**,” the unbeliever. (1 Cor. 2:14)
 - (b) The “**carnal man**” - σάρκικος - sarkikos - (Greek adj.) - “**fleshly man**,” the sinning believer who is out of fellowship. (1 Cor. 3:1, 3)
 - (c) The “**spiritual man**” - πνευματικός - pneumatikos - (Greek adj.) - “**spiritual man**,” the believer under the control of the Holy Spirit, who is not dominated by his OSN. (1 Cor. 2:15)

E. The word **sin**, found in the singular, is also used in the Bible to describe **Adam’s original sin** (AOS). (Rom. 5:12, 15, 17a, 19a with Rom. 3:23a)

- (1) This **sin by Adam** in the Garden of Eden is the first **deliberate** sin in the Entire human race. (Rom. 5:12a) Although the woman sinned first, she sinned **in ignorance**, being quite deceived. (1 Tim. 2:14)
- (2) Therefore, **AOS** became the **basis of God’s condemnation** of the entire human race because **Adam**, and not the woman, was **the federal head** of the race. (Rom. 5:12b, 15, 17, 18a; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22; Gal. 3:22) This condemnation and subsequent fallen sinful nature is called theologically the “**total depravity of man.**”
- (3) This sin, AOS, is also the basis of our fallen sinful nature, sometimes called the “old sin nature,” OSN. (Rom. 5:12b)

2. VOCABULARY:

- A. חֵטִי' - CHETE' - (Heb. n.) - sin, fault (Levit. 19:17), a known or unknown sin.
- B. חָטָא' - CHATA' - (Heb. verb) - to miss the mark, to sin (Gen. 20:6, 9)
- C. שְׂגִי'אָה - SHeGI'AH - (Heb. n.) - a transgression, as a sin of ignorance; a sin committed through inadvertence and error (Psa. 19:13).
- D. פְּשָׁע - PESHA' - (Heb. n.) - a fault, a transgression, a trespass (Gen. 31:36).
It appears to be stronger than חַטָּאת - CHAT'AT - (Hb.) “rebellion” in Job 34:37.
- E. עֲוֹן - 'AON - (Heb. n.) - iniquity, perversity, sin, a crime, the guilt or penalty of a sin (Gen. 4:13; Ex. 20:5)
- F. ἁμαρτία - hamartia - (Gk. n.) - sin (1 John 1:9); a body ruled by sin (Rom. 6:6)

G ἁμαρτάνω - hamartano - (Gk. verb) to miss the mark, to sin (1 Cor. 7:28;
1 John 5:16)

H. ἀδικία - adikia - (Gk. n.) - unrighteousness, “unknown sins” (1 John 1:9);
wrongdoing, wickedness (1 John 5:17)

I. παράβασις - parabasis - (Gk. n.) - transgression, overstepping, violation
(Rom. 5:14)

3. CLASSIFICATION OF SINS:

A. **Imputed Sin**, or the *penalty of sin* - is Adam’s original sin, AOS, (Rom. 5:18a) imputed or attributed to each member of the human race at the point of physical birth, instantaneously. Men are said to be “**sinner by birth.**”

- (1) Therefore, while we are born physically alive, we are born spiritually dead because of Adam’s sin. (Rom. 5:12, 15, 18)
- (2) The human race was counted guilty when Adam sinned knowingly.
(Gen. 3:6, 13; 1 Cor. 15:21a, 22a; Rom. 3:23a)
- (3) Man is basically sinful and evil because he is born that way. (Psa. 51:5; 58:3)

B. **Inherent Sin**, or the *power of sin* - is the fallen or corrupted nature produced in Adam when he first sinned. AOS therefore produced a condition of sinfulness, a sinful trend or a sinful nature, a “new sin nature” (NSN). Men are said to be “**sinner by nature.**”

- (1) God permitted this condition to become a **permanent part** of Adam’s human nature, probably in his **genetic code**.
- (2) This sinful nature is apparently transmitted through the male to all future generations, except the Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom. 5:12; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15)
- (3) This sinful nature **transmitted by procreation**, which we call the “old sin nature” (OSN), **produces personal sins and evil** in our life (Rom. 7:20).

C. **Personal Sin or Sins**, or the *presence of sin* - are the transgressions, violations, and omissions of the divine laws, which we do throughout our lives. Men are said to be “**sinner by choice.**”

- (1) Personal sins are a manifestation and result of each of us **having an OSN** and **obeying its lusts** by choice, free will. (Eph. 2:1-3; James 1:14, 15; Psa. 14:3; 53:1; 143:2; Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:10-12)
- (2) There are three **categories of personal sins**:
 - (a) **Mental attitude sins** (MAS) - (Matt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21)
 - (b) **Sins of the tongue** (SOT) - (Matt. 12:34-37; 15:18; Mk. 7:20, 23)
 - (c) **Overt sins** (OS) - (1 Cor. 6:18; 1 Tim. 5:24)

4. THE PROBLEM OF PERSONAL SINS:

- A. **All personal sins** of the human race, **including AOS** and the first **sin of the woman** in the Garden of Eden, **were judged and paid for** “*once and for all* (time)” on the cross of calvary by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matt 1:21; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 3:13, 14; Heb. 9:28; Heb. 10:10, 12, 14; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 2:2; 3:5; 4:10) Jesus “*died for all* (people)”. (2 Cor. 5:15; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 John 2:2)
- B. Anyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is said to be **saved** (Acts 16:31), is **redeemed** (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13, 14), and is **forgiven** of all his or her sins (Col. 2:13).

