

The Four Key Concepts – #1

SIN

In order to understand anything else in the Bible we must first understand sin. We cannot grasp why there is so much hardship in this world and our life unless we understand sin. We cannot appreciate our need for a Savior unless we understand sin. The portions of Scripture used in this Bible study are the ones that deal most directly with this issue. As we look at these passages, we are going to try to answer the following questions:

- Where did sin originate?
 - What exactly is “sin”?
 - Who is guilty of sin?
 - What does sin do to us?
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WHERE DID SIN ORIGINATE?

Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

Genesis 1:31 - God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

2 Peter 2:4 – God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell.

Genesis 3:4-6 - "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." *When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*

1 John 3:8 - He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.

John 8:44 – [Jesus said,] "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

James 1:13 - When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.

1. According to the underlined portions of those passages, who is the ultimate author of sin?
2. According to the italicized portions of those passages, who else deserves the blame for the presence of sin in the world?
3. Who IS NOT to blame for sin being in the world?

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In the following space, please summarize what you have learned from those passages that help you answer the question, "WHERE DID SIN ORIGINATE?"

WHAT EXACTLY IS "SIN"?

Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

Psalm 51:5 – Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Genesis 8:21 – Every inclination of [man's] heart is evil from childhood.

4. According to the underlined portions of those passages, when was I first guilty of sin in God's eyes.

Genesis 5:3 – Adam had a son in his own likeness, in his own image.

John 3:6 – Flesh gives birth to flesh.

5. After looking at John 3:6 and Genesis 5:3, can you explain how this is possible?

Romans 7:18 – I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.

Romans 8:7 – The sinful mind is *hostile to God*, it does not submit to God's law, *nor can it do so.*

Ephesians 2:3 – Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

6. According to Romans 7:18, what could you call this sin that we are born with?

7. According to the italicized portions of those passages, what does this do to me?

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That “sinful nature” that we inherit from our parents impacts our life in a negative way. Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

Matthew 15:19 – *Out of the heart* come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

Genesis 6:5 - The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that *every inclination of the thoughts of his heart* was only evil all the time.

Matthew 5:28 – But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

1 John 3:15 - Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

8. According to the italicized portions of those passages, where do my sins originate?
9. According to those passages, does God judge us on just our actions, or does he also judge the thoughts behind those actions.

1 John 5:3 – This is love for God: to obey his commands.

1 John 3:4 – Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

Leviticus 5:17 - "If a person sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, even though he does not know it, he is guilty and will be held responsible."

10. According to those passages, what is the way we show love for God?

11. Therefore, how is sin defined?

We commit sin when we break God's _____, whether that be by committing sinful actions or by thinking sinful thoughts.

We generally speak of two different categories of sin and give them the following definitions. These definitions can serve as the answer to our question, “WHAT IS ‘SIN’?”

“ORIGINAL SIN” – The sinfulness that is handed down from parents to children. (This is therefore sometimes also referred to as “inherited sin.”

“ACTUAL SIN” – The sins in thought, word, and action that an individual commits on their own.

Both types of sin are deserving of God's punishment. We'll look at that in more depth later.

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WHO IS GUILTY OF SIN?

If you're speaking about "original sin," you obviously have to answer "everyone." Original sin is handed down from parents to children at the moment of conception. So let's focus in on "actual sin." Please read the following passages and then answer the corresponding questions.

Leviticus 19:2 – Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy. (*"Holy" can be defined as "perfect" or "righteous" or "without sin."*)

Matthew 5:48 – Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

James 2:10 – Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

12. According to those passages, how does God want us to keep his law in our thoughts, in our speech, and in our actions?

13. What about just one slip? Wouldn't God let that slide? (Look at James 2:10.)

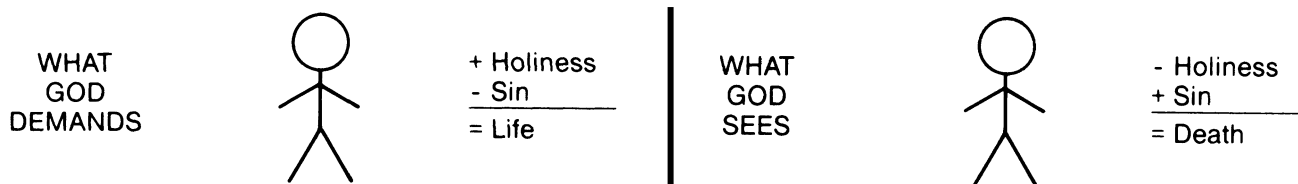
On the basis of those passages, what would you guess is the answer to the question, "WHO IS GUILTY OF SIN?"

Romans 3:23 - All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

Psalms 53:3 - Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

14. Do these passages support what you wrote in the box above?

If you wanted to diagram this, you could do it in the following way. What God demands in his Law is that we live a holy, perfect life... a life that has NO sin. However, what he sees is a life that is tainted by sin, and therefore falls short of the perfection he demands.



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You see how in that diagram one adds up to life and the other to death. Let's look at this more closely.

WHAT DOES SIN DO TO US?

Genesis 2:16,17 - And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it *you will surely die.*"

Ezekiel 18:4 - The soul who sins is the one who *will die.*

Romans 6:23 - The wages of sin is *death.*

Romans 5:12 - ...sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men...

15. According to those passages, what is one consequence of sin?

16. How can you understand that "death came to all men" as the result of Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden? (Hint – Think about what we said concerning original sin.)

Isaiah 59:2-3 – But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you.

2 Peter 2:4 – For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them in the gloomy dungeons to be held for judgement...

Matthew 10:28 - ...be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

17. What is the ultimate consequence of sin?

Ephesians 2:1-2 - As for you, *you were dead in your transgressions and sins...*

18. What power do we have to take care of sin on our own? (Hint – Think of how much power a corpse has to take care of itself.)

On the basis of these passages, how would you answer that question, "WHAT DOES MY SIN DO TO ME?"

Key Concept #1 - SIN

Every single person is lost in their sin. But does that mean that we will experience the punishment of hell? That's the main focus of the second key concept – GRACE.

Ephesians 2:4,5 - But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – IT IS BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED.

TAKING IT DEEPER...

- A. Agree or Disagree – God is not angry if we sin accidentally.
- B. Agree or Disagree – Although children learn bad habits from others, basically they are good and want to do right.
- C. Agree or Disagree – God must not hold infants and young children accountable for their sins, because they are too young to know what they are doing.
- D. Agree or Disagree - Some people are able to live a life that conforms perfectly to God's Law?
- E. Agree or Disagree – The Bible tells us that God is loving. Therefore God wouldn't actually send anyone to hell.
- F. Agree or Disagree – Sinful actions (such as killing someone or stealing) are worse than sinful speech (such as lying or cursing). And sinful speech is worse than sinful thoughts (such as lust or hatred).
- G. Agree or Disagree – No one has ever lived their entire life without committing a sin.
- H. What do you think? If people are basically good, is it fair that God still punishes them for the very few sins that they do commit?