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“Eve,” Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617), Musée des Beaux-Arts de Strasbourg

Many people currently do not believe in the total depravity of man; however, Scripture is clear that man is fallen. In fact, God ordained the institution of government primarily to restrain the latent sin nature of man: to believe the opposite—that man is basically good—is to reject scriptural truth.

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

Former Cabinet Members / White House Senior Staff: Wednesdays 7am, Zoom.

Senate Members: Tuesdays 8am, rotating offices, hot breakfast served.

House Members: Thursdays 8am, AG Hearing Room, Longworth 1302, hot breakfast served.

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MINISTRY UPDATE

CapMin Appoints Ministry Leader to the European Union



Valeriu Ghiletschi, a seminary-trained Baptist pastor and former Moldovan Parliamentarian who has a track record of making disciples in the political arena, has accepted Capitol Ministries' (CapMin's) appointment to be the full-time ministry leader to members of the European Union (EU).

In this position, Pastor Ghiletschi will be tasked with building discipleship Bible-study ministries to members of the European Parliament (EP) The EP is the legislative branch of the EU, which is a political and economic union that governs common economic, social, and security policies of its 27 member states. When the EP is not in session, Pastor Ghiletschi will be working closely with Slavik Rimski, CapMin's newly minted Global Director for Eastern and Western Europe to plant and build ministries throughout capitols of nations across Eastern and Western Europe. While his nation

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The late Francis Schaeffer, in his classic work *How Should We Then Live?* spoke euphemistically regarding the statue of David (located in Florence, Italy), stating that it was and is the artistic epitome of humanistic ideology—that man is basically good. He quipped, “If a woman was to wait to marry a living statue of David, she would never marry.” Michelangelo’s statue, not to be confused with the biblical David, represents the humanist belief that mankind will ultimately ascend to perfection. But the humanists are wrong.

With the proliferation of violent groups rioting in the streets, looting, murdering, and attacking innocent and unarmed men, women, and children both in the United States and other countries, the thought that the world will become a better place through the use of reason is naive. It will not! God ordained government to use force to quell evil. Read on and learn more about the doctrine of sin. You must know your stuff and have strong convictions about this subject!

Ralph Drollinger

I. INTRODUCTION

The necessity of any governing authority’s proper understanding of sin cannot be overemphasized. Not only does the teaching of Scripture regarding this subject relate specifically to our personal life, but it also is foundational to the professional understanding of policy makers and law enforcers. Can you clearly think through the biblical answers to the following?

- How do you explain the dual nature of man?
- Does sin infect and affect more than just the person?
- Does sin infect and affect the whole world?

These and other important topics will be addressed in this study. A biblically accurate, informed understanding of what the Scriptures say about sin will help us in a myriad of ways! It is foundational as to how we view the world and is the proper remedy to national and international problems.

To improperly diagnose an ailment is to fail to cure it.

Again, this study focuses on what the Bible teaches about the total depravity of man, the doctrine of sin. Since many passages on this subject can be found throughout Scripture, I would like to focus on certain aspects that



♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I believe are most relevant, not only to your personal life as a public servant but also to your thinking and to the formation of public policy. How should a proper biblical understanding of certain aspects of sin inform and influence your thinking? This study is integral to the ability to form a Christian worldview.

First, we will explore an accurate biblical definition of *sin*, and then we will segue into how we should best understand its origin and transference. Once we establish both fundamental premises of the doctrine, we will quickly pivot to surveying sin's manifest nature in the world from an individual to a corporate, national understanding. Stay with me, and this process will become easier than you may think.

II. SIN'S DEFINITION

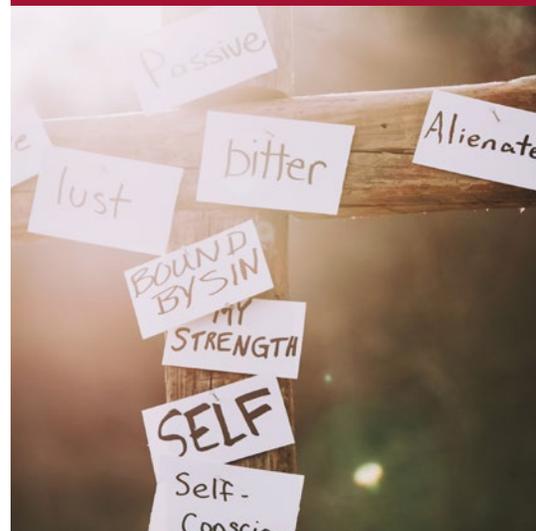
When discussing what the Bible teaches about sin—and the fact that we live in a fallen world—an accurate understanding of what this means and does not mean is critically important.

