

V. The Doctrine of Sin

A. The Introduction of Sin into the World

1. **Man was created with freedom of choice**

- * If God created a perfect world, how did sin originate?
- * As we noted earlier, man was originally created in God's image.
- * This included the fact that he was a rational creature with the freedom of choice.
- * Man was originally in a condition of true holiness, which allowed him unhindered access to God and a propensity to choose that which was good.

- * But for such freedom to be truly "free," meant that man was also given the choice to disobey and do evil.
- * The same moral freedom that enabled man to choose to serve God also enabled him to choose to serve himself.

Discussion

- * Why didn't God just create man without the ability to sin? Then they could enjoy unbroken communion with God forever.
- * To do that would miss the point of man being in God's image, which includes the freedom to willingly love and serve God.
- * Man would have simply been robots, and that's no kind of love relationship.
 - * What if Cheryl was a computer that I simply programmed to love me.
 - * We can programme our computers to work, and do all of the right things, and even "talk," but that does not mean that we have meaningful relationships with them.
- * God knew what would happen and still thought it was worth the risk.

2. **Man chose to abuse his freedom and sin**

- * *The biblical account of the fall is found in Gen. 3.*
- * The serpent tempted Adam and Eve to sin (3:1-5)
- * They knew the rules, yet they gave in to the desire--the pleasure to be obtained from eating the fruit.
- * Adam and Eve made a choice to abuse their freedom.
- * They chose to yield to desire and eat the forbidden fruit
 - * I am convinced that this fruit must have been Durian!
- * Sin came about as the result of the abuse of this freedom.
- * Neither God nor Satan "created" evil, since evil is not a thing of substance which can be created.
- * Rather, evil is a relationship that is entered into by those who freely choose to oppose the righteous commands of God and choose instead to follow their own ways.

3. **The immediate result of their sin (3:7-10)**

a. **They learned the difference between good and evil.**

- * They recognized their sin and they felt shame and guilt.
- * For the first time they felt shame at their nakedness.
- * They sewed fig leaves together & made coverings for themselves.

- * Yes, they knew know more, but they didn't like it.

b. They had broken fellowship with God.

- * Sin has separated them from God.
- * In their guilt, they tried to hide from God when he came to them.
- * Principle: Spiritual guilt separates us from God.

c. They were punished for their sin (3:14-24).

- * The serpent was cursed above all animals
 - * When he crawls on his belly he will eat dust--all his life.
 - * There will be enmity between man and the serpent.
 - * He will ultimately be destroyed by the seed of the woman.
- * Eve was cursed with pain in childbirth.
 - * "You shall desire your husband..." is a sexual statement.
 - * Even though you will now have pain in childbearing, you will still continue having sexual relations.
- * Adam must work hard to survive.
 - * He will have hindrances in his work and will face physical death.
 - * Adam and Eve have to leave the garden.

- * *Life in the world as we know it (the real world) begins.*

4. The ultimate consequences of their sin

a. Universal depravity of mankind.

- * Through Adam, sin entered the entire human race.
- * Some question why Scripture places the blame on Adam, when Eve was the first to give in.
 - * God had given the prohibition to Adam, before Eve was created.
 - * In making her decision, Eve had 2 sets of data to choose from: one report from Adam, and another from Satan.
 - * Eve rejected Adam's information to follow Satan.
 - * In making his decision, Adam also had 2 sets of data: God's and Satan's. Adam rejected God to follow Satan.
- * So the NT teaches us that because of Adam's sin we too are all sinners.
 - * Rom. 5:12-19: "Sin to all from one man..." and Jn. 2:16
- * Adam, as the head of the race, sinned, in a legal and representative sense.
- * When Adam sinned, he was acting in this representative capacity and as a result, all humans share in the legal responsibility of that sin and now have a corrupted and depraved nature.
- * Analogy: our president/prime minister acts as a representative on behalf of the people.
 - * Our legal head/representative acts on our behalf, and his actions will be reckoned to us.
- * In the same way, in God's eyes man is guilty: he has violated God's intention for mankind, and is liable to punishment.
- * Some would argue that all people are not equally bad.
- * There are some non-saved people who are pretty "good" (nice).
- * Illustration: Place three people according to their goodness.
 - * Death valley (280 feet below sea level)

- * Denver, the mile-high city
- * The peak of mount Everest 29,000 feet.
- * From our human perspective, they may look different.
- * But from God's high standard/position (the moon) it all looks the same.
- * Equally separated from God--all men are equally lost.

b. Loss of communion and open fellowship with God.

- * Before the fall Adam and Eve had a very natural community with God.
- * But sin resulted in a separation between God and man.
- * There is now a barrier that separates man from God.
- * Man is unable to come back into relationship with God w/o assistance.

