

VI. The Doctrine of Sin (Hamartiology)

Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? (Romans 7:24)

A. Definition

Sin means to fall short, to miss the mark. Sin is that which opposes God and all that He is. Sin is disobedience toward God, His Word, His commands, and His purposes.¹

B. Origin

Sin entered the human race when Adam and Eve disobeyed their Creator God in the Garden of Eden, failing His test. God guided Moses in the writing down of the story in Genesis chapter 3. Simply stated, Adam disobeyed the commandment of God. Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:22 teach that that disobedience affected not just Adam personally but all of his descendants as well. Because of that one man's sin, every human being is born with a natural tendency to sin. This is called a "sin nature." Because of the sin of our first father, everyone is born a sinner.² All of us are self-centered and are on that wide road that leads to eternal death.³

From Ezekiel 28:11-19 and Isaiah 14:12-20, we learn that Satan was created a good angel of very high position near God. However, he was filled with pride and coveted the Lord's seat. He set his goal on dethroning God so that He could be over all. This was the origin of sin. The Bible does not reveal when this rebellion happened.⁴

Jesus told us that Satan was a murderer from the beginning and is the father of lies.⁵ In the Garden of Eden Satan deceived the woman through half-truths and lies. In her state of innocence, the woman listened to his words and believed his lie that if she ate, she would be like God.⁶ Believing his lies, she ate and in that instant died spiritually. She then enticed her husband to disobey and eat. Their spiritual death is made evident through the fact that Adam and Eve covered their bodies with fig leaves and hid themselves from the Lord.

In 1 Timothy 2:14 Paul declares that Adam was not deceived. He entered the transgression knowing fully what he was doing. Perhaps it was his love for his wife that caused him to follow her in the rebellion, but that is not clear. Though sin entered the world through the deceptive acts of the devil, the head of the human race deliberately chose to violate the law of God and to disobey his Creator. In so doing, he brought sin and condemnation upon himself and all of his children after him, contaminating the entire human race. Theologians refer to this as "imputed sin," and because of this man is a sinner by nature.

¹ Deuteronomy 27:26; Romans 3:23; James 2:8-12; 1 John 3:4

² Psalm 51:5; John 3:17-18

³ Matthew 7:13

⁴ Luke 10:18; those of the Creation Research Society would have us believe it was when Satan tempted Eve. There is no Scriptural support for this. It appears that Satan fell before this.

⁵ John 8:44

⁶ Genesis 3:5

C. Consequence

Sin brings death, both spiritual and physical.⁷ Biblically speaking, death is separation. Physical death is the separation of the soul and spirit of man from the physical body. Spiritual death is the separation of the soul and spirit from the Creator. As recorded in Genesis 3, we learn that as soon as Adam and Eve disobeyed the command of their Creator they became spiritually dead toward God; their communion with the Father was broken; and they hid themselves from His presence. In that moment of disobedience man died spiritually. It is only through a spiritual regeneration, commonly called the “new birth” as revealed by Jesus in John chapter 3, that the spiritual life toward God can be restored and the progress to maturity begun.

Paul tells us that the whole creation suffers because of the Fall.⁸ All of creation is waiting for the return of Christ when there will be a new creation. Peter tells us that the current world will be destroyed.⁹

The “second death” is spiritual death that eventually becomes irreversible.¹⁰ Those who do not appropriate by faith the forgiveness and salvation offered by God in the Lord Jesus will be judged, found guilty, and condemned.¹¹ They will be eternally separated from God. In this life their consciences, truths about God revealed in His creation, and the Holy Spirit will have spoken to their hearts; but they refused to respond positively. In the Lake of Fire they will suffer in a way that is beyond imagination because God will not be present. The Lake of Fire is a place without God, His goodness, and love—literally an ungodly environment. That suffering is eternal.

D. The Cure

The blood of Jesus Christ shed on the Cross, His spiritual and physical death,¹² are the only cure for the sins of man.¹³ God will not share His glory with another. The work of salvation is solely a work of God.¹⁴ Men, as responsible agents, are called upon to appropriate the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Through faith the believer is liberated from the second death and the consequences of sin.¹⁵

Epilogue

Some issues discussed in "The Genesis Account of Creation," in the Appendix, could impact the doctrinal issue of physical death. The author has prayed and meditated on this for some time and has not formed a conclusion. There are many things that are beyond human understanding, and we wait for clarification when with our Lord in Glory.

⁷ Romans 1:32; 5:12-17; 1 Corinthians 15:21a

⁸ Romans 8:19-22, see also Psalm 51:5; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23; 8:22-23; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:10, & 12-25 and the Doctrine of Man.

⁹ 2 Peter 3:7

¹⁰ Revelation 20:6 & 14

¹¹ Revelation 20:15

¹² Isaiah 53:4-6 & 11-12 (in the Hebrew “many” is used to indicate “all”); 2 Corinthians 5:21

¹³ John 14:6; Acts 4:12

¹⁴ Ephesians 2:8-9

¹⁵ Romans 5:15-16; 8:2; 1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Hebrews 9:22; 1 John 1:7, see the Doctrine of Salvation and the chapter on Calvinism.