

HAMARTIOLOGY

The Doctrine of Sin

THE DEFINITION OF SIN

Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature. Grudem

SIN IN ACTION

1 John 3:4

⁴ Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

SIN IN ATTITUDE

Exodus 20:17

¹⁷ “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Matthew 5:22

²² “But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

SIN IN ATTITUDE

Mark 12:30

³⁰ AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'

SIN IN OUR NATURE

“the sinful state and condition in which men are born.” Berkhof

“the corruption of our whole nature.” Hodge

SIN IN OUR NATURE

Romans 5:8

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Ephesians 2:3

³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

SIN IN OUR NATURE

Some would term this “original sin” or “inherited sin.” T. Pennington

...it is derived from the original root of the human race (Adam)

...it is present in the life of every individual from the time of his birth

...it is the inward root of all the actual sins that defile the life of man.”

Berkhof

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

God does not sin and cannot be blamed for sin.

Deuteronomy 32:4

⁴ “The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.

Genesis 18:25

²⁵ “Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

God does not sin and cannot be blamed for sin.

Job 34:10

¹⁰ “Therefore, listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do wickedness, And from the Almighty to do wrong.

James 1:13

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

God does not sin and cannot be blamed for sin.

We affirm that God ordained that sin would come into the world... through the voluntary choices of moral creatures. Grudem

Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin, God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory. (Westminster Confession of Faith, VI/i)

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

God does not sin and cannot be blamed for sin.

Ephesians 1:11

“I also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

Daniel 4:35

³⁵ “All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’

THE FIRST SIN

Their eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is in many ways typical of sin generally. Grudem

I. “What is true?” Whereas God had said that Adam and Eve would die if they ate from the tree (Gen. 2:17), the serpent said, “You will not die” (Gen. 3:4).

Genesis 2:17

¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

Genesis 3:4

⁴The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die!

THE FIRST SIN

2. It gave a different answer to the question “What is right?” God had said that it was morally right for Adam and Eve not to eat from the fruit of that one tree (Gen. 2:17). But the serpent suggested that it would be right to eat of the fruit, and that in eating it Adam and Eve would become “like God” (Gen. 3:5).

Genesis 2:17

¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

Genesis 3:5

⁵ “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

THE FIRST SIN

3. Their sin gave a different answer to the question, “Who am I?” The correct answer was that Adam and Eve were creatures of God, dependent on him and always to be subordinate to him as their Creator and Lord. But Eve, and then Adam, succumbed to the temptation to “be like God” (Gen. 3:5), thus attempting to put themselves in the place of God.

Genesis 3:5

⁵ “For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

SIN IS IRRATIONAL

Psalm 14:1

¹ The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.

Proverbs 10:23

²³ Doing wickedness is like sport to a fool, And so is wisdom to a man of understanding.

Proverbs 12:15

¹⁵ The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel.

SEVEN EFFECTS OF THE FALL (REYMOND)

1. Our first parents lost their legal/moral innocence and original righteousness and found themselves the subjects of real guilt and moral corruption

This awareness of guilt first displayed itself as shame or embarrassment with respect to their own physical nakedness in the presence of each other. This shame, traced in the text to their physical nakedness in the presence of each other, was only the *reflex* of the inner nakedness of the guilty conscience before God working itself out in the sphere of the external.

SEVEN EFFECTS OF THE FALL (REYMOND)

2. The image of God, reflected originally both by Adam and Eve as individuals and by the human community which they comprised in terms of a true knowledge of God and concern for justice for one's neighbor, was immediately fractured and distorted.

Genesis 3:8

⁸ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:12

¹² The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."

SEVEN EFFECTS OF THE FALL (REYMOND)

3. Fellowship between God and man was broken.

Real alienation now existed between God and man, God's alienation being holy and fully justified, man's alienation being unholy and unjustified. Real alienation from God's side is illustrated by his judicial sentencing of the pair to death and by his expulsion of them from the garden and away from himself (which in point of fact is the essence of death).

SEVEN EFFECTS OF THE FALL (REYMOND)

4. Man's environment was cursed, and nature's productivity accordingly became impaired by thorns and weeds.

Genesis 3:17–18

¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.

¹⁸ "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field...

SEVEN EFFECTS OF THE FALL (REYMOND)

5. The man and the woman were judicially condemned and accordingly punished.

Eve was first sentenced. Her punishment consisted in suffering in childbearing and in the desire that would relentlessly work within her driving her to master her husband (see the similar expression in Gen. 4:7 for support for this view). Although it is stated in connection with Adam's sentence as the head of the race, by implication Eve too was sentenced to death—physical with respect to the body, spiritual with reference to the soul—as is evident from the fact that she was driven—along with Adam—away from the “garden of God” (Ezek. 28:13) and away from the tree of life.

