Major Bible Themes

52 Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures Simplified and Explained

Adapted from the book *Major Bible Themes*
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Sin: Its Character and Universality

- Human Speculation on Sin
  - Because sin is a dominant fact of human experience, it has been the subject of endless discussions.
    - A common feature of non-biblical attitudes toward sin is to regard it as a misconception based upon a false theory that there is right and wrong in the world – God and the evils of sin are denied.
    - An ancient approach denies that man really sins by confining sin to the physical world, resulting in asceticism (the denial of the desires of the body) and Epicureanism (indulgence of the body).
    - Another common concept is that sin in merely selfishness which ignores the fact that we often sin against ourselves.
  - All of these theories fall short of the Biblical definition of sin.
- The Biblical Doctrine of Sin
  - The teaching of Scripture is that sin is any lack of conformity to the holy character of God, whether it be an act, disposition, or state.
  - Various sins are defined in the word of God as illustrated by the Ten Commandments given to Israel (Ex 20:3-17).
  - Sin is always against God (Ps 51:4; Luke 15:18) even though it is often directed toward human beings.
  - Accordingly, a person who sins is unlike God and, therefore, subject to God's judgment.
  - The doctrine of sin is presented in the Bible in four ways.
    - Personal Sin – the form of sin which includes everything in the daily life which fails to conform to the holy character of God.
    - The Sin Nature – the corruption of the flesh that occurred at the fall of man and resulted in a deprave character, enslaved to sin, in Adam and all of his posterity.
    - Imputed Sin – Adam's sin credited to the account of every member of the human race resulting in universal condemnation in Adam.
    - The Estate of Sin – the positional reality of being "under sin" at physical birth and thereby having no ability to save ourselves.

- Personal Sin
  - Relates to some particular command of God in Scripture.
  - Misses the "mark" of God's own character of holiness (Rom 3:23).
  - Includes the aspect of rebellion or disobedience.
  - Can be an act of commission or omission (Jas 4:17).
- The Sin Nature
  - Man's entire nature was corrupted in the fall (Rom 5:19; Eph 2:3).
  - This includes man's will (Gen 8:21), conscience (1 Tim 4:2), and intellect (2 Cor 4:4) as man's understanding has been darkened and his heart is hard (Eph 4:18).
- Imputed Sin
  - When Adam sinned, we all sinned with him (Rom 5:12).
  - Adam's original sin has been imputed to the entire human race (Rom 5:13-14).
  - The promised consequence of death (Gen 2:17) has been applied to every member of the human race (Rom 5:15-17).
- The Estate of Sin
  - Whether Jew or Gentile, we are under sin (Rom 3:9).
  - We are all "shut up" in the estate of sin so that God can show His mercy in the promise of salvation by faith (Rom 11:32; Gal 3:22).
- The Bible clearly indicates the devastating effects of sin upon man and the hopelessness of man's attempts to solve his own sin problem.
- The proper understanding of the doctrine of sin is essential to understanding God's remedy for our sin problem.

- Questions
  - What are some inadequate concepts of sin that are sometimes advanced?

  - How does the Bible, in general, define sin?

  - What sins are specifically mentioned in the Ten Commandments?

  - Why is sin always a sin against God?

  - What four aspects of sin are presented in the Bible?

  - What is meant by personal sin?

  - What is meant by imputed sin?

  - What does the Bible teach about the sin nature of man?

  - To what extent is man depraved?

  - Are all children are born sinners?

  - Is there scriptural evidence that the whole world is in the judicial estate of sin?

  - Why is a proper understanding of the doctrine of sin important for understanding the doctrine of salvation?