B. The Nature of Sin

- * *Having noted the entrance of sin into the world, we must now examine it more closely.*
- * *We have implied that sin, most basically, is selfishness--wanting to fulfill one's desires, no matter the cost.*
- * *What is the nature of this "sin" against which we fight?*

1. Understanding the meaning of sin

- * Most simply put, sin (*hamartia*) means missing the mark.
- * To deviate from the correct way--it is actually used of a sling missing the mark (Judges 20:16).
- * While this may sound at first it is referring to just accidental "poor aim,"
- * The word implies that a wicked man misses the right mark because he deliberately aims toward the wrong one.
- * Hamartia denotes deliberate action--one misses the mark because he has intentionally aimed at the wrong target (Rom. 6:1-2).
- * Sin is a lack of conformity to the moral law of God, either in act, disposition, or state (Berkhof, p. 233).

2. The character of sin

a. Sin is an inward inclination that results in outward acts.

- * Some think of sin as simply doing evil acts.
- * But sin is an inherent inward disposition inclining us to do wrong.
- * *Man must deal with sin in his life in two different ways:*

(1) Sin is a state of existence: original sin.

- * "Original sin" denotes the sinful state into which we are born.
- * *Show comic: Nursery: "Class, today's topic is original sin..."*

We are born with a sinful nature.

- * Because of Adam, we are all born into original sin
 - * Rom 5:12: "Sin entered the world through 1 man"
 - * See also Jn. 2:16; Rom. 5:14-19; Gen. 6:5.
- * All people are actually born with a sinful nature, so we were sinners before we even sinned.

- * We sin because we are sinners
- * Not, because we sin we are sinners.
 - * See Ps. 51:5; Eph. 2:3; Job 14:4; Jn. 3:6, etc.
 - * Rom. 5:19; 7:14, 20; 8:4-8; Gal. 5:17

This sinful state is sometimes called total depravity.

- * Man is born a hopeless sinner.
- * The corruption of sin extends to every part of our nature.
 - * See Rom. 7:18; 8:7; Eph. 4:18; 2 Tim. 3:2-4.
- * *Show comic: I thank God for total depravity, its the only...*
- * Total depravity does not mean that we have no innate knowledge of God or conscious left.
- * But it does mean that we are unable to change on our own, or make ourselves right.
- * We do not have the ability on our own to restore ourselves to right relationship with God.
- * We cannot do acts which makes us worthy of God's acceptance.
- * See Jn. 3:3; 6:44; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1
- * I think its pretty obvious that we are all born sinners.
- * All you have to do is look around you to see that.
- * *Joke: Dream about room in heaven with clocks.*

The other night I dreamed that I went to heaven. In heaven an angel led me to a huge room full of clocks. There were many kinds, some big, some small, and they all had names on them. And then I saw it, there was a beautiful mantel clock, and it had the name _____ on it. The hands were barely moving, just a slow sporadic tick..tick... Then I saw another stately old grandfather clock. It had _____'s name on it. It head a slow but steady tick...tick...tick... Then were was a cute Mickey Mouse alarm clock. It had _____'s name on it, and it had a much faster steady pace: tick...tick...tick... There was a cuckoo clock with _____'s name on it. It was clipping along at a pretty fast pace. Finally I asked the angel what does this mean? Why are some ticking so slowly, and others much more quickly? The angel answered, each tick represents when that person commits a sin. "Oh, I see!" I responded. But wait then, where is _____'s clock? The angel replied: Oh, that's in the other room. God uses that for his personal fan.

- * *So, not only is sin a state of existence (original sin), but...*

(2) **Sin involves specific acts: actual sin.**

- * Those sins which we can and do personally commit.
- * Because we are guilty of original sin, we will do actual sin.
- * We all commit actual sins because we are sinners.

Actual sin can take one of two forms:

(a) **Sins of commission**

- * Doing things that should not be done.
- * Some sins are explicitly specified in the Bible, some are implicitly specified.
- * It's interesting, but the closer we grow to God, the more aware we are of sin.
- * When we're new Christians it's just the major sins.
- * But as we become more like Him, we realize all of the areas in which we fall so short.
- * *Show comic: Putting an end to sin is like trying to...*

* *In addition to sins of commission, there are...*

(b) **Sins of omission**

- * It is just as much sin to not do things that we know should be done.
- * One little boy obviously did not understand this word.
"When the teacher asked the class, "what are sins of omission?" he quickly responded: "Those are the sins we should have committed but didn't."
- * The Bible tells us that to know what to do, and to not do it, is a sin.
- * James tells us that we should not only be hearers of the word but doers.

b. **Sin entails spiritual disability.**

- * Sin alters our inner condition--our character.
- * Just as a cracked mirror reflects a distorted picture, so the image of God in us had been distorted and disturbed.
- * There is a separation from God (Ps. 51).
- * Only through a renewal of the mind by God can the individual be restored to an undistorted, spiritually healthy condition (Rom. 12:2).

c. **Sin is incomplete fulfillment of God's standards.**

- * It is a failure to keep God's commands and standard of righteousness.
- * We may do this by simply falling short of his expectations, or by actually breaking his law and doing the opposite of what he requires.
- * In Romans 7, Paul tells us that this is a daily struggle for Christians.
- * We want to do what is right, but that old human nature gets in the way.
- * *Show comic: My gaps are killing me...*

d. **Sin is displacement of God.**

- * Placing something else, anything else, in the supreme place which

belongs to God is sin.