Adam's sentence consisted, first, in *painful* labor, not labor *per se* (see 2:15), but labor that would characterize a veritable struggle for subsistence.

SEVEN EFFECTS OF THE FALL (REYMOND)

6. By God's forensic imputation of Adam's first transgression to all those descending from him by ordinary generation, "all mankind lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and are so made liable to the miseries of this life, to death itself, and the pains of hell forever."

Romans 5:12

¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—

SEVEN EFFECTS OF THE FALL (REYMOND)

7. Man's greatest and most immediate need is now divine grace, which God declared he would provide in and by a Redeemer who would himself in and by his own mortal wounding finally destroy Satan's kingdom of evil.

Genesis 3:15

¹⁵ And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION

From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth, in its own nature, bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal. (Westminster Confession of Faith, VI/iv, vi)

PRIMARY VIEWS ON ORIGINAL SIN

Pelagian and Semi-Pelagian

Arminian

Reformed

PRIMARY VIEWS ON ORIGINAL SIN

C. HODGE

Pelagian

The radical principle of the Pelagian theory is, that ability limits obligation. “If I ought, I can,” is the aphorism on which the whole system rests. C. Hodge

... he laid down the principle that man must have plenary ability to do and to be whatever can be righteously required of him. C. Hodge

PRIMARY VIEWS ON ORIGINAL SIN

C. HODGE

Pelagian

1. The intimate conviction that men can be responsible for nothing which is not in their power.
2. Sin, therefore, consists only in the deliberate choice of evil. It presupposes knowledge of what is evil, as well as the full power of choosing or rejecting it
3. That there can be no such thing as original sin, or inherent hereditary corruption. In other words men are born into the world since the fall in the same state in which Adam was created.

PRIMARY VIEWS ON ORIGINAL SIN

C. HODGE

Pelagian

4. Adam's sin injured only himself.

5. As men come into the world without the contamination of original sin, and as they have plenary power to do all that God requires, they may, and in many cases do, live without sin; or if at any time they transgress, they may turn unto God and perfectly obey all his commandments.

PRIMARY VIEWS ON ORIGINAL SIN

C. HODGE

Pelagian

6. ... men could be saved without the gospel. As free will in the sense of plenary ability, belongs essentially to man as much as reason, men whether Heathen, Jews, or Christians may fully obey the law of God and attain eternal life. The only difference is that under the light of the Gospel, this perfect obedience is rendered more easy.

7. The Pelagian system denies the necessity of grace in the sense of the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit.

PRIMARY VIEWS ON ORIGINAL SIN

T. PENNINGTON

Pelagian - A Summary

Adam's sin affected only himself.

At birth we are innocent and able to obey God.

Rom. 5:12 - we incur death because we follow Adam's bad example and personally sin.

PRIMARY VIEWS ON ORIGINAL SIN

C. HODGE

Semi-Pelagians - A Summary

That the beginning of salvation is with man. Man begins to seek God, and then God aids him.

That this incipient turning of the soul towards God is something good, and in one sense meritorious.

That the soul, in virtue of its liberty of will or ability for good, cooperates with the grace of God in regeneration as well as in sanctification.

PRIMARY VIEWS ON ORIGINAL SIN

T. PENNINGTON

Arminian

Adam's sin corrupted us physically and intellectually, but we have no guilt because of Adam's sin.

At birth we have a sinful nature, but are still able to cooperate with God because of prevenient grace.

Rom. 5:12 – we incur death because we consciously choose to follow our corrupted nature and thereby ratify Adam's sin.

PRIMARY VIEWS ON ORIGINAL SIN

T. PENNINGTON

Reformed

Adam's sin brought guilt, corruption, and death to all mankind.

At birth our entire nature is polluted by sin, we are under God's just condemnation, and with are unable to do anything that pleases God or attains salvation.

Rom. 5:12 – we incur death because the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to us.

PRIMARY OBJECTION TO THE BIBLICAL VIEW?

IT'S UNFAIR!

RESPONSE TO GOD'S FAIRNESS

T. PENNINGTON

Everybody who argues that this is unfair has, in fact, personally committed many sins.

Scripture indicates that those sins will be the primary basis for God's judgment.

