**What Is Sin – Lesson 1: Original Sin**

**Genesis 4:7a** If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.

**"Are right and wrong convertible terms, dependent upon popular opinion?"** – William Lloyd Garrison

1805-1879 - An American abolitionist, one of the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society, demanding ‘immediate emancipation’ of slaves in the United States.

* Is the definition of right/wrong (sin) a changing concept that is at the whim of people?
* Is there more than one right/wrong set of conditions?
* Who decides what is right or wrong, what is acceptable and what is sin?

The concept of ‘sin’ is widely disputed among almost all people, with differences based on religion, culture, personality, profession, family (any differences between two people will vary the outlook on any given subject).

In this lesson set, sin will be examined to determine what is sin, who is it a sin against (who defines and judges), and what are the consequences of sin.

The lessons will be segmented into three parts:

1. Original Sin
2. A World Of Sin
3. Unpardonable Sin

Some fundamental terms used in this lesson set:

**Dispensation** A distinct arrangement or period in time that bounds the relationship between man and God

**Sin**  Transgression of God’s law

**Transgress** Infringe or go beyond the bounds of (such as breaking a law)

**Law** The system of rules that a particular country or community recognizes as regulating the

actions of its members and may enforce by the imposition of penalties. In this context,

the governing entity is God and the members are humanity

**Lesson 1 – Original Sin**

To understand sin today, it is necessary to understand the definition of sin, the origin of sin, and how it affects mankind, from the individual through to the collective population.

**Sin Defined**

**Psalm 19:7** The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

* The ‘law’ is the standard that defines the difference between ‘right’ and ‘wrong’; it is with regard to God as the author of this requirement (what is acceptable, what is not acceptable)
* The law is perfect because God is perfect – It reflects God’s perfect will

**1 John 3:4** Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

* Sin is very simply ‘the transgression of the law’:
  + It is not cumulative (no distinction based on quantity – One either has or has not transgressed)
  + It is not incrementalized (no concept of one sin being worse than another)
  + It is not marginalized (no ‘partial’ transgression – either is or is not in compliance)
  + It is not assigned by standing (one size fits all – A transgression carries the same weight regardless of social position)

[**Origin of Sin**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Joshua-9-16/)

**Genesis 1:26-27 The creation of Man**

[**(26**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Joshua-9-16/)**)** And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

[**(27**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Joshua-9-16/)**)** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

The creation of man was without restriction – No law given to transgress / No concept of right or wrong – Adam and Eve were free to behave however it pleased themselves (even if not acceptable by today’s social standards), as they discovered God’s creation (the earth and all it contained).

**Romans 5:13** For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

The initial dispensation of creation had no sin (at this time, Adam is a sinless man), as there was no standard established. Man pleased God simply by existing, with all that man could imagine.

* The same view parents accept a newborn into their household – There is no accountability, because all is done in innocence.

**Genesis 2:15-17 The First ‘Law’**

[**(15**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Joshua-9-16/)**)** And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

[**(16**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Joshua-9-16/)**)** And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

[**(17**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Joshua-9-16/)**)** But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

As man is taken from the site of the creation, he is placed into a specially prepared place (a garden), where there is a change in the relationship between man and God:

* Man is assigned responsibility (job) – To dress and keep the garden
* Man is given restriction (law) – To define what is acceptable to God and what is not
* Man is given consequence (punishment) – The price for transgressing the law of God is defined as death

The garden is not simply a secluded location like a sanctuary (or a prison), but a nurturing environment to provide man with:

* Sustenance (all the provisions of food with variety and availability – GEN 2:9)
* Self-sufficient (no need for irrigation or special agricultural techniques – GEN 2:5-6)
* Resources (as man learns and changes, the garden provides materials to engage his imagination – GEN 2:12)
* Entertainment (man was encouraged to interact with the rest of the living creation - GEN 2:19-20)
* Companionship (man received the gift of fellowship, commonality and love – GEN 2:21-25)

Man entered into a new condition of living in every sense of the word – Man is now accountable to God with regard to God’s will.

**Genesis 3:6 The First Sin (transgression of the law)**

[**(6**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Joshua-9-16/)**)** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

God established the standard of acceptance (GEN 2:17) and man transgressed. In this transgression, Adam became a ‘sinner’:

* The consequence for disobedience (sin) was condemnation to death – Adam’s flesh (to include all the fruit of his flesh) is to be consumed in death

**Romans 5:12** Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

* The condemnation of mankind is due to the ‘original sin’. As the children of Adam (all have descended from him), all carry the curse of death.

[**Consequence of Sin**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Joshua-9-16/)

**Genesis 3:10, 12 - Shame (to know the wrong choice was made)**

[**(10**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Joshua-9-16/)**)** And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself

* Man now knew that the actions of man failed to please God, as law was transgressed

[**(12**](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Joshua-9-16/)**)** And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

* First rule of breaking the law: Blame someone else (causes division between men)

**Genesis 3:16, 17, 23 – Man’s nurturing environment is gone**

**(16)** Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

- The woman is cursed with pain and servitude

**(17)** And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life

- The man is cursed with labor and responsibility

**(23)** Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

- Both are removed from the garden, and sent into the much harsher world

**Genesis 3:21 – Substitutionary death**

**(21)** Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

- As death is the punishment for transgression of the law, innocent blood must be shed (man is no longer innocent – it is a price man cannot pay).

- The animal is not bound by any law (no behavioral requirements were issued to the animal kingdom) and can be used to provide reconciliation (as defined by law)

- This is the foundation for the ritual of animal sacrifice to attempt to pay the penalty for sin, as the skins of animals were used to cover man, and hide their shame.

This act by God established the requirement for innocent (sinless) blood to atone (cover) sin, and is the foundation of the necessity of the Christ as the acceptable blood sacrifice (blameless – Not of the flesh of Adam, not condemned) to atone for the sin of the believer.

**Next Lesson: A World of Sin**

**What Is Sin – Lesson 1: Original Sin**

**Study Questions**

1. According to Psalm 19:7, how is God’s law defined?

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1. According to 1 John 3:4, what is the definition of sin?

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1. According to Genesis 2:15, what responsibility was man given in the Garden of Eden?

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1. According to Genesis 2:15, what is the consequence of transgressing God’s law?

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1. Complete the following scripture:

**Romans 5:13** For until the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**True / False**

T F Man was created in sin.

T F The sin of Adam is in me now (my flesh is condemned).

T F Man was created into a world of rules.

T F Man’s sin brought shame.