

Session 1: We need a saviour: God's wrath at our sin**Welcome and introduction**

- **A doctrine of salvation:** We've called this course "God's Great Salvation." Why? It's from Hebrews 2:3 - "how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation?"
- **A course outline:** We'll spend eleven weeks working through this course. You can see the subjects listed in our termcard. But there are really three stages to it...
 - Sin and wrath: that's today – why we need to be saved.
 - Salvation accomplished: we'll look at Christ's saving work – how we have completed the work of salvation.
 - Salvation applied: how do I benefit from all that Christ has done?
- **Our method: systematic theology.** That's not something to be scared of! But what is it?
 - Expository Bible teaching is our usual model at Immanuel. That means we teach our way through books of the Bible, listening to God's voice in all passages of Scripture in an ordered and sequential way.
 - But it's also important to look at the great themes of Scripture as taught by many different passages. That's the job of systematic theology.
- **How will it work each week?** There'll be talking from me, some time in groups; please do ask questions. I'm planning to put up on the website each week a transcript of the session as well as the audio recording and the handout. It's likely we won't get to the bottom of each topic – and you can use the transcript to go a bit deeper and fuller – and you can read through bits which I'll intentionally leave out.
- **Bible-reading & opening prayer – Romans 1:16-32**

Why begin with sin? It's a bit of a gloomy topic!

A helpful quote from an Australian pastor called Simon Manchester:

- "We will never appreciate our saviour unless we appreciate our sin. Shallow views of sin lead to shallow views of Jesus."

Unless we understand the problem, we won't understand the solution.

Like a doctor, if we diagnose the sickness incorrectly, we will end up taking the wrong medicine.

So, before we look at God's Great Salvation we're going to look at human beings. Consider what the Bible teaches about men and women and the problem of sin. [ie. Biblical anthropology.]

Remember: this is not an academic exercise

- it's one of the most practical of all doctrines.
- this describes what we are by nature: which will humble us.
- and what God has saved us from: which will make us thank him afresh.

1. What is sin?

(a) Key Bible words for “sin”

The Bible DOES talk a lot about sin. And it uses many different words to describe sin. About 50 different words. Showing apart from anything else that God is really HOLY.

The most common words for sin speak of:

- Missing the mark... of Guilt... and of Rebellion against a King.

(We’ve not got time right now to see that in the Bible. You can do that at home if you wish.)

Exodus 34:6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." (ESV)

Let’s think about 3 common words for sin – we bump into all three in Ex 34:7.¹

What do these three words mean?

- “sin” = “missing the mark” or “falling short of the goal.”² Man deviates from the path marked out by God. Veers away to left or right. And this makes you unclean before God. Sin needs to be washed away.
- “iniquity.”³ Sometimes translated as “wickedness”. But it really means bearing “guilt” or “punishment”. You’ve sinned, and therefore you’re guilty before God and under God’s punishment.
- “transgression.”⁴ This has the idea of “rebellion” against a great king, of open defiance by inferior creatures against our great God.

Other Bible words:

- ‘ungodliness,’ ‘trouble,’ ‘emptiness,’ ‘falsehood,’ ‘worthlessness,’ ‘foolishness,’ ‘stupidity,’ ‘sickness,’ ‘injustice,’ ‘evil,’ ‘error,’ ‘lack of reverence,’ ‘trespass,’ ‘debt,’ and ‘ruin.’

Sin is horrible, isn’t it. Let’s just listen to God, in some other Bible passages, talking about human sin. See the various words and ways in which sin is described.

Jeremiah 2:13, "My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water."

Mark 7:20-22, He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.'²¹ For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,²² greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.²³ All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

Romans 14:23, "Everything that does not come from faith is sin."

Hebrews 3:12, "See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God."

1 John 3:4, "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness."

But the key Bible concept behind sin is IDOLATRY and FALSE WORSHIP...

¹ On “sin”, see New International Dictionary of OT Theology and Exegesis, vol. 2, pp87-93.

