

SIN

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Sin is any act or offense that goes against the laws and principles governing relationships between God and human beings, government, and society at large.

RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING OF SIN

In matters of faith, especially Christianity and Islam, sin is understood to have a heavenly origin because the first sin was committed there. However, other religions that are not based on Christian, Jewish, or Islamic faith—such as Buddhism and Hinduism—tend to base their beliefs more heavily on human existence and conduct. This makes it more difficult to understand the origin and development of sin.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF SIN

The Bible is the first book in which the history of the origin of sin is presented. It is important first to understand why we should believe the information found in this book. The Bible was not the first book ever written; that is not the case. The Bible is a collection of many books that tell one story in a direct way.

The first biblical book to present the history of sin is one of the five books of Moses, known as the Pentateuch. It is the book of Genesis. The word Pentateuch comes from Greek and means “five books.” “Penta” means five, while “teuchos” refers to a book or scroll. In Judaism these books are called the Torah, and they are a foundation of Jewish worship.

Genesis, the book that tells the story of sin, was written between the 13th and 15th centuries before Jesus. Estimates place it around 1200–1400 BC. It was written in various wilderness settings, including the wilderness of Sinai, the wilderness of Kadesh-barnea, and other deserts where the Israelites stayed, as well as in the plains of Moab.

THE STORY OF SIN IN HEAVEN

Another book that complements Genesis by describing the story of sin in heaven is the book of the prophet Ezekiel. It says:

Ezekiel 28:13–18

“You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: carnelian, topaz and jasper; chrysolite, onyx and beryl; sapphire, turquoise and emerald; and gold. The workmanship of your settings and mountings was prepared on the day you were created. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mountain of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. By your many sins and dishonest trade you have desecrated your sanctuaries. So I made a fire come out from you, and it consumed you, and I

reduced you to ashes on the ground in the sight of all who were watching.”

THE FIRST SIN

This is the story of the first sin: where it happened, who committed it, and what followed afterward.

According to the account, the one who committed the sin was an angel from the order of cherubim. He was extremely beautiful, and God had anointed him to dwell with Him in His sanctuary and to walk in God's authority. But after some time, this very beautiful cherub became corrupt. Because of his beauty, he looked at himself and considered himself to be of a very high rank, which caused him to become proud and rebellious. Furthermore, his great wisdom became corrupted by his beauty. He became full of evil plans and displayed wickedness and violent behavior while he was in the holy dwelling place, heaven.

In short, the cherub who was cast down—Satan—was expelled because of the sin of pride. Pride grew into violence, arrogance, and wickedness. That is how the first sin came into existence. Let us now discuss how we came to find ourselves in a condition of being separated from the glory of God because of sin.

Genesis 2:17

“But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

ADAM AND EVE

After God created the first man, Adam, He gave him a command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. One may ask why God would forbid the human being He had created in His image and whom He loved from eating from a tree that would enable him to know good and evil, including what he should do and what he should avoid.

The answer is not that God did not trust Adam. Nor was it a trap designed to test his faithfulness. No. The reason God placed that tree there was to demonstrate that He had given human beings the ability to think and make decisions, and this is what distinguished them from animals.

God knew what Adam needed in order to live forever and enjoy life, both for himself and his family. He knew Adam well and wanted to protect him. That is why God gave him a command not to disobey Him, so that he would not die.

The key point is this: obeying God was the right answer rather than disobeying what had been commanded. The principles of government in this world also follow the principle of the law God gave humanity for protection. For example, if a government says, “Wear a face covering outside because there is an epidemic; if you do not, you will be quarantined and fined,” the government is not setting a trap in order to quarantine or fine its citizens. Rather, it is a way of protecting them from infection. That is part of caring for citizens and serving them. When a person refuses to obey such a law and punishment follows, it is not the government's fault; it is the person's disobedience. This is how God acted in Eden toward Adam and Eve. He acted out of love and for their protection.

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

THE TEMPTATION AND THE FALL

That is what God intended for Adam and Eve when He gave them the command. He knew that within it were peace rather than harm, and that it would give them hope for what He had prepared for them.

Soon afterward, the cherub who had fallen because of sin came to the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve lived. This is what happened:

Genesis 3:1–24

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, “You must not eat from any tree in the garden”?’

The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”’

‘You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’

He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.’

And He said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?’

The man said, ‘The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.’ Then the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’

So the LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’

To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’

To Adam He said, ‘Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, “You must not eat from it,” cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the

field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.'

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

And the LORD God said, 'The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.' So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After He drove the man out, He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."

SATAN AND THE ROOT OF DISOBEDIENCE

After Satan took the form of a serpent, he did what he had done in heaven. Just as he had deceived many angels who fell with him, he came to deceive Adam and Eve so that they too would become cursed and be expelled from God's dwelling place. There was nothing else Satan could do to continue fighting against God except to attack what had come from God's love—Adam and Eve. Yes, he achieved his objective. Even the existence of Satan has meaning in relation to the existence of human beings.

This time, the sin of pride and rebellion that had been committed in heaven by Satan had already produced its first offspring, called disobedience. Disobedience became the second root from which all sins sprang.

THE BONDAGE OF SIN

Since that time, many thousands of years have passed, and sin has taken many different forms. Yet, despite this, God has never abandoned humanity. He continued to care for the remarkable work of His hands. He knew very well that He had created human beings in His image. He always hoped that humanity would return to obey Him and humble itself.

Satan, meanwhile, continued to invent many schemes and discovered another powerful weapon of sin called bondage. Bondage is a condition of being tied to a habit or action in such a way that giving it up becomes difficult and seems impossible. Satan introduced the bondage of sin. The foundation that sustains sin is bondage. It is a spirit associated with Satan because he himself caused beings to become enslaved to doing evil.