I like conservative theologian Wayne Grudem's working definition of *sin*: "Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature."¹ The Sermon on the Mount repeatedly makes it clear that sin is more than outward conformity to God's moral standards; it involves attitudes as well. For instance, in Matthew 5:22 anger is deemed sinful; so is lust (Matthew 5:28). Additionally, in that we were by nature children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), God imputes a new nature into believers at the time of sal-

vation and expects them to live according to their new nature (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Peter 1:4). The Greek word for *sin* (*hamartia*) means "to miss the mark."

Sin is more than self-centeredness. I remember one of my mountaineering friends in the tent next to mine in the middle of the night (at 18,000 feet elevation, during a huge windstorm that lasted for three straight days, I might add) asking me to help him memorize some Scripture. Half-asleep with chilled half-breaths, my first thought was *how selfish of him!* Yes, he was being selfish, but he was expressing a good form of selfishness! In fact, much self-interest is approved in Scripture! So selfishness is not a good definition of *sin*. When we are seeking to grow in sanctification or to *discipline* [our] *body and make it* [our] *slave...* (1 Corinthians 9:27), we are (empirically speaking) harboring and acting out selfish desires. But God heartily approves of such good selfish desires! On the other hand, our selfless devotion to a false religion will not please God, much less attain God's standard of sinlessness. So, selfishness is not a good one-word definition of *sin*.

Sin needs to be defined the way God defines it in His Word. Another way to say it is as follows: anything uncharacteristic of the communicable attributes of God present in an individual is sin. To miss the mark of His perfect acts, attitudes, and nature about everything and anything at all times is sin. No wonder then that Paul states in Romans 3:23: *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*



Personally—keep a short leash on your sin; keep erasing it from your life and thereby maximize your God-purposed potential!





Continued from page 2

was under Communist rule, Pastor Ghiletschi studied engineering in Odesa, Ukraine and became an electronics engineer. When the Soviet Union fell, he traveled to Romania to study at Emmanuel University, where he earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree. He has served as the dean of the college of Theology and Education in Chisinau, as president of the Baptist Union of the Republic of Moldova, and as president of the European Baptist Federation.

As a member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Pastor Ghiletschi was the chairperson of the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights. He was also the rapporteur of several reports adopted by the PACE, one of which was: “Tackling Intolerance and Discrimination in Europe with a Special Focus on Christians.” He served as a member of the Moldova Parliament from 1998–2001 and again from 2009–2019.

After he learned about CapMin, he contacted us and completed the required ministry leader training in 2019. Pastor Ghiletschi was named CapMin’s full-time ministry leader to the EU in February 2022. “I believe as Christians, we must be present in every sphere in society, and it is important for the Christian message to be heard in the public square. There must be a Christian witness there,” he said. “I pray and ask the Lord to open a door for this ministry in the European Parliament and other national parliaments.”

III. SIN’S ORIGIN

Sin was present in the angelic world before creation and the Fall of man. This is evidenced by the fact that Satan and his demons rebelled and were cast out of heaven (cf. Isaiah 14:12; Ezekiel 28:11–19; Luke 10:18) prior to the creation and Fall of man in Genesis 1 and 3 respectively. Sin then entered the created world via the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the garden (Genesis 3:1–19). Eve trusted in herself, and then Adam trusted in himself over and above what God had specifically commanded of them. They thought they knew better than God, in essence placing themselves above God and His ways (Genesis 3:5) and rebelliously exchanging themselves for His place of sovereignty and authority.

IV. SIN’S MANIFESTATION IN THE INDIVIDUAL

The Bible is clear that Adam’s sin spread to all mankind in the sense of individuals. Again, Paul states in Romans 3:23, *For all have sinned....* The Psalmist says, *They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one* (Psalm 14:3), and Solomon adds, *Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins* (Ecclesiastes 7:20). All have sinned because sin is inherited from Adam. Paul explains that inheritance this way in Romans 5:12:

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.

Later he adds, in v. 18, speaking respectively of Adam and Jesus:

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

In Romans 5:19 he adds in reference to Christ’s work on Calvary:

For as through one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

The best way to think about this is that when Adam was tested in the garden, he represented the total human race thereafter. Unfair? God is God, and and He chose this economy.

If we reason that Adam’s imputation of sin is unfair, then we must also reason Christ’s imputation of righteousness as unfair.

Scripture teaches the imputation of both: the former by birth and the latter by believing faith. Notice both in the following passages: David best summarizes the existence of representational and inherent individual sin in Psalm 51:5:

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

John, in his Gospel, teaches the latter (1:12):



But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.