5. THE PROBLEM OF INHERENT SIN:

- A. As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ we can and do still sin (1 John 1:10) because we still have an OSN, Inherent Sin. (1 John 1:8; Rom. 7:20).
- B. However, “*...if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;*” (1 John 2:1) whose “*blood cleanses us from all sin.*” (1 John 1:7)
- C. As believers, “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” (1 John 1:9; 1 Cor. 11:31)
- D. Such **confession of sin** is also described by the following:
- (1) “**Putting aside** all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness...” (James 2:21 with Col. 3:8)
 - (2) “*...and lay aside every encumbrance and **the sin** which so easily entangles us,...*” (Heb. 12:1 with Eph. 4:25)
 - (3) “**I acknowledge my sin to Thee, and my iniquity I do not hide; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’; and thou didst not forgive the guilt of my sin.**” (Psa. 32:5 with Psa. 51:3, 4; Prov. 28:13; Levit. 5:5; Num. 5:6, 7)
- E. As believers we should not let “*sin,*” the OSN, continually rule in our bodies or obey its lusts (Rom. 5:12-14) because “*our old man,*” the OSN, “*was crucified with Him, that our **body of sin,** the OSN, might be rendered powerless, that we should no longer be slaves to **sin,** the OSN;*” (Rom. 6:6, 12; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9)

6. SIN LISTS FOUND IN THE BIBLE:

- A. The **Ten Commandments:** (Ex. 20:3-17; Deut. 5:7-21)
- B. Things which **the Lord hates:** (Prov. 6:16-19; 26:25-28)

C. Sin lists of Paul: (Rom. 1:22-32; 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 6:8-10; Eph. 5:3-7; Col. 3:5-9; Gal. 5:15-21; 1 Tim. 1:9-10; 2 Tim. 3:1-6)

7. THERE IS A SIN UNTO DEATH:

A. This sin, found but not explained in I John 5:16, is most probably the last sin that God permits an unrepentant carnal believer to commit before he is removed from this life. (1 Cor. 5:5; 11:30)

B. This is God's maximum discipline for a perpetually carnal believer. (1 Sam. 28:16-19; Psa. 118:17, 18; Jer. 9:16; 44:12)

8. THERE IS AN UNPARDONABLE SIN:

A. This sin, found but not explained in Matt. 12:31, 32, is called "*blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.*"

(1) Many theologians believe that this sin could only be committed during Christ's lifetime by those who rejected the Holy Spirit as the one performing miracles through Jesus Christ. (Matt. 12:24-30; Luke 12:10)

(2) Those who rejected the Spirit of God in Jesus before the cross of calvary and Pentecost would never find anyone else who could provide their salvation.

B. Others see this sin as simply the rejection of the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit.

(1) Jesus said that "*He (the Holy Spirit), when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin ... because they do not believe in Me.*" (John 16:8-9)

(2) Therefore, the only **unpardonable sin** is that of **unbelief** in the Lord Jesus Christ, because the Holy Spirit bears witness of Him. (John 15:26)

9. THERE IS NATIONAL SIN:

A. When a maximum number of citizens within a city or a national entity commit the same sin or sins of a related nature, which are particularly odious to God, that city or nation is spoken of as having **national sin**. (Gen. 18:20; I Kings 8:33, 34; 14:16; Isa. 1:4; 3:8, 9; Prov. 14:34; Ezek. 2;3; Amos 9:8; Rev. 18:4, 5)

B. God judges the sins of any nation. (Gen. 19:15; Levit. 26:18, 21, 24, 28; Jer. 5:9, 25, 29)

10. THERE IS WORLDWIDE SIN:

A. When a maximum number of people in the whole world are in sin and when wickedness dominates the whole world, God says "*The earth reels to and fro like a drunkard....for its transgression is heavy on it,...*"

(Isa. 24:20; cf. Gen. 6:5; Gen. 6:11,12; Rev. 18:3-5)

B. God judges the whole world. (Gen. 6:13; Isa. 24:1-6, 21b; Rev. 19:15)

11. SIN IS PART OF EVIL:

- A. The term *evil* is used to describe the **antagonistic genius thinking** of Satan, the Devil, resulting from his sin of pride and his rebellion against God.
(1 John 2:13; 5:18, 19; cf. Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:14) SEE: Doctrine of Evil.
- B. **Evil** is used as a **synonym for the manifestations** of the OSN in Rom. 7:19, 21.
- C. **Evil** therefore includes **personal sins**, which are transgressions of God's law (I John 3:4), and **human works**, which exclude faith and God's grace.
(Rom. 8:8; Rom. 11:6; 1 John 3:12; Gal. 3:1-3; cf. Isa. 64:6)
- (2) All **personal sins** were all **judged on the cross**. (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 2:24)
- (3) **Evil deeds** other than personal sins will be **judged at the judgement seat of Christ**. (2 Cor. 5:10)