

The Book of Hebrews on Sin

By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©1992 (Rev. 2010)

1. What is sin?

Sin basically is anything that doesn't conform to God's character. The Bible uses many words for sin.

Old Testament (Hebrew words used in the Bible)

- "hattat" meaning "missing the mark" (used 522xs; Ex. 20:20; Judges 20:16; Proverbs 8:36)
- "ra" meaning "breaking up, wickedness" (used 444xs; Gen. 3:5; 38:7; Judge 11:27)
- "avar" meaning "to cross over; transgression" (used 600xs; Num. 14:41-42; Deut. 17:2)
- "pasha" meaning "rebellion; transgression" (1 Kings 12:19; 2 Kings 3:5; Proverbs 28:21)
- "awon" meaning "defiance" (Num 15:30-31)
- "shagag" meaning "going astray, error" (Isa. 28:7; Lev. 4:2; Num. 15:22)
- "rasha" meaning "opposition to righteousness" (Ex. 2:13; Ps. 9:16; Prov. 15:9)
- "taah" meaning "to wander, go astray" (Num. 15:22; Ps. 58:3; 119:21)

New Testament (Greek words used in the Bible)

- "hamartia" meaning "missing the mark" (used 227xs; Acts 2:38; Romans 5:12; 6:1; 1 Cor. 15:3)
- "anomia" meaning "lawlessness" (1 Tim. 1:9; 2 Cor. 6:14; 2 Thess. 2:3)
- "parabatsis" meaning "transgression, stepping aside" (Rom. 2:23; 5:14; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 9:15)
- "planao" meaning "to go astray" (1 Pt. 2:25; 1 Jn. 1:8)
- "paraptoma" meaning "falling away, false step" (Rom. 5:15-20; 2 Cor. 5:19; Gal. 6:1; Eph. 2:1)
- "apeitheia" meaning "rebellion: (Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2)

(Basic Theology, Charles C. Ryrie, Wheaton: Victor, 1986, Pp. 209-212; Christian Theology, Millard Erickson, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989, Pp. 564-575; The Moody Handbook of Theology, Paul Enns, Chicago: Moody, 1989, p. 109; Baker's Dictionary of Theology, Everett Harrison, Grand Rapids; Baker, 1979, Pp. 486-489; Systematic Theology, Wayne Grudem, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994, Pp. 490-491)

The word "sin" (Gr. "hamartia") appears 27xs in the Book of Hebrews.

Whatever Hebrews says about sin will not contradict the rest of the New Testament.

- All of a believer's sins, past, present and future were paid for on the Cross
- All believers will still sin until we get to glory
- No sin of the believer will cause him to lose his salvation.

2. What problem does sin pose?

- Sin is "deceitful," (Heb. 3:13)
- Sin is "pleasurable," (Heb. 11:25)

3. What are the results of sin?

- Sin brings misery because sin's pleasure does not last, ("passing" Heb. 11:25)
- Sin "hardens" one's heart, (Heb. 3:13)

4. What did Jesus do to sin?

- Jesus sanctified from sin, (Heb. 13:11)
- Jesus purged sin, (Heb. 1:3)
- Jesus became the "propitiation for sin, (Heb. 2:17)
- Jesus as High Priest dealt with sin, (Heb. 5:1)
- Jesus put away sin, (Heb. 9:26; 10:6,8)
- Jesus doesn't remember it any more, (Heb. 8:12)

5. What helps us in our struggle with sin?

- Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses, (Heb. 4:15)
- Believers need to exhort us daily, (Heb. 3:13)
- God the Father may chastise us, (Heb. 12:11)
- The Holy Spirit's witness to us, (Heb. 10:15)

6. What do we need to do with sin?

(The writer of Hebrews does not talk of losing salvation, nor of needing to be re-saved)

- We need to "lay aside" the sin (Heb. 12:1)
- We need to strive against sin, (Heb. 12:4)