

Sin

Key verses

- “but each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.” James 1:14-15
- “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” Matt.15:18-20

The Greek word 'hamartano' is translated **sin, faults, offend** and **trespass** in our English Bibles. This word means: 'missing the mark' or 'not sharing the prize'. In other words it is sin that has to be put out of the way before we can share in the promises of God. This can only be achieved through redemption in Christ Jesus.

What is the cause of Sin?

Both Jesus and James tell us that sin is born in the heart of man. **Sin is disobedience to what God requires** and will result in eternal death unless we **repent and obey Jesus' Gospel**. Sin is really an uncontrolled misuse of a legitimate God given desire. We are all creatures with **the ability to reason**. This has to be, as the alternative is for us to be robots. God requires His children to serve Him of **their own free will**, and to exercise control over their desires, so that they are only used for the purposes that God has created them for. Jesus says many times in Revelation that the reward is for, “**he who overcomes**”, the inference here being to those who are prepared to put in the effort (with God's help) to overcome temptation and the desire to do evil. It is also very important to accept that we are **all responsible for our own sins**.

Sins of omission

- “But his lord answered and said to him, “You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.” Matt.25:26

Sins of omission are when we **fail to fulfill a responsibility in God's service**. We may be occupying our time with an activity that is quite legitimate in itself, but if this activity stops us from fulfilling our necessary duties to God, then it becomes a sin of omission. The parable of the wicked and slothful servant mentioned in the verse above is alluding to this sin (Matt.25:26-28). The slothful servant was castigated for not even bothering to put in a minimal effort in the Lord's service.

- “So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest ” Matt.25:27

* False god of the ancient Philistine city of Ekron. Known as “lord of the flies”, which may have been a Hebrew mocking for the Canaanite, “lord of the high place” (Baal-zebul).

All Scripture quoted on this sheet is from the N.K.J.V.

The unforgivable sin

- “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance...”

Heb.6:4-6

- “Assuredly, I say unto you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation – because they said, ‘He has an unclean spirit’”. Mark 3:28-30

Jesus said that there is an unforgivable sin, that being **blasphemy against the Holy Spirit** (Matt.12:31; Luke 12:10; Mark 3:28-30). Many people including the religious leaders of the day were **eye witnesses of the power of God through His Son in the miracles He performed and the Gospel that He preached**. Despite all this though, these people rejected Jesus and claimed His power came from Beelzebub*. Jesus said that this blasphemy against God's power is an unforgivable sin. This sin was also a problem with certain first century believers who had been given the **Holy Spirit with “the powers of the age to come”** and had then turned their back on their calling. This is described in the verses quoted above.

What is ‘sin in the flesh’?

- “Truly, this I have found: God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes.” Eccles.7:29

Early in the fifth century Augustine of Hippo introduced the theory that Adam's sin is transmitted to all members of the human race at conception. This alleged inheritance is styled “original sin”, “imputed sin” or “inherited sin”. Many today still support this teaching. **We are responsible to God for the sins we commit, not the nature of our being**.

It is true that the Bible uses the phrase, “sin in the flesh”, in Paul's letter to the Romans (Rom.8:3), but does this verse teach that sin as a literal component dwells in our flesh from birth? This cannot be the case as Adam and Eve were condemned to death because of the sin they committed and not because of the nature of their make-up. It should also be noted that **the impulses that lead to sin** existed in Adam before disobedience or else disobedience would not have occurred.

A figure of speech

“Sin in the flesh”, is a figure of speech known as “metonymy”, (see sheet 30). The impulses or desires that lead to sin reside in the body, and come to be called by the name of the act to which they can give birth ie sin. These desires and impulses are **legitimate in themselves**, but have the **potential for sin** should we make the **wrong choice** based on the **insidiously strong influence of “the world”** as opposed to the **requirements of God in His Word**.