



1 John 1:8-9; 3:4-10; 5:16-17

Sin: Error & Rebellion

Categories of Sin

1. The term **Sin** is both a specific and yet diverse topic in our New Testament. On one hand, Peter, James, John, and Paul talk about **Sin** as though it is a singular concept that Jesus came to destroy and eradicate. And this is absolutely true! Yet on the other hand, **Sin** is presented as a complex condition at the same time both present and absent in the body of Christ.

2. Sin is a complex concept represented by 33 different New Testament Greek words. These 33 terms derive from 10 different root terms. The ten Greek terms are listed as followed:.

- "**ἄμαρτία**" - James 2:9 - Error, missing the mark, sin
- "**παραβαίνω**" - James 2:9 - Step around, transgression
- "**παράπτωμα**" - Romans 11:11 - To fall away
- "**παρακούω**" - Matt. 18:17 - To not listen to God
- "**ἀδικέω**" - Rev. 22:11 - To act unjustly, do wrong
- "**Ἀσεβέω**" - 2 Pet. 2:6 - Live ungodly, live impiously
- "**ἄνομία**" - Matt. 24:12 - Lawless, violation of Law
- "**Ἄγνοέω**" - Rom. 10:3 - Ignorant of God, error
- "**ἡττάω**" - Romans 11:2 - Loss of salvation, fault
- "**πονηρία**" - Matt. 22:18 - Depraved, evil

3. These 10 words for sin can be divided into two camp: error & rebellion, mistakes & choice for self-rule.

ἄμαρτία and Other Emphasis' of Sin

1. Each of the above terms for sin have their specific emphasis as the above passages illustrate.
2. **ἄμαρτία** is an important term used both in a specific way, but in varying contexts. **ἄμαρτία** means to "error" or

“miss the mark”. This term for sin functions more as a judicial term, highlighting an action or motive as being incorrect. It can be used to describe a deliberate choice to error or an error done out of ignorance. Whether a deliberate choice to sin or not, *ἁμαρτία* simply highlights error. Context is crucial when studying *ἁμαρτία*.

ἁμαρτία that Does & Does Not Lead to Death

“If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.” 1 John 5:16-17 NIV84

1. Unlike Paul, John’s writing reveals a less technical and more simplistic style of Koine Greek. He therefore seems to rely more on imagery and comparing / contrasting concepts to convey his message.

- Light & Darkness - God is Light and He is contrasted against Darkness, which is all that not sourced by Him.
- Life & Death - In Him is Life. Outside of Him there is no Life. Death therefore is that which is separated from God.

2. In his first epistle, John describes two types of Sin:

- Sin that “leads to death”
- Sin that “does not lead to death”

3. Sin that “leads to death”

- To clarify a mistranslation in the NIV84, the sin that leads to death is not a *particular sin*. The translation should not be, as the NIV84 presents, “There is a *sin* that leads to death.”, but as the NKJV presents “There is sin leading to death.”
- The “a” in the NIV84 should be removed from the translation, for it is not consistent with the original language.
- This sin that “leads to death” is not a *sin*, but a category of sin.
- This type of sin results in separation from God.
- The response to the person caught up in this sin is quite different than the type that “does not lead to death.” The Church does simply pray about their condition, but acts decisively in confronting their actions.

4. Sin that “does not lead to death”

- The response to the person caught up in this sin requires prayer and discipleship.

- Unlike the type of sin that “leads to death” and therefore separates from God, this type of sin does not separate from God because it “does not lead to death.”

ἁμαρτία - Error

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” 1 John 1:8 NIV84

1. This verse is crucial to understanding *error* and the Christian life. As John points out, anyone who denies having error lives in deception.
2. It is critical, however, to understand this being the sin that “does not lead to death.” This is error in the believers life.
3. The sin that “does not lead to death” is a condition at birth inherited from Adam. This condition of sin can be illustrated by the 2 year old, who though has error (sin) in their life and by nature acts selfishly, did not choose this condition, but is born in this state.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9 NIV84.

4. This condition can be forgiven and can be cleansed from a person’s life. They can be purified “from all unrighteousness.”

ἁμαρτία - Rebellion

“Anyone who indulges in sin lives in moral anarchy, for the definition of sin is breaking God’s law. And you know without a doubt that Jesus was revealed to eradicate sins, and there is no sin in him. Anyone who continues to live in union with him will not sin. But the one who continues sinning hasn’t seen him with discernment or known him by intimate experience.”

“Delightfully loved children, don’t let anyone divert you from this truth. The person who keeps doing what is right proves that he is righteous before God, even as the Messiah is righteous. But the one who indulges in a sinful life is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God was revealed was to undo and destroy the works of the devil. Everyone who is truly God’s child will refuse to keep sinning because God’s seed remains within him, and he is unable to continue sinning because he has been fathered by God himself.”

“Here is how God’s children can be clearly distinguished from the children of the Evil One. Anyone who does not demonstrate righteousness and show love to fellow believers is not living with God as his source.”

1 John 3:4-10 The Passion Translation

1. John expounds in this section of his letter on the sin “that leads to death.” Though John uses the same term as

he does when describing the sin that “does not lead to death,” the context defines *ἁμαρτία* differently.

2. The use of *ἁμαρτία* in 1 John 3:4-10 describes unrepentant “error”. The person who commits this sin has been made aware of the “error” and yet continues to live in that “error”.

3. John uses the present tense consistently in this section highlighting the continual **rebellion** of living a life in “error”.

- “Everyone who *sins*..” v4
- “...*keeps on sinning*.” “...*continues to sin*” v5
- “He who *does* what is sinful...” “...the devil..*has been sinning* from the beginning.” v8
- “No one who is born of God will *continue to sin*...” “*go on sinning*...” v9
- “Anyone who *does not do* what is right is not a child of God...” v10

4. John defines rebellion as **continuing to live** in “error” after God has revealed and convicted the person of that “error”.

5. To continue to live in error after conviction has taken place defines how we are to understand rebellion against God.