² Hebrew *hatta’t* – occurs nearly 600 times in OT. The NT word *hamartia* is usually a translation of this Hebrew word. We see the basic meaning in Judges 20:16, “Among all these soldiers... each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.”

³ Hebrew *awon* – occurs 231 times in the OT.

⁴ Hebrew *pasha’* – occurs 136 times in the OT. For eg. Ezekiel 2:3.

(b) Key Bible concept: idolatry

Romans 1:18-25

We read this passage at the beginning of our time together. Now...

Questions for group discussion:

- How can we tell that God is angry at human sin?
- Why is God angry?
- Describe the different dimensions of human sin.
- Think: why are we told so often that humans are “basically good”?

Verse 18 confronts us head on with the wrath of God. To which we’ll return in a few minutes time. But what is it that provokes the anger of God? Answer: because people wickedly suppress the truth. Follow through Paul’s logic:

Verses 19 and 20 teach us that God’s God-ness is written all over creation. His God-ness is “understood from what has been made.” God’s fingerprints are all over creation. The truth about the creator God is everywhere.

As a result, “men are without excuse.” They have no excuse for ignoring the one true God. God has revealed himself in creation. There’s sufficient revelation that to render us without excuse. Not enough to save... but enough to condemn.

And condemn he must, because we “suppress the truth.” Creation screams of the Godness of God... but people would rather poke out their eyes and shove fingers in their ears than see and hear it. But that’s not the worst of it.

Verses 21-23 teach us this: that having suppressed truth about the true God, man then pursues idols. Look carefully at those verses.

- The true God is rejected: he’s not glorified... he’s not thanked for his amazing generosity
- Our minds and hearts are darkened and become spiritually useless because of sin.
- And there’s a terrible exchange – a wicked swap: We swap worship of the true God for worship of creatures. Notice: we don’t CEASE worshipping when we stop worshipping the true God. Human’s can’t stop worshipping. But Rather than worship the creator... we worship creatures.

What’s described in v23 is actual idolatry. The fashioning of actual idols before which men bow down and worship. But when anything displaces God, then it is an idol. Anything that prevents us from glorifying God and giving him thanks... is an idol.

A couple of applications before we go on:

- We are all worshippers. We either worship the one true God... or we are an idol worshipper. (You don’t have to be a chicken-sacrificing Satan worshipper to be an idolater).
- Idolatry is the heart of sin. “Sins” and sinful behavior are not the heart of the problem. Deep within me is the urge to reject God as God and to devote myself to something else that is not God. “Sin” is not primarily about “sins.”
- As we’ll see in a minute God rightly hates idolatry, because it robs glory from him and gives it to another. Idolatry... the worshipping of other gods... is NOT OK. Even if our relativistic age says that it is.

2. How does sin affect us?

(a) sin is found in every person

1 Kings 8:46 "...for there is no one who does not sin..."

Romans 3:10-12, "As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

1 John 1:8-10, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives."

Young, old, rich, poor. There are no "good" people. It's not just the obviously wicked who are sinful.

- We need to remember this in our evangelism. When people stream into the station on Monday morning: they are all stained deep with sin.
- This is true of people IN churches as well as people OUTSIDE of churches. Christians and non-Christians. Us. You. Me. This is ME.
- Every person, except the Lord Jesus Christ: (how very wonderful! More on the sinless Jesus in our next session).

(b) sin infects every part of every person: "total depravity"

It's not just that sin is found in EVERY person who has ever lived. But more: sin infects EVERY PART of every single person.

Romans 7:18, "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature."

The apostle Paul says: If you search inside the human soul, you will find nothing pure, nothing wholly good. If you search inside the Christian's soul – in his sinful nature – you will find nothing pure, nothing wholly good.

Romans 8:7-8, "the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God."

It is impossible for someone controlled by sin to do anything that pleases God. Because every part of them. Every action. Every desire. Is infected by sin. This is the doctrine of "total depravity."

