

SIN

by James P. Dawson

We have voiced many questions concerning sin. Is there an unforgivable sin? Which is the greatest sin? How does one categorize or list sins in their order of evil in God's sight? In PSA 32 and other Scriptures(1) we find three different types of actions that the Lord considers "sin."

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. . . . I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD: and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."PSA 32:1-5.

In the Old Testament sacrifices of grain and doves were offered by the individual worshipers in the Temple. These offerings and repentance were considered sufficient to cover "sins," which usually consisted of the type of "sin" that one experiences during everyday living, little white lies, sins of omission, anger and the like. We defined iniquity as "planned evil" or premeditated evil. This required a blood sacrifice and the Priest could only conduct the sacrifice in the Temple on the Feast of Atonement. When Christ went to the cross, He was the blood sacrifice for our sins and iniquities. However, Christ taught us to pray in LUK, (2) the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Transgression is the sin of trespassing on someone else's authority. When we take advantage of someone, or we usurp someone's rights, we should go to that person and ask for forgiveness. We should be quick to forgive those who slight us. In the KJV the word iniquity occurs 262 times, but in the NIV it occurs only 11 times in these same verses. The NIV substitutes "sin" 94 times, guilt 34 times, evil or evildoers 44 times, wicked or wickedness 27 times and wrong 16 times for the word iniquity. These words are less harsh than iniquity - planned evil - premeditated evil. This reduces the stabilizing effect on the individual and is another case where the NIV dilutes the WORD.

Sin

When the word sin is used as a noun, the word "hamartia" literally means "a missing of the mark," but this meaning is largely lost sight of in the NT. It is the most comprehensive term for moral obliquity. It is used of "sin" as:

- (a) **a principle or source of action, or an inward element producing acts:** ROM 3:9 5:12-13, 20; 6:1 2 7:7
- (b) **a governing principle or power,** e.g., ROM 6:6, "(the body) of sin," here "sin" is spoken of as an organized power, acting through the members of the body, though the seat of "sin" is in the will (the body is the organic instrument); in the next clause, and in other passages, as follows, this governing principle is personified, e.g., ROM 5:21 6:12 14 17 7:11 14 17 20 23 25 8:2 1CO 15:56; HEB 3:13 11:25 12:4; JAM 1:15 (2nd part);
- (c) **a generic term distinct from specific terms, yet sometimes inclusive of concrete wrong doing,** e.g., John 8:21 34 46 9:41 15:22 24 19:11; in I John 5:17, "all unrighteousness is sin" is not a definition of "sin" (as in I John 3:4), it gives a specification of the term in its generic sense;
- (d) **a sinful deed, an act of 'sin',** e.g., MAT 12:31; ACT 7:60; JAM 1:15 (1st part); JAM 2:9; 4:17; 5:15 20; IJO 5:16 (1st part).

Transgress, Transgression

Transgress is usually used as a verb, parabaino, which literally means "to go aside" "to go beyond," is chiefly used metaphorically of "transgressing" the tradition of the elders, MAT 15:2; the commandment of God, MAT 15:3; in Acts 1:25, of Judas, KJV, "by transgression fell" (RSV, "fell away"); in 2 John 1:9 some texts have this verb (KJV, "transgresseth"). The verb, hyperbaino, literally means "to go over" (hyper), and used metaphorically and rendered "transgress" in 1 Thessalonians 4:6 (KJV, "go beyond"), i.e., of "overstepping" the limits separating chastity from licentiousness, sanctification from sin. As a Noun, parabasis, is defined primarily as "a going aside," then, "an overstepping," is used metaphorically to denote "transgression" (always of a breach of law):

- (a) of Adam, ROM 5:14;
- (b) of Eve, 1TI 2:14;
- (c) negatively, where there is no law, since "transgression" implies the violation of law, none having been enacted between Adam's "transgression" and those under the Law, ROM 4:15;
- (d) of "transgressions" of the Law, GAL 3:19, where the statement "it was added because of transgressions" is best understood according to ROM 4:15; 5:13; 5:20; the Law does not make men sinners, but makes them "transgressors"; so sin becomes "exceedingly sinful," ROM 7:7-13. Conscience thus had a standard external to itself; by the Law teaches man his inability to yield complete obedience to God that by that they may become convinced of their need of a Savior, in ROM 2:23, RSV, "transgression (of the Law)," KJV, "breaking (the Law)"; HEB 2:2; 9:15.