Furthermore, every part of the individual being has been infected by and affected by sin. In that mankind possesses an inherent sinful nature, man has a predilection for and does sin. Created in the image of God, which explains man's goodness, he is nonetheless fallen, thus explaining his dual nature in a way unlike any other-worldly philosophy can or does.

Imago Dei and simultaneous imputation best and only explain the dueling nature found within man's existence since the Fall and throughout the ages.

The Fall affected more than the soul of man; in addition, it infected the whole of the *world*. Critically important is this: the governing authority must possess a working comprehension of not only the theology of *individual* sin, but the theology of *corporate* sin.

V. SIN'S MANIFESTATION IN THE WORLD

Many passages speak of sin's manifestation in the *world*, stating that the whole *world* is fallen, in contrast to defining sin as only individuals' being indwelt and fallen. However, many conservative theologians stop at individual sin and do not develop the concept of corporate sin. And yet the biblical concept of corporate sin is an area especially important to the under-

standing of political leaders and their policy formation, e.g., as stated in the prologue, government exists in large part to quell sin and evil, per Romans 13:1–8 and 1 Peter 2:13–14.

Equally important then to the effect of sin on a personal basis is its effect on the whole *world*. Conservative theologian Millard Erickson puts it best:

The Bible teaches that evil has a status apart from and independent of any individual human will, a subsistence of its own ... We occasionally refer to this reality as "the *World*" [*kosmos*].²

Geoffrey William Bromiley adds that the Greek word *kosmos* is oftentimes used in Scripture in juxtaposition to the kingdom of God ... i.e., the *world* is used by the Bible writers to depict the very embodiment of evil.³

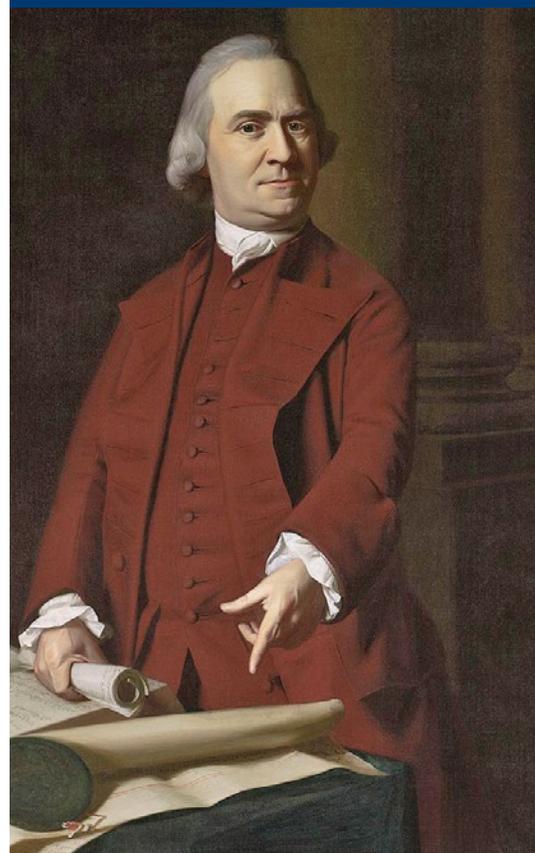
A. THE FOUNDATIONAL PASSAGE

This expansive idea of not only individual but also corporate manifestations of the Fall is supported from the beginning by the immediate results of the Fall. Notice God's response in Genesis 3:17b–19a:

"Cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; by the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground."

The Fall of Adam and Eve cursed not only them, but the whole earth as well.

Samuel Adams



He called on the State of Massachusetts to pray that ...

"With true contrition of heart to confess their sins to God and implore forgiveness through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior."

— Samuel Adams, signer of the Declaration of Independence, "Father of the American Revolution," ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, governor of Massachusetts.

Samuel Adams, *Proclamation for a Day of Fasting and Prayer*, March 15, 1796.



John Jay



Have you ever wondered why nothing is easy in this life? It's hard to earn a living. It's hard to eat right. It's hard to stay in shape! It's hard to keep government on track! All serve to illustrate Genesis 3! Until Christ's return, mankind exists in a fallen world—both in an individual and corporate sense. Again and again, this hamartiological understanding and distinction is critically important for those who serve in government. The second law of thermodynamics—entropy—came into existence with the Fall; everything is constantly moving toward disorder, not perfection, which means:

The humanist's take on the statue of David is an artistic ideological misnomer.