Definition of total depravity:

- NOT that we are as bad as we could be. No-one is as bad as we could be.
- BUT that no part of us is untouched by sin. Every part of every human. Every single human thought, word, deed, endeavour is infected by sin in some way.⁵

And this situation is something that we CANNOT FIX. To use Bible language we are enslaved to sin. We are gripped by what is sometimes called the bondage of the will...

(c) **THEREFORE we are unable to save ourselves.**

This is an implication of total depravity.

- total depravity entails total inability.... / Total depravity → total inability
- Because we are wholly infected with sin, we cannot free ourselves.

This state is sometimes called "the bondage of the will."

⁵ One implication of the doctrine of total depravity is that no desire or action of ours is ever as good as it should be. Therefore, nothing we do can ever earn God's favour. Even the godly actions of Christians are still at some level infected by sin.

Listen to some Bible texts describe our slavery to sin...

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

- notice: our hearts are “beyond cure.” This is terminal illness. We cannot fix the problem.

Ephesians 2:1, “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins”

- the unsaved soul is “dead.” You can’t get off the mortuary slab and do anything. You’re unable.

Let’s listen to Jesus talking about our natural spiritual state in John’s Gospel.⁶

Look up and read: **John 8:31-45, 59**

Notice how Jesus describes unbelievers in v34? “a slave to sin.” If we can bit it a bit more forcefully: human beings do not have “free will.” Not if we mean “I’m free to choose God – or not to choose God.” No. We are not free to choose God. [Unbelievers sin “necessarily”.]

How are can God hold us responsible for our sin? How is fair for God to judge sinners who are slaves to sin? The answer’s this: because we WANT to in. We can see that in **John 8:44**

- “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire.” [NIV]

Jesus says: your will is bound to sin. But you want to sin. Your will is to sin. You sin voluntarily. Nobody forces un unbeliever to sin against their will.

Here’s an illustration:

- A man builds a room. He’s on the inside as he builds it. There’s a door in his room, but there’s only a handle on the outside. And he slams the door shut. Here’s the thing...
- Adam, for that’s his name. He has loads of kids. And he and they cannot leave the room. They are bound there. They’ve bound themselves there by their sin. BUT Adam and his kids LIKE it there. They don’t want to leave.
- He’s not free to leave the room – he’s not free to choose Christ... But he is free to do what he wants – and he always wants to reject Christ.

And that is sufficient freedom to be held responsible.⁷

- on his own he CAN’T repent and believe... but nor does he want to.

Here’s an example from the Bible - the example of Judas:

- Matt 26:14-16 says Judas betrayed Jesus for money. He wanted to do that. Nobody coerced him to betray Jesus. It was voluntary.
- Yet, Jn 17:12 says Judas betrayed him to fulfil the Scriptures, & it calls him the “Son of Destruction” or one “destined for destruction”. He sinned necessarily.

We’ve seen the deep inability of man. The deep, dark sinfulness of sin.

[Here are some helpful summaries from the 39 Articles,⁸ the Westminster Confession,⁹ and J.I Packer.¹⁰] We’ll draw out some applications of this doctrine at the end. *ANY QUESTIONS...*

⁶ Jesus on humanity’s state in John’s Gospel: we are spiritually dead [5:24], a slave to sin [8:34], children of the devil [8:44], spiritually blind [9:39], facing judgement [5:24], in the flesh, and therefore helpless [6:63], doers of evil [7:7], walking in darkness [8:12], not from heaven [8:23], not part of Jesus’ flock [10:26].

⁷ To use technical language we affirm liberty of spontaneity (we always do what we want, although we cannot act against a compelling disposition), but we deny liberty of indifference (indifference to two alternatives).

⁸ Article 10 of the 39 Articles states: “The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith; and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.”

⁹ Westminster Confession IX.3: “Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.”

3. Where does sin come from?

Q: Why are we enslaved to sin? Why is sin so deep and gripping and enslaving?

A: The answer is what has been called “**original sin.**”

“**Original sin**”: That might be a term you’ve heard. It doesn’t occur in the Bible, but it does describe Bible truth. “Original sin” [a term coined by Augustine] means sin derived from our origin. And it takes us back to the first man Adam and the Garden Eden. And it says that what happened back then isn’t ancient history. But it’s our story – we’re caught up in it.