Romans 2:6

⁶ who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:

Colossians 3:25

²⁵ For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

RESPONSE TO GOD'S FAIRNESS

T. PENNINGTON

If you think it's unfair to be represented by Adam and to have his guilt imputed to you, then you should also think it's equally unfair to be represented by Christ and to have his righteousness imputed to you.

ELEMENTS OF ORIGINAL SIN

Imputed Guilt

Inherited Pollution/Corruption

Total Depravity

Total Inability

IMPUTED GUILT

When Adam sinned, God placed real personal guilt that sin to my account.
T. Pennington

Rom. 5:19 – we “were made sinners”; verb tense implies that when Adam sinned, God thought of every human being as a sinner. T. Pennington

The context shows that Paul is not talking about actual sins that people commit every day of their lives, for the entire paragraph (Rom. 5:12–21) is taken up with the comparison between Adam and Christ. And when Paul says, “so [..., “thus, in this way”; that is, through Adam’s sin] death spread to all men because all men sinned,” he is saying that through the sin of Adam “all men sinned.” Grudem

IMPUTED GUILT

Romans 5:13–14

¹³ for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

Here Paul points out that from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, people did not have God's written laws. Though their sins were "not counted" (as infractions of the law), they still died. The fact that they died is very good proof that God counted people guilty on the basis of Adam's sin. Grudem

IMPUTED GUILT

Romans 5:18–19

¹⁸ So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

¹⁹ For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

Romans 5:8

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

IMPUTED GUILT - CONCLUSION

All members of the human race were represented by Adam in the time of testing in the Garden of Eden. As our representative, Adam sinned, and God counted us guilty as well as Adam. Grudem

Impute - “to think of as belonging to someone, and therefore to cause it to belong to that person.” Grudem

Imputation – A forensic term that denotes the reckoning or placing to a person’s account the merit or guilt that belongs to him on the basis of his personal performance or of that of his federal head.” A. Cairns

INHERITED POLLUTION/CORRUPTION

This inherited sinful nature is sometimes simply called “original sin” and sometimes more precisely called “original pollution.” I have used instead the term “inherited corruption” because it seems to express more clearly the specific idea in view. Grudem

Psalm 51:1–5

¹ Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.

⁴ Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

INHERITED POLLUTION/CORRUPTION

Our natures totally lack spiritual good before God. Grudem

Romans 7:18

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

Titus 1:15

¹⁵ To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.

Jeremiah 17:9

⁹ “The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

INHERITED POLLUTION/CORRUPTION

In Our Actions We Are Totally Unable to Do Spiritual Good Before God (Grudem)

Romans 8:8

⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

John 15:5

⁵ “I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

T. PENNINGTON

What it is NOT:

1. That people act as bad as they really are by nature.
2. That every sinner will indulge in every form of sin.
3. That people have no knowledge of God's law or a functioning conscience.
4. That sinful man doesn't admire those things that are good and virtuous.
5. That every sinner is as depraved as he can possibly become.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

T. PENNINGTON

Why don't people always act as bad as they could?

God's common grace in:

- 1) an innate awareness of God and coming judgment (Rom 1:20-21, 32);
- 2) the law written on their hearts (Rom 2:14-15);
- 3) various authorities, including parents and civil government (Rom. 13:1-5).

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

What does it mean?

That the corruption inherent in every human being permeates every part of man's nature, including every faculty and power of both soul and body.

“...man in his raw, natural state as he comes from the womb is morally and spiritually corrupt in disposition and character. Every part of his being—his mind, his will, his emotions, his affections, his conscience, his body—has been affected by sin (this is what is meant by the doctrine of total depravity). His understanding is darkened, his mind is at enmity with God, his will to act is slave to his darkened understanding and rebellious mind, his heart is corrupt, his emotions are perverted, his affections naturally gravitate to that which is evil and ungodly, his conscience is untrustworthy, and his body is subject to mortality.” Reymond

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

Genesis 6:5

⁵ Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 8:21

²¹ The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.

1 Kings 8:46

⁴⁶ "When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near;

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

Psalm 130:3

³ If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

Psalm 143:2

² And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no man living is righteous.

Ecclesiastes 7:20

²⁰ Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY SHOULD...

T. PENNINGTON

I. Serve as a constant reminder that our own hearts are still capable of any sin.

I Corinthians 10:1-11

¹ For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea;

² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

³ and all ate the same spiritual food;

⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

⁵ Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.

⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY."

⁸ Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day.

⁹ Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents.

¹⁰ Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer.

¹¹ Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY SHOULD...

T. PENNINGTON

2. Encourage humility

1 Corinthians 10:12

¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY SHOULD...

