

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 13, Biblical Description of Sin Continued, Examination of Key Biblical Texts

© 2024 Robert Peterson and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on the Doctrines of Humanity and Sin. This is session 13, Biblical Description of Sin Continued, Examination of Key Biblical Texts.

We continue our study of the Doctrine of Sin, and let us pray before we open up God's Word.

Father, we bow before you. We thank You that You are our Father, and we are Your sons or daughters through faith in Jesus Christ. Bless us, encourage us, teach us, correct us, and lead us in your way everlasting; we pray through Jesus Christ, the Mediator. Amen.

Our topic for the next few lectures is the Doctrine of Original Sin, a very important and neglected doctrine, especially today. I want to spend a little more time on a biblical description of sin, although we spent significant time on it in the previous lectures, because I want to reinforce four very important points, taking the time to look at the scriptures for each one.

Number one, sin is an offense against God's character and a violation of his law. I want to show the relationship between the law of God and the character of God. Two, sin includes guilt and pollution. I know we said it before, but it can hardly be overemphasized. Three, sin includes thoughts, words, and actions. And four, a repeat, but a necessary one, sin is deceitful.

A biblical description of sin continued. John Mahoney's was very thorough, broad, and deep, and even edifying in how he pulled things together in the end. And yet we can reinforce some of these points.

Sin is an offense against God's character. We saw Psalm 51 in the midst of David's confession of sin. To the best of our knowledge, the Psalm titles are in the oldest Hebrew manuscripts we have.

This one says to the choirmaster a Psalm of David when Nathan, the prophet, went to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba. And in verse 14, he says, delivers me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation. So, there are hints of it even within the Psalm itself.

But the remarkable thing is, his sins against other human beings, namely Bathsheba and Uriah, her husband, adultery and murder, respectively, he regards as ultimately sin against God. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. According to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

There's an ellipsis here. There are words implied. And now I confess my sins so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment on the last day.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. It's not saying the sex act is sinful. After all, God created Adam and Eve and sex, if you will.

But it's saying he was, he is his, from conception, he was a little sinner. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, which is a good reason to confess our sins. And you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

And again, a good reason to confess our sins. Against you, only have I sinned and done what evil in your sight means. All sin, much of which is against other people or things or whatever.

All sin ultimately is sin against God. He is the supreme being. We call him that for a good reason.

He is all in all. I'm not teaching pantheism. He's different from his creation.

But he is the supreme being. He's the giver of his moral code. He's the God of ethics.

He's the God of salvation. He's the God of the Bible's teaching, the God of creation, providence, redemption, and consummation. So, all of our actions are ultimately done by quorum Deo in his presence.

And all sin is ultimately sin against God. In Genesis 39.9, if ever somebody had an excuse to cover up his sins, it was Joseph. Man, he could have been the rest of his life.

I'm a loser. Look what my brothers did to me. God doesn't love me. I can do what I want. No way. No way.

He continually sought God. He did one good thing after another and was continually elevated to a position of leadership. He was then forgotten by his friends in prison and accused by Potiphar's wife.

And Joseph's response to Potiphar's wife shames us New Testament believers. It just blows me away. He's away from Israel.

He's away from, I know, there's no Israel yet. He's away from his father and his brothers, who are incipient to Israel, if you will. He's all alone.

Again, he resists Potiphar's wife's advances and ends up being blamed for it and sent to jail. And that's why he ends up in jail and so forth. But listen to him.

Oh, my word. Lie with me, she says to him. This lady is not beating around the bush.

She goes right for it. But he refused and told his master's wife to notice how she was referred to. Behold, because of me, my master has no concern about anything in the house.

What a leader this guy is. What a responsible man. And he has put everything that he has in my charge.

He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. There is a little addition here. You fool.

He didn't say those words. How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? His God-centeredness slays me. What did he have? The stories of God's dealings with his people, right? He didn't have an Old Testament.

He didn't have the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation. Just remarkable. A remarkable man of God, surely in whom his spirit dwelt.

I'm amazed. I'm staggered. I'm grateful.

I'm humbled. Sin is an offense against God's character because it is a violation of his holy law. We saw it in 1 John 3:4. Sin is lawlessness, right? And it is the Reformed tradition that's made a lot of that.

Sin is more than that. Romans 8:7 is instructive in this regard. We need to connect the law of God and the character of God.

Yes, aspects of the law considered in a large framework are obsolete. They have passed away. But the Ten Commandments are a revelation of the holy, just, and loving character of God, and they are everlasting.

Romans 8:6, for to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit, capital S, is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, for indeed it cannot.

Those who are in the flesh, those who are unsaved, cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if, in fact, the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

Again, I'll say it: the Jewish dress, even of the Ten Commandments, is passé. It is done away. We're not Jews.

We're not obligated to offer sacrifices. It would be wrong. It should not be our goal to re-institute the civil law of Israel in American culture and the other cultures around the world.

Theonomy is wrong-headed. But the Ten Commandments are a revelation of the character of God. And as such, breaking God's commandments is an offense against God himself.

Because they are a reflection, a manifestation, a revelation of God's holy character. As Bruce Waltke shows in his Old Testament theology book, and Paul House, for that matter, in his Old Testament theology book, the Ten Commandments exert a huge effect on the ethics of the Scriptures in both Testaments. It is incalculable how important they are.