Listen to **Romans 5:19** as it reflects on the events of Eden:

- “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”

Humanity was *not* created sinful. We were made “good.”¹¹ But Adam’s actions changed human nature. And impacted upon every single human being for the rest of time.

What did Adam do? See in v19 that that through the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners. What one man did *made* many people into sinners.

How? It’s not just that Adam is our great, great, great, something-or-other grandfather. Not just that he’s our ancestor. Nor is it simply that we copy him in sinning. It’s more than that.

God gave Adam a special job to do. He was appointed “head of the human race.” He was our leader, representative, our captain. To give him his posh title, Adam is the “covenant head” of the human race. That’s the way God decided to set things up.

An illustration: imagine Adam as a GIANT... like a giant version of Hagrid. A huge giant. This is “Adam”. He’s got a really big belt. And hanging on his belt is every man woman and child who has ever lived. So hanging from one of those hooks on his belt.

And here’s the big deal: As God did business with Adam, he actually did business with all of us.¹² It’s as if WE were actually in the garden of Eden with Adam. Take Pete the Pagan, an imaginary friend: when God deals with Pete, he doesn’t just deal with Pete in isolation. He deals with Pete-who-is-hanging-on-Adam’s-belt.

That’s hard to understand. And it may seem unfair. If so, remember this: First: this is just the way God has chosen to do things; Second: if we think it unfair that Adam represents us in sin, then we must also think it unfair that Christ is our captain of salvation. Notice the end of v19, “through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.” In a parallel way the actions of one man *make* Christian people righteous. It’s “in Adam” our covenant head that sinners fall... and it’s “in Christ” – hanging on the belt of Christ – that sinners are saved.

¹⁰ J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology*, p82: “Scripture diagnoses sin as a universal deformity of human nature, found at every point in every person... Thus moral deformity is dynamic: sin stands revealed as an energy of irrational, negative, and rebellious reaction to God’s call and command, a spirit of fighting God in order to play God. The root of sin is pride and enmity against God, the spirit seen in Adam’s first transgression; and sinful acts always have behind them thoughts, motives, and desires that one way or another express the willful opposition of the fallen heart to God’s claims on our lives.”

¹¹ Genesis 1-2. Also Eccles 7:29

¹² There is a parallel relationship in Hebrews 7:10 where Levi is said to have been “in the loins” of his ancestor Abraham when Melchizedek and Abraham met.

4. God's response to sin: holy hatred

God is NOT surprised by sin. We haven't time to say much here at all. The Fall and human sinfulness did not take God by surprise. In a mysterious way that we cannot fathom, the Bible teaches that God willed the Fall. He is sovereign over sin and evil. Not in such a way that he is responsible for it. But in such a way that it does not happen outside his control.¹³ No time to say more than that.

Our chief point now is to note this: God responds to sin with a **holy hatred**. A holy and righteous God must hate sin. If He didn't, he would not be good. Here's Hebrews 1:9 talking about God, "You have loved righteousness and hated.

Why? Because sin is above all things SIN AGAINST HIM. Psalm 51:4, "Against you, you only, have I sinned"

When we see "horizontal sin" – person against person sin – don't forget that God is the MOST grieved party. If we only see horizontal dimension, then we'll be tempted to think that all we need is to be made into nicer people. When we're telling folk the Gospel, remember that the greatest problem they face is an aggrieved God – not a screwed up life. (Though of course sin does lead to a screwed up life).¹⁴

And God acts in holy hatred not just against sin, but also against the sinner. We've all heard that "God hates the sin and loves the sinner." But that statement is a bit misleading.

- Psalm 5:5, "you hate all who do wrong."
- Ephesians 2:3, "Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath." Listen to the Gospel in John 3:36, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

If I can put it simply: sin is NOT the greatest problem we face. GOD'S WRATH at sin is the greatest problem human beings face. Because sin – and sinners - inexorably attract the holy anger of God.