T. PENNINGTON

3. Produce watchfulness

Mark 14:37–38

³⁷ And He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?”

³⁸ “Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY SHOULD...

T. PENNINGTON

4. Increase our desire for and pursuit of personal holiness

Romans 7:14–18

¹⁴ For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

¹⁵ For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.

¹⁶ But if I do the very thing I do not want to do, I agree with the Law, confessing that the Law is good.

¹⁷ So now, no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me.

¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not.

Romans 8:12–13

¹² So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—

¹³ for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY SHOULD...

T. PENNINGTON

5. Produce extreme gratitude for our coming deliverance

Romans 7:24–25

²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY SHOULD...

T. PENNINGTON

6. Create a more intense longing for Christ's return and our ultimate salvation

Romans 8:22–25

²² For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

²⁴ For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?

²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

TOTAL INABILITY

... because man is totally or pervasively corrupt, he is *incapable of changing his character or of acting in a way that is distinct from his corruption.* Reymond

Matthew 7:18

¹⁸ “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.

John 6:44

⁴⁴ “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND INABILITY

These two human conditions (total depravity and total inability) demonstrate that man in his natural state is not only *morally and spiritually corrupt* but also *incapable of the understanding, the affections, and the will to act* which, taken together, enable one to be subject to the law of God, to respond to the gospel of grace, to appreciate the things of the Spirit, to do those things which are well-pleasing in God's sight, and to love God. Reymond

GENERAL TOPICS ON SIN



ACTUAL SIN

All people are sinful before God

Romans 3:9–10

⁹ What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

¹⁰ as it is written, “THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

Romans 3:23

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

INFANTS WHO DIE

...even before birth children have a guilty standing before God and a sinful nature that not only gives them a tendency to sin but also causes God to view them as “sinners.” Grudem

Psalm 51:5

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANTS BEING SAVED

Here we must say that if such infants are saved, it cannot be on their own merits, or on the basis of their own righteousness or innocence, but it must be entirely on the basis of Christ's redemptive work and regeneration by the work of the Holy Spirit within them. Grudem

John 3:3

³ Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANTS BEING SAVED

God's work in infants:

Luke 1:15

¹⁵ “For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb.

Psalm 22:10

¹⁰ Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother’s womb.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANTS BEING SAVED

Children belong to God

Ezekiel 16:20–21

²⁰ “Moreover, you took your sons and daughters whom you had borne to Me and sacrificed them to idols to be devoured. Were your harlotries so small a matter?

²¹ “You slaughtered My children and offered them up to idols by causing them to pass through the fire.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANTS BEING SAVED

Jesus indicated that people who enter heaven are like children, implying that children go to heaven.

Matthew 18:2–3

² And He called a child to Himself and set him before them,

³ and said, “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 19:13–14

¹³ Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them.

¹⁴ But Jesus said, “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANTS BEING SAVED

Children Are Called Innocent

Jeremiah 19:4–5

⁴“Because they have forsaken Me and have made this an alien place and have burned sacrifices in it to other gods, that neither they nor their forefathers nor the kings of Judah had ever known, and because they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent
⁵ and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind;

Deuteronomy 1:39

³⁹ ‘Moreover, your little ones who you said would become a prey, and your sons, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, shall enter there, and I will give it to them and they shall possess it.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANTS BEING SAVED

Limited Understanding (Piper)

John 9:41

⁴¹ Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

Jesus says in John 9:41 to those who were offended at his teaching and asked if he thought they were blind-he said, "If you were blind, you would not have had sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains." In other words, if a person lacks the natural capacity to see the revelation of God's will or God's glory then that person's sin would not remain-God would not bring the person into final judgment for not believing what he had no natural capacity to see.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANTS BEING SAVED

Limited Understanding (Piper)

Romans 1:20

²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

In other words: if a person did not have access to the revelation of God's glory - did not have the natural capacity to see it and understand it, then Paul implies they would have an excuse at the judgment.

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANTS BEING SAVED

David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 12:21–23

²¹ Then his servants said to him, “What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food.”

²² He said, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.’

²³ “But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.”

ARGUMENTS FOR INFANTS BEING SAVED

Unconditional Election and Infants (Piper)

It should also be emphasized that the salvation of all who die in infancy is not inconsistent with unconditional election (the view that God chooses whom to save of His own will, apart from anything in the individual). As Spurgeon pointed out, it is not that God chooses someone to salvation *because* they are going to die in infancy. Rather, He has ordained that only those who have been chosen for salvation will be allowed to die in infancy. God's justice in condemnation will be most clearly seen by allowing those who will not be saved to demonstrate their inherent sinfulness through willful, knowing transgression.