The bondage associated with Satan also has its own forms of bondage. After angels sinned, took human bodies, came down to earth, and sought women, leaving the dwelling God had prepared for them, they later longed to return to heaven. They pleaded intensely with a man of God to intercede for them, but God rejected their request and punished them by making them demons—fallen angels who had sinned.

They joined those who had fallen earlier and descended with Satan, and together they devastated the earth. They are described as causing drunkenness, sexual immorality, murder, war, violence, lying, hatred, witchcraft, pride, and many other evils. Each sin is represented as being associated with a demon that causes it. This makes sin spiritual while also making it visible in the human body.

THE LAW AND THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

God gave many thousands of laws to prevent people from committing sin. It was extremely difficult to provide a lasting solution. Later God gave His Son as a ransom so that everyone who believes in Him could

be freed from the chains of sin and live.

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

SALVATION THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

In this way, the command God gave in the Garden of Eden, which was intended to protect humanity from dying because of disobedience, was given again through His Son Jesus Christ, so that whoever believes in that Son—the new command—will not perish. Just as the Eden command was fulfilled through obedience, life through His Son Jesus Christ is received through believing in Him.

The laws that were meant to protect people from sin caused many to die because they were difficult, but they also saved many who obeyed them because they were righteous. The remedy for sin sometimes required sacrifices. At times, removing sin from among the people required the sinner to be put to death. Thus, the burden of the law also weighed heavily on people who were already burdened by sin.

Because of His great love, when God saw that being made righteous from sin through obedience to the law was too difficult for people and that destruction was drawing near, He gave His Son Jesus Christ as a sacrifice—the ransom for sin.

THE POWER OF JESUS TO SAVE

For more than two thousand years, the lives of those who have believed in Him have been changing every day. For all these years, those who believe in Him have been receiving freedom from the bondage of sin. When Jesus forgives your sins, He is also described as healing your diseases. He continues to free those who are bound by Satan's weapon of the bondage of sin.

Jesus is still working today. He is full of mercy and love. In Him there is power that overcomes sin and drives out demons; it is power that causes us to turn away from many evils. Those who enter into Him become children of God, and God protects them, strengthens them, changes their history, delivers them from a generational pattern of sin, and erases the record Satan uses to accuse them—the record of sins. He took that record away by hanging it on the cross and rose again victorious.

When Satan hears the name of Jesus, he flees, together with all his evil. Do you want to be saved? It is possible, and it is by grace. Other things that people need may require money and payment, but salvation is by grace. Salvation requires believing in Jesus so that He may save you from the sins that have enslaved you.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

Take courage; He loves you. God created everything so that it would benefit you and so that you could govern it. He did not create you for poverty. He did not create you to die of hunger. He did not create you to perish in sin. I know that such conditions do not please you and that you do not want them. I know that you have tried for a long time to fight for yourself, but it has failed. This is the time to accept the Lord Jesus and let Him do it for you.

Listen to the promise:

Psalm 121

“I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD watches over you—the LORD is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD will keep you from all harm—He will watch over your life. The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.”

A CALL TO FAITH

This is the promise God makes with you today if you choose to believe in Jesus. God will protect you, be with you, provide for you, change your life, bless you, and make you a blessing to others.

You are a sign of God's love. You are loved. One reason angels exist, besides worshipping God, is so that they may serve and protect you. In God's eyes you are more valuable than the world. You are extremely valuable. That is why Satan fights you so intensely and tries to lead you into sin. He knows very well that what God has prepared for you and the plans God has for you are greater than anything else.

Have you fallen? That is evidence that you once stood. This is the time to tell Jesus that you are returning, no matter what condition you are in. Do not be overwhelmed by sorrow; do not harden your heart. Love is calling you. Life is seeking you. Get up. Advance in the name of Jesus Christ.

Heaven and earth are waiting for you, either to judge you or to reward you. Choose what is good and reject what is evil. Choose life and reject death. Choose Jesus and reject Satan. Turn to the gospel and turn your back on Satan's schemes and temptations.

If you change, others will change too. Many will change because you have changed. Many will live because you have found life. Families will be healed because of you. Society and the wider community will be healed because you have also been healed. This is what God wants from you: to become His partner in telling others about saving grace and showing them the way—and the way is Jesus Christ.

Do not let Satan whisper to you about how insignificant and unworthy you are. God sees you as a partner and a good ambassador. God does not focus on your failures, your body, or the sins you have committed. God cares about your heart and your life. You are a flower. Just as it is pleasing to the eyes to look at a flower, so it pleases God to look at you. You are deeply loved. Accept that love. If human love brings you joy, is being loved by the Creator of heaven and earth not far greater than human love?

PRAYER OF SALVATION

Pray this prayer with me if you want to be saved from Satan and from sin and to return to Jesus if you have fallen:

Prayer

“Lord Jesus, I know that my life is governed by Your grace. I confess my sins and ask for forgiveness. I know that I am a child of God and that I was created for a holy life filled with blessing. I choose to become the person You want me to be. I come to You, Lord; forgive me for the things I have sinned against You. I

choose life instead of death. I choose righteousness instead of sin. I choose You, Lord Jesus, instead of Satan.”

FINAL COUNSEL

Then go to the church nearest to you, or find a Christian church, and tell them about the decision you have made so that they can follow you up and baptize you in much water, so that you may begin living a blessed life accompanied by the promise of Jesus Christ.

May all the good things God gives reach you and all that belongs to you, and may the plan be for us to meet in heaven.