

I. INTRODUCTION: THE FACT OF SIN

- The world: *our greatest problems are structural*
- Christianity: *our greatest problem is moral*

II. THE PROBLEM OF SIN: GOD'S PERFECT STANDARD

III. SIN IN THE BIBLICAL STORY

- Genesis 3: crucial for understanding whole Bible
- The meaning of sin:
 - Missing the mark
 - Wickedness, perversion, iniquity
 - Transgression, rebellion, crime

- *Isaiah 59:2* “But your iniquities are separating you from your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not listen.”

- The solution to sin: Jesus the Messiah (John 1:29, Matt 1:21)

IV. THE FALL: THE ESSENCE OF SIN (GENESIS 3)

Adam & Eve's sin...

- 1) Sought to redefine the basis for **knowledge**: it gave a different answer to the question, “What is true?”
- 2) Sought to redefine the basis for **moral standards**: it gave a different answer to the question, “What is right?”
- 3) Sought to redefine the basis for **identity**: it gave a different answer to the question, “Who am I?”

V. THE ORIGIN OF SIN

- Sin does not originate in God (1 John 1:5, Hab. 1:13, Jas. 1:13, Deut. 32:4)
- The angelic fall (Jude 6, 2 Pet 2:4)
- God is totally sovereign, yet never the author of sin

VI. A THEOLOGY OF SIN: SEVEN STATEMENTS

- 1) **Inherited Guilt:** We are counted guilty because of Adam's sin.
(Romans 5:12-21)

- 2) **Inherited Corruption:** We have a sinful nature because of Adam's sin.
(Psalm 51:5, 58:3)

- 3) **Total Depravity:** In our natural state we lack all spiritual good before God. (Gen. 6:5-6, Ps. 14:2-3; Isa. 64:6; Eph. 2:1-3)

Robert Reymond:

*“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.”**

* Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), 450.

4) **Total Inability:** In our actions we are totally unable to do spiritual good before God. (Jer. 13:23, Rom. 8:7-8, 1 Cor. 2:14, 2 Cor. 4:4)

Again, **Robert Reymond:**

“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. He is unable to discern, to love, or to choose the things that are pleasing to God. As Jeremiah says, ‘Can the Cushite change his skin, or a leopard his spots? If so, you might be able to do what is good, you who are instructed in evil.’”[†]

5) All are sinful before God. (Ps. 143:2; 1 Kings 8:46; Rom. 3:23)

6) A single sin makes us legally guilty before God. (Rom. 5:15, Jas. 2:10-11)

John Murray explains that God will not be false to his own character:

“To be complacent towards that which is the contradiction of his own holiness would be a denial of himself. So that 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?”[‡]

7) We deserve God’s eternal wrath because of our sin. (Eph 2:3, John 3:36)

VII. CONCLUSION: THE SINLESS SAVIOR

[†] Ibid., 453.

[‡] John Murray, “The Nature of Sin,” in *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1997), 2:81-82, quoted in *ibid.*, 457.