- * This can even be placing our own selfish desires before his own.
- * It boils down to a love of self becoming magnified and one begins to place self-interests above those of God--this is what leads to sin.
- * Simply put, sin leads from being self-centered rather than being a centered self, whose true source of motivation is God.

C. Consequences of Sin

- * Because God is just, righteous and Holy, sin is abhorrent to God.
- * Therefore, God must ultimately punish sin.

1. Punishment

a. Definition of Punishment

- * The infliction of pain or suffering because of some misdeed.
 - * Misdeed = sin
 - * The one to inflict pain/suffering = God.
- * Because of man's sinful condition, he is liable to God's punishment.

b. Purposes of Punishment

- * *Why must punishment be inflicted?*

(1) Punishment may be retributive

- * To a great extent God's judgment has a retributive character.
- * Punishment is getting what they deserve.

(2) Punishment may be inflicted as a deterrent

- * God makes examples of some in hopes of deterring others from sinning.
- * Example Ananias and Saphira; Achan

(3) Punishment may be to reform the sinner

- * God punishes us to reform us.
- * While God's judgment does have a retributive character (punishment they deserve), it also has a restorative goal.
- * "The Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives." (Heb. 12:6).
- * Sometimes God disciplines us for the sake of helping us see the error of our ways and turning from them (Ps. 107:10-16).

(4) Punishment for the satisfaction of divine justice

Achan, Ananias and Saphira were punished by a just God, and a just God must maintain his holiness. God's justice was called into question, and must be vindicated. This is not always done immediately and instantaneously (thank God!). Key: In the satisfaction of God's justice, deterring and reforming can take place, but the bottom line is his holy nature.

c. Two kinds of Punishment

(1) Natural consequences of sin

- * This refers to the inevitable consequences of sin.
- * When we sin, there is a natural law in effect—we reap what we sow
 - * Drunkenness will result in liver problems.
 - * Sleeping around will result in venereal disease, pregnancy
 - * Being drunk and getting in a car can result in an accident.

(2) Divine Punishment of sin

- * Sometimes God may inflict divine punishment for sin.
- * Miriam turned leprous for speaking against Moses.
- * Ex. 32: Israel and the golden calf: God said that he will punish those who had participated.

* *Joke: Dream of punishment...*

This reminds me of a dream I had once. In my dream I went to what I assumed was heaven. An angel led me down a long white hallway. We passed a doorway looking into a room, and I asked to stop and look inside. To my surprise, in the room was name a female, and she was chained to a very ugly man. Surprised, I asked the angel, “What’s she doing in there chained to that ugly man?” The angel said that during her life she had committed some sins on earth, and so that is her punishment.

A little further down the hallway we passed another door, and again I looked inside. This time, I saw name a female chained to a horrendously ugly man. He had to be the most grotesque man that ever walked the face of the earth. This man was so ugly that even the paint on the walls was peeling. I was starting to get sick to my stomach... I said, “That’s not fair. She’s a nice girl. Why is she chained to that man?” The angel told me that before while on earth she had committed some very bad sins.

Finally as we continued down the hallway, we passed a third and final room. Again, out of curiosity, I peaked my head inside the door. But this time, to my amazement, was name a man, and he was chained to the most gorgeous woman in the world. She was truly a beautiful creature. This time I was dumbfounded, “Why does he get to be chained to her?” I asked the angel. “Oh,” replied the angel, well that woman was very, very wicked.”

* *While various forms of punishment may occur, the ultimate penalty of sin is...*

2. Death

* *Two kinds of death:*

a. Physical death

- * Because of sin, man faces sickness, disease, and ultimate death.
- * From the dust we came, to the dust we will return.

* See Gen. 3:19; 1 Cor. 15:21-22

- * Even though we are Christians, this is still one of the results of living in a fallen world.
- * We still experience sickness and ultimately physical death.
- * We live under this effect of the fall until the day when we will be glorified in the presence of the Lord.

b. Spiritual death

- * The communal relationship between God and man has been shattered.
- * Sin separated man from God.
- * Man separated from God experiences spiritual death.
- * If he does not turn to God through Christ, he will experience eternal spiritual death
 - * Eternal separation from God.
 - * See Rom. 5:12; 6:23;
- * Fortunately, for those who turn back to God and are in right standing with him, this punitive element of death is removed.
- * We can return to the hope of eternal spiritual life.

Conclusion

- * Fortunately, our theology does not end here.
- * Yes, man chose to sin and thus separated himself from God.
- * But God has provided a way in which we can re-establish that fellowship with him.
- * Through the saving work of Jesus Christ, the gulf separating man and God can be restored.