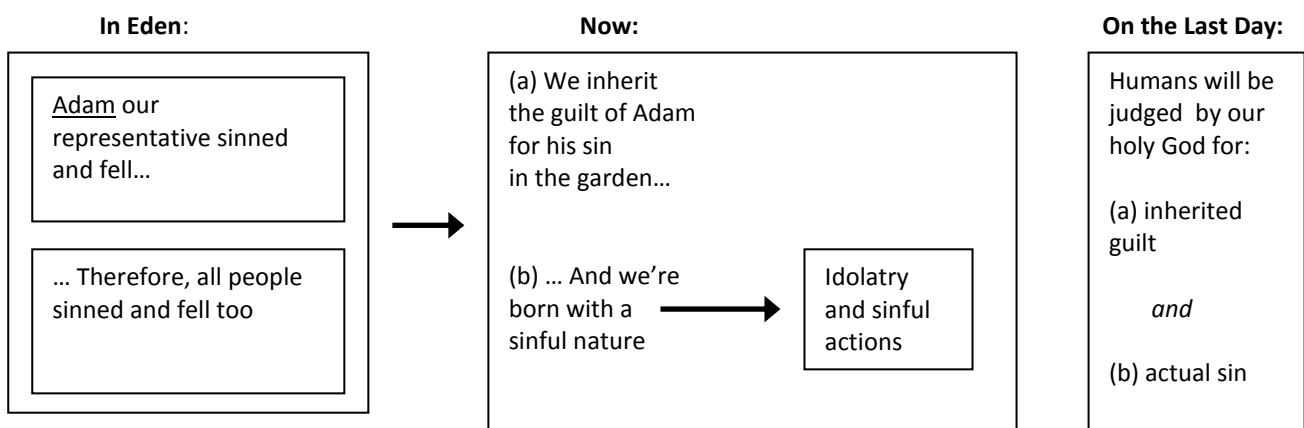
How does God respond to sin? Holy hatred.

Let's summarise, and then apply God's truth:

5. Application: sin is so sinful... only God can save me

(a) "I am more wicked than I ever realised..."

Here's a diagram which (I hope) will help us understand with our heads a bit more of OUR OWN SIN...



¹³ D.A. Carson: "In his holy counsels, God willed the Fall and Evil, in order to bring himself maximum glory by redeeming a people through the work of his Son. Bear in mind that the Bible holds together the following two principles (i) God is absolutely sovereign, but his sovereignty never functions in Scripture to reduce human responsibility; (ii) Human beings are responsible creatures – that is, they choose, they believe, they disobey, they respond, and there is moral significance in their choices; but human responsibility never functions in Scripture to diminish God's sovereignty or to make God absolutely contingent." (D.A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, p148.)

¹⁴ Cp. the way in which the *Alpha Course* presents sin in a very human-centred/horizontal way.

Look through the diagram, column by column:
In Eden... / Now... / On the Last Day...

A couple of things to note:

- When we think about sin we tend to focus on outward sinful actions: But there's much more to sin than that. Sin is at root a heart attitude of idolatry and hatred of God. We commit sinful acts because we have a sinful nature. That is, we are naturally God-haters. We are born morally twisted. At the level of heart and desire and will. As all parents know, you don't need to teach your children to sin.
- Why do we have a sinful nature? We have a sinful nature – and are bearers of Adam's guilt. Why? NOT because we sin. Rather, we are sinners because we're born as children of Adam with a nature enslaved to sin.

"I am more wicked than I ever realised..." That's the old catchline of the Christianity Explored course. And it's true, isn't it. Or have a look at the cover of this edition of the Briefing: headline "Totally depraved"... and under it a picture of a smiling little girl in a floral print dress. Do we believe that's true? True of me? Of you? Because it's really important that we do.

Thinking about sin helps me understand not just me – but other people and the world we live in. People are not "basically good." When people do appalling things I know why. When people we love do appalling things. If – like most people today – we think humans are basically good then we'll end up being very hurt and confused.