- (e) The noun, paranomia, is rendered "transgression" in 2PE 2:16 in the RSV and as iniquity in the KJV and paraphrased as "lawbreaking" or "contrary to the law."

Iniquity

Iniquity, **anomia**, literally means "planned lawlessness" or "premeditated evil," and used in a way which suggests the meaning as lawlessness or wickedness. Its usual rendering in the NT is "iniquity," which literally means unrighteousness or premeditated evil. It occurs very frequently in the Septuagint, especially in the PSA, where it is found about 70 times. It is used:

- (a) of iniquity in general MAT 7:23; 13:41; 23:28; 24:12; ROM 6:19 (twice); 2 Corinthians 6:14, RSV, "iniquity" (KJV, "unrighteousness"); 2TH 2:3; 2TH 2:7, RSV, "lawlessness" (KJV, "iniquity"); TIT 2:14; HEB 1:9 IJO 3:4 (twice), RSV, "(doeth) . . . lawlessness," and "lawlessness" (KJV, "transgresseth the law" and "transgression of the law");
- (b) in the plural, of acts or manifestations of lawlessness, ROM 4:7; HEB 10:17. In the phrase "man of sin," 2TH 2:3, the word means contempt of Divine law, since the Antichrist will deny the existence of God.

This generation is embracing a series of translations of the Bible that makes it easier for them to "do their thing." It removes the pressures of the moral code in the Scriptures and leads us into the type of world conditions required for the end times, i.e., "as in the days of Lot"**(3)** and "in the days of Noah."**(4)**

The different types of "sin" required different ways of seeking forgiveness of the Jews, but when Christ went to the cross He covered all our "sins" with His blood. He took our unrighteousness and gave us His righteousness. The only unforgivable sin is denying Christ as Lord and Savior. As Christ forgave us, we in turn must forgive those who sin or transgress against us.

Man rates sins in order of presumed levels of evil. The presumed level is a relative term and is dependent on our beliefs, culture and circumstances. In the minds of most cultures, to kill a person is wrong, but we justify killing in war, for protections of our families and in other areas. The motivation for the killing is considered as the deciding factor if the killing is justified. However, we do not accept the same motivation in all cultures and beliefs. The death penalty is a good example. Some consider the commandment "thou shalt not kill" to mean that there is no justification for the death penalty or killing, even in war. Some translators suggest that this is more accurately interpreted as "**thou shalt not murder.**" This interpretation makes motivation as the prime criteria for justification of a killing. This is very evident in the way one looks at abortion. In my opinion to abort a fetus for convenience of the parents is wrong, it is murder; however, an abortion to save the mother's life I accept. In the later case one is choosing one life over the other, a premeditated act of killing, a definition for murder. Is killing right and/or justified to save the mother's life?

We consider murder as a much greater sin than a little white lie, and we accept all levels of "sin" in between these. However, how does God rate our sins? God is perfect and therefore cannot accept anything that lacks perfection. Our belief in Christ is the only thing that makes us acceptable to Him. Then any sin, any imperfections are unacceptable. The little white lie is just as much an imperfection as a murder, in God's eyes. That is why God to justify us in his sight required Christ's sacrifice.

Now that you have read these articles on the web pages, www.aaronc.com and www.jp dawson.com and seen how God works through individuals, through His creation and nature, through countries and history and how He reveals Himself through prophecy it is time to take a look inside yourself.

Cited References

1. **EXO 34:7** Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.
2. **LEV 5:1** And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity.
3. **PSA 51:2-3** Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.
4. **PSA 85:2-4** Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger. Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger toward us to cease.
5. **MIC 1:13; Job 31:33; EZE 18:24, 30; 21:24.**
6. **LUK 11:2-4.** When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.
7. **LUK 17:28-30** Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.
8. **IPE 3:20.** Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.