The following passages teach the corporateness of sin via the word *world*:

B. THE FUNCTIONAL PASSAGES

Further building out the doctrine of sin, from Genesis 3 into the New Testament, this originally Old Testament concept of universal fallenness is depicted (in part) by the following passages:

1. John 7:7

“The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil.”

2. John 15:18–19

“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.

If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you.”

3. John 17:14

“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

4. 1 Corinthians 1:21

For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

5. John 17:25

“O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.”

6. John 1:10–11

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

7. Colossians 2:8

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

“The Bible will also inform them that our gracious Creator has provided for us a Redeemer in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed—that this Redeemer has made atonement “for the sins of the whole world,” and thereby reconciling the Divine justice with the Divine mercy, has opened a way for our redemption and salvation; and that these inestimable benefits are of the free gift and grace of God, not of our deserving, nor in our power to deserve.”

— John Jay, president of Congress, diplomat, author of the Federalist Papers, original chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, governor of New York.

John Jay, *The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay, 1794–1826*, Henry P. Johnston, editor (New York: Burt Franklin, 1890), Vol. IV, 494, 498, from his “Address at the Annual Meeting of the American Bible Society,” May 13, 1824.

**8. John 8:23**

And He was saying to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world.”

9. John 18:36

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”

10. James 1:27

Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

11. 1 John 2:15–17

Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

12. 1 John 5:4–5

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

States Erickson regarding the biblical use of the word *world*:

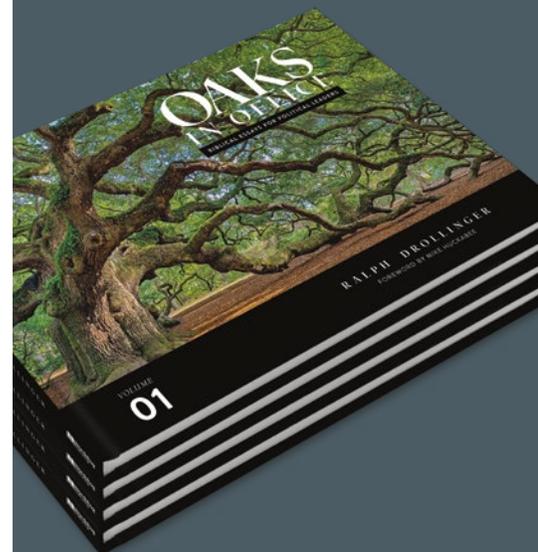
“The world represents an organized force, a power or order that is counterpoised to the kingdom of God.”⁴

This conclusion is clear from all of these passages. It is clear to see from a study of the use of the word *world* that sin has infected and affected both individuals and the earth as a whole.

VI. APPLICATION**A. TO THE PERSON**

First John 1:9 states to believers, *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Believers need to walk with a clear conscience, keeping their sin account current with Christ. Believers cannot walk in the power and control of the Holy Spirit and at the same time continually quench the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. Whenever the Holy Spirit convicts our conscience of the need to confess our wrongdoing to Him immediately in order to remain filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to do otherwise is to short-circuit His indwelling empowerment. We must keep a short leash on our sin, erasing it from our life, and thereby maximize our God-purposed potential in office and thereafter! It is normative for believers to be victorious over sin in their personal life.

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B. TO THE PROFESSION

It is critically important for the public servant to view the *world* through the eyes of Scripture. Man is fallen, and government is meant by God to quell evil in the *world*. Government then is a manifestation of God's restraining grace in a fallen *world*.

To view the *world* as basically good and in need of my reasoning abilities—as if others will conclude to do what's right when convinced intellectually—is naive, unwise, and at the very least, viewing the *world* through rose-colored glasses. The recent riots across the United States and the unrest in so many other places around the globe serve to illustrate the premise of this Bible study: without strong governments intent on quelling evil, the fallen, sin nature of man will be increasingly on the rise. Governments and their leaders must send a constant message that sin will be punished. When I hear of government leaders trying to reason with terrorists who believe their deity commands them to kill us, I am reminded of Mark Twain's saying about trying to teach a pig to sing: you waste your time and annoy the pig!

May this basic conviction and understanding be relative to your God-given job as a leader in government; may your convictions be based upon a scripturally solid understanding of sin. May humanistic naivete come to an end not only in the White House but also on the Hill.

VII. CONCLUSION

Make no mistake: an America directed by the ideology of Secular Humanism will only lead to an increasingly chaotic *world*. Man is totally depraved in his nature—not totally good. That an America directed by leaders who understand the biblical doctrine of sin will lead to an increasingly peaceful *world* is clear from Scripture and history.

1. Wayne Grudem, *Politics According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 490.
2. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 660.
3. Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 3, 868.
4. Erickson.

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