ARE THERE DEGREES OF SIN?

Legal Guilt

It only takes one sin to condemn us to hell!

Romans 5:16

¹⁶The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

ARE THERE DEGREES OF SIN?

Different sins can have very different consequences.

John 19:11

¹¹ Jesus answered, “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”

Ezekiel 8:6

⁶ And He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations which the house of Israel are committing here, so that I would be far from My sanctuary? But yet you will see still greater abominations.”

ARE THERE UNINTENTIONAL SINS?

Leviticus 4:2

² “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘If a person sins unintentionally in any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and commits any of them,

Leviticus 4:13

¹³ ‘Now if the whole congregation of Israel commits error and the matter escapes the notice of the assembly, and they commit any of the things which the LORD has commanded not to be done, and they become guilty;

RESPONDING TO VARIOUS DEGREES OF SIN

GRUDEM

It helps us to know where we should put more effort in our own attempts to grow in personal holiness.

It helps us to decide when we should simply overlook a minor fault in a friend or family member and when it would be appropriate to talk with an individual about some evident sin (see James 5:19–20).

RESPONDING TO VARIOUS DEGREES OF SIN

GRUDEM

It may help us decide when church discipline is appropriate, and it provides an answer to the objection that is sometimes raised against exercising church discipline, in which it is said that “we are all guilty of sin, so we have no business meddling in anyone else’s life.”

This distinction may also help us realize that there is some basis for civil governments to have laws and penalties prohibiting certain kinds of wrongdoing (such as murder or stealing), but not other kinds of wrongdoing (such as anger, jealousy, greed, or selfish use of one’s possessions)

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS?

Our Legal Standing Before God Is Unchanged

Romans 8:1

¹ Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS?

GRUDEM

Our Fellowship With God Is Disrupted and Our Christian Life Is Damaged

Ephesians 4:30

³⁰ Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Hebrews 12:6

⁶ FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS?

GRUDEM

Our Fellowship With God Is Disrupted and Our Christian Life Is Damaged

Although they never can fall from the state of justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's *fatherly displeasure* and not have the light of His countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance. (chap. 11, sec. 5)

WHAT IS THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?

Matthew 12:31–32

³¹ “Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

³² “Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

WHAT IS THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?

GRUDEM

The context indicates that Jesus is speaking about a sin that is not simply unbelief or rejection of Christ, but one that includes

- (1) a clear knowledge of who Christ is and of the power of the Holy Spirit working through him,
- (2) a willful rejection of the facts about Christ that his opponents knew to be true, and
- (3) slanderously attributing the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ to the power of Satan.

WHAT IS THE UNPARDONABLE SIN?

Berkhof wisely defines this sin in the following way:

This sin consists in the conscious, malicious, and willful rejection and slander, against evidence and conviction, of the testimony of the Holy Spirit respecting the grace of God in Christ, attributing it out of hatred and enmity to the Prince of Darkness ... in committing that sin man willfully, maliciously, and intentionally attributes what is clearly recognized as the work of God to the influence and operation of Satan.

JUDGMENT

...because of man's corruption and inability to please God, he is deserving of punishment, for his sin is not only real evil, morally wrong, the violation of God's law, and therefore, undesirable, odious, ugly, disgusting, filthy, and ought not to be; it is also the contradiction of God's perfection, cannot but meet with his disapproval and wrath, and *damnable* in the strongest sense of the word because it *dishonors* God. God must react with holy indignation. He cannot do otherwise. Reymond

JUDGMENT

John Murray declares,

with a divine “cannot” that bespeaks not divine weakness but everlasting strength, not reproach but inestimable glory. He cannot deny himself. To be complacent towards that which is the contradiction of his own holiness would be a denial of himself. So that wrath against sin is the correlate of his holiness. And this is just saying that the justice of God demands that sin receive its retribution. The question is not at all: How can God, being what he is, send men to hell? The question is, How can God, being what he is, save them from hell?

JUDGMENT

T. PENNINGTON

God's verdict contains **five elements—five separate legal decisions** that together summarize God's final verdict on every man without Christ.

Romans 3:19–21

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

²⁰ because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

JUDGMENT

T. PENNINGTON

Apart from God's grace, our day in court would produce this certain verdict;
God Himself would declare every single one of us:

1. Responsible before His Law
2. Guilty with no defense
3. Abiding forever under His wrath
4. Hopeless before the divine standard
5. Aware of our true condition