Because they reveal God's character so that to honoring him from the heart, obeying his law and his word, glorifies him. It exalts his character. To disobey his commandments, even just in heart, in spirit, or also in letter, actually breaking outwardly the commandments, is to dishonor him who gave the commandments in the first place.

Sin includes guilt and pollution. I know we said it before, but it is very important. Galatians 3. This might be the fundamental distinction of sin, theologically speaking.

Sin does two huge things to fallen humanity. Number one, it makes us not only answerable to God but condemned before him, in utter need of his deliverance. And number two, it's not just this status, this lack of relationship.

It also infects us, actually in our lives. Minds and bodies, words, thoughts, and actions. So it's both a legal term of condemnation, of guiltiness and a moral term for the corruption of human beings and their lives.

That is a critical, two critical theological understanding of what sin involves. In Galatians 3, Paul extols the Son of God for his work of redemption. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

What does that refer to? He tells us, for it's written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. Jesus is our substitute, and here, our legal substitute, because he takes the penalty, the curse of the law, in himself as he dies on the accursed tree. The background is verse 10 of Galatians 3. All who rely on works of the law are under a curse, for it's written, cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them.

By the way, every point almost, Paul backs up with quotations, okay, because in this chapter, especially verses 15 to the end, he is opposing the Judaizers who have committed a fundamental misunderstanding of the Old Testament. They have focused on the law, the Mosaic institution, the Ten Commandments, and the whole baliwick, wrenching it out of the context of the Abrahamic covenant. In Galatians 3:19 and following, Paul says the Abrahamic covenant has to do with grace and faith in the seed which is to come, who is Christ.

The Abrahamic covenant is God's passing between the pieces of the animals, thereby calling down a curse upon himself if he doesn't keep the covenant with his people. God promised Abraham a number of things: the land, a great name, huge numbers of people coming from him and his infertile wife, he was infertile too, and all the families, if we combine Genesis 22 with Genesis 12, all the nations, all the families of the earth, Revelation 21 actually makes it all the peoples of the earth, pluralizes it, will be blessed through you. That is ultimately a promise of Christian missions going to the world.

Of course, Abraham didn't understand, but God did. God did. The Judaizers have taken the Ten Commandments and the law as a whole, which was subservient to the Abrahamic covenant.

It was to be understood in light of grace and faith and the promised mediator. Oh no, they wrenched it out and made the Old Testament religion of law and law-keeping and legalism and all that goes with it. Rebellion of heart, perfunctory performing of sacrifices.

So, the prophets rail against the sacrifices, and the liberals say, see that? There's a divide here. God didn't ordain that. Yes, he did ordain those things.

He wants them offered from the heart, and he lambastes the sacrifices and the priests who offer them and the people who come, not because he didn't want the sacrifices, which he instituted in the book of Exodus and Leviticus, I should say, but he, because he wanted them to come with sincere hearts and a sincere conscience as

Hebrews 10 reminds Christians about their worship. That is why Paul again and again quotes the Old Testament, especially the law. You misunderstand the law.

You're pulling it out of its context. You are turning a religion of grace and faith in the promised one to come into a religion of works, and thereby, you're under a curse because cursed says the law be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law to do them. Deuteronomy 27:26.

Now, it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the righteous man shall live by faith. The righteous shall live by faith, but the law is not a faith. Rather, the one who does them shall live by them.

Then comes that wonderful verse. And by the way, curse, curse, curse, curse. I forgot how many times, four times.

Curse and curse it, right? But preceding those verses, starting with 10, we have nine. So then those who are of faith are, excuse me, the end of eight. The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, in you shall all the nations be blessed.

So then those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. Blessed, blessed. And then curse, a curse, 10. Cursed, 10. Curse, 13. Cursed, 13. Cursed, 13. Five times. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.

It is evident what that means. From the penalty of the law to the threat of the law against lawbreakers. How did he do it? By dying on the cross in our place.

This is one of the clearest places of penal substitution in the Bible. We're under a curse. Christ as it was pushes us out of the way, and the thunderbolt of God's curse strikes his sinless beloved head instead of us.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it's written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. Blessing, blessing, five curses.

And then verse 14, so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. Because Jesus took the curse of the law, we get the blessing of salvation, eternal life, peace with God, and forgiveness of sins that God promised Abraham. Sin involves guilt.

Jesus took the punishment that our sins deserve so that we might be forgiven although we are guilty before a holy God. The guiltless one was made guilty for us that in him we might receive the acceptance of God. A bad paraphrase of 2 Corinthians 5:21, God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Christ was our vicar, our substitute who took the penalty of the law in the place of us, the guilty ones, that we might be declared righteous, justified before God based upon Christ's righteousness of his sinless life and especially of his vicarious death. Guilt is also spoken of in Ephesians 2:3, as we have seen previously. We were by nature. Paul says before we were saved. Ephesians 2:1 to 4 is the best place in the scriptures to show our three enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, and here we were by nature, children of wrath, even as the rest of fallen humankind. By nature means by birth. Compare Galatians 2:15, NIV. We were, by nature, objects of wrath.

Because of this idiom, children of wrath means the people deserving wrath. It's an Old Testament Hebrew idiom. We saw it be previously 2 Samuel 12:5. He is a son of death, which means he deserves to die.

Sin includes guilt and condