

The Battle for Truth?

Part 4 – What is Sin?

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INTRODUCTION

Isaiah 5:20

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

Isaiah cried out against those who would attack God's holy standards calling them evil, while at the same time create a standard that was opposed to God's order and call it good.

Sounds like today doesn't it! God's standards have been attacked on every front: morality, sexuality, gender, marriage, family, community, the role of government, and the list could go on.

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Sin and Love

God created a perfect world. There was no pain, suffering, or death. Everything worked together perfectly. Dominion (Stewardship) of Creation was given to Adam.

Many have asked, “Why did God create man with the ability to sin?”

It appears that every intelligent being that God created was given a choice.

These choices form the heart of love, service, and worship!

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Sin and Love

God could have created without the ability to choose “free will”. However, this would have made us like puppets. We would simply follow the pull of the strings.

We would sing and behave according to our programming.

One needs to ask, “Is such behavior true worship and true love?”

It appears that God wanted more from His creation!

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Sin and Love

Love and worship involve choices.

One can choose to place their affections on God, or they can place their desires elsewhere.

For beings to truly serve and worship God from a heart of Love, requires being given a choice not to.

It appears that every intelligent creature God made was given a choice to obey or to turn away.

Choices also carry consequences.

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Sin and Love

In the Garden of Eden, there was just one rule. Though there were also commands and expectations. Adam was to tend the Garden. We do not know all that this entailed, but it would have been enjoyable work. We know that the Garden was localized, so perhaps it was to expand the Garden's boundaries. Adam and Eve were also told to be fruitful and multiply.

The one rule was not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of God and Evil. It was on this command that Satan focused his attack.

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Sin and Love

Satan directed his attack on the character of God. He created doubt as to God's goodness and intent. He then focused their desire on the one thing that there were not allowed to have.

When Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," they committed in and act of direct rebellion against God. It was not done in ignorance or by mistake. It was a willful choice. We still suffer from the consequences of that choice.

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The World's View of Sin

Most religions have some concept of sin. They recognize some type of god and man's place within the order of the universe. Sin becomes some type of violation against how we treat god, our fellow man, or nature.

Though different religions have a concept of sin, they may have different levels and consequences for those sins.

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The World's View of Sin

There is a growing movement today that denies the existence of sin. This movement rejects the existence of God so there are no "Divine Mandates" for man to follow, therefore, there is no sin.

If man is a product of evolution, then man is not responsible to anybody but himself.

The problem with this idea, is it leaves mankind and society without a moral framework to protect the rights of others.

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The World's View of Sin

The need for some form of moral framework has fallen to society, government, and social media to establish some type of moral code that people can live within.

Today every special interest group has their own agenda that is being pushed. These groups attempt to liberate mankind for the "antiquated ideas of religion." God has been dismissed and mankind attempts to set themselves up as the moral lawgivers. The concepts of sex, marriage, gender, wealth, and social order are rapidly being rewritten.

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The World's View of Sin

Today, according to Barna, 72% of people identifying as “Christian” believe that man is basically good.

With regard to the latest school shootings, one commentator stated that, “these kids are basically good, their thinking has just been distorted by bad ideas and mental illness.” The solution, don’t look at the perpetrator, rather look at the issues in society that have created this situation. It always seems to come done to conservative ideas, religion, and cultural inequality.

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The World's View of Sin

The world sees man as basically good, and the problem with society is the traditional moral construct of traditional Biblical ideals.

The idea of good and evil have been flipped.

One website that I was looking at stated that “the real bad guys in today’s society are the ‘Nay Sayers’ who stand opposed to the new social order.”

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God's View of Sin

Psalm 2:1-6

Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? ²The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, *saying*, ³“Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.” ⁴He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The Lord shall hold them in derision. ⁵Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: ⁶“Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion.”

Though the world rebels against God and attempt to break His laws that restrain sin, does not negate the reality that God exists and will hold each individual responsible for their sin.

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God's View of Sin

1 John 3:4

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

You would think that sin would be easy to define. It does involve breaking God's Law. That is definitely sin. Galatians 3:24 teaches us that the Law was a tutor to show us our need for a Savior. It reveals our sinful hearts.

Sin is also our thoughts and imagination. Jesus taught in Matthew 5-7 that sin is not just the outward physical act, but our inner thoughts, attitudes and desires.

Sin can also be failing to do good to others (James 4:17)

It also involves going against one's conscience (Romans 14)

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God's View of Sin

Jesus summarized the Commandments of God into two broad principles.

1. Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and strength.
2. Love others like you love yourself. (Matthew 22:37-40)

In Barna's 2020 survey on the Christian World View, 52% of those who claim to be Christian believe that will get to heaven because they are "good." This grows out of the failure to define sin from God's perspective.

Romans 3:23 is clear, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Being good does not get one into heaven, sin is what keeps one out!

We will look at the Truth of How to Get to Heaven next week.

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God's View of Sin

I remember one of my Sunday School teachers having us each draw a straight line. I worked diligently to draw my line. I must say that I was very proud of my line. Then my teacher revealed my line for what it was. She took a ruler and her pen and drew a perfectly straight line next to mine.

This is the concept of being "good." When we compare ourselves to others, our "lines" look pretty straight. However, when we compare ourselves to the standard, we see that we fall short.

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God's View of Sin

God is not merely good or that He does good things, God is the standard of good! It is who He is. Good by this definition (the only one that counts in eternity) is that which is in keeping with the character, purpose, and will of God.

"Evil" by definition is anything that is contrary to the character, purpose, and will of God.

God created man and called him "good." Man chose to walk away from God's plan and purpose and "evil" entered the world.

Contrary to the lies of the world, None of us are good. We are all fallen creatures. We all need a Savior!

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So What ...

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

We have all turned from God to our own selfish way. None of us are good. We are broken, lost, and blind. Most people are just trying to do the best they can. As human beings we lack the understanding to know how to live, so we keep making choices that take us further away from the One who is Good.

The "good news" is that God has made a way of restoration. He laid on Him our "iniquity" (sin). We will look next time on "How does one get to Heaven?"

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