

Sin—What Is It?

The Scofield Reference Bible footnotes are interesting and instructive. It reports the literal meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words variously rendered “sin,” “sinner,” etc., disclose the true nature of sin in its manifold manifestations.

Sin is:

- * transgression, an overstepping of the law, the divine boundary between good and evil (Ps 51:1; Rom 2:23)
- * iniquity, an act inherently wrong, whether expressly forbidden or not (Rom 1:21-23)
- * missing the mark, a failure to meet the divine standard (Rom 3:23)
- * error, a departure from right (Rom 1:18; 1 Jn 3:4)
- * trespass, the intrusion of self-will into the sphere of divine authority (Eph 2:1)
- * lawlessness, or spiritual anarchy (1 Tim 1:9)
- * unbelief, or an insult to the divine veracity (Jn 16:9)

SIN:

- * Originated with Satan (Isa 14:12-14)
- * Entered the world through Adam (Rom 5:12)
- * Was, and is, universal—Christ alone excepted (Rom 3:23; 1 Pt 2:22)
- * Incurs the penalties of spiritual and physical death (Gen 2:17; 3-19; Eze 18:4-20; 6:23).
- * Has no remedy but in the sacrificial death of Christ (Acts 4:12; Heb 9-26) availed of by faith (Acts 13:38, 39)

Sin can be summarized as three-fold:

1. An act, the violation of, or want of obedience to, the revealed will of God.
2. A state, absence of righteousness.
3. A nature, enmity toward God.

Christians can sin in thought, word, action, inaction, and small faith. But there is forgiveness and cleansing, from Him. See Proverbs 28:13 and 1 John 1:9. The old nature wars against the new nature of the believer (Gal 5:17). But the believer is helped to obey God's instructions by the Holy Spirit of God, who fills those who are yielded.