And... given the depth of my sin... **God must save and God alone.** If we are that sinful – so lost in sin – then it follows that God must save and God alone. Here's John 6:44, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Salvation must be 100% God's work. Not 50% him and 50% us. Not even 90-10. It's ALL of God.¹⁵

Listen to Charles Spurgeon:

"I will go as far as Martin Luther, where he says, "If any man ascribes anything of salvation, even the very least thing, to the free will of man, he knows nothing of grace, and he has not learned Jesus Christ rightly." (Sermons, Vol. 1, p.395)

"We declare on scriptural authority that the human will is so desperately set on mischief, so depraved, so inclined to everything that is evil, and so disinclined to everything that is good, that without the powerful, supernatural, irresistible influence of the Holy Spirit, no human will ever be constrained toward Christ." (Sermons, Vol. 4, p.139)

God's salvation is amazing isn't it! What I need is this: I need God to do something in me and for me.

- for me: deal with God's wrath at my sin

- in me: transform my will

And that's what he does! Praise the Lord for his amazing grace.

I don't know how you think about your own salvation, how you came to Christ. If converted as an adult we sometimes say things like "I chose to follow Christ in... 1998." But that's a long way from the whole story! God chose you, drew you, transformed you. Much more on that in weeks to come. It's his work... it has to be. That's why it's so great a salvation. That's why we fear for unbelievers, and we pray and speak.

Homework

See handout: Psalm 51. For next time read Hebrews 2:5-18.

¹⁵ We believe in divine monergism – the sole work of God. We deny synergism – joint working between God and man.

Appendix: Some Bible-texts on SIN and the FLESH/SINFUL NATURE

^{NIV} **1 Kings 8:46** "When they sin against you-- for there is no one who does not sin-- and you become angry with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to his own land, far away or near;

^{NIV} **Jeremiah 17:9** The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

^{NIV} **Matthew 12:30-37** "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. ³¹ And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. ³³ "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

^{NIV} **Mark 7:20-22** He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' ²¹ For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

^{NIV} **John 6:44** "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

^{NIV} **Romans 1:18-3:20** The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹ since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-- his eternal power and divine nature-- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. ²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. ²⁵ They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen. ²⁶ Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. ²⁷ In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion. ²⁸ Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

2:1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. ² Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. ³ So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? ⁴ Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? ⁵ But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ God "will give to each person according to what he has done." ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. ⁹ There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹ For God does not show favoritism. ¹² All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. ¹⁷ Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God; ¹⁸ if you know his

will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law;¹⁹ if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark,²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth--²¹ you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?²² You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?²³ You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?²⁴ As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."²⁵ Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised.²⁶ If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised?²⁷ The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.²⁸ A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical.²⁹ No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

3:1 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision?² Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.³ What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness?⁴ Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."⁵ But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.)⁶ Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world?⁷ Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?"⁸ Why not say-- as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say-- "Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.⁹ What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."¹³ "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips."¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood;¹⁶ ruin and misery mark their ways,¹⁷ and the way of peace they do not know."¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

^{ESV} **Romans 7:7-25** What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."⁸ But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law, sin lies dead.⁹ I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died.¹⁰ The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.¹¹ For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.¹² So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.¹³ Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the **flesh**, sold under sin.¹⁵ I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.¹⁶ Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good.¹⁷ So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my **flesh**. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.²⁰ Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.²⁴ Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?²⁵ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my **flesh** I serve the law of sin.

^{NIV} **Romans 8:5-8** Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.⁶ The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;⁷ the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor **can** it do so.⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.

^{NIV} **Romans 14:23** But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

^{NIV} **Galatians 5:16-21** So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.¹⁷ For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict

with each other, so that you do not do what you want.¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.¹⁹ The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

^{NIV} **Ephesians 2:1-3** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

^{NIV} **Ephesians 4:17-19** So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.¹⁹ Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.

^{NIV} **Hebrews 3:12** See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

^{NIV} **James 2:10-11** For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.¹¹ For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

^{NIV} **1 John 1:8** If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

^{NIV} **1 John 3:4** Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

^{NIV} **1 John 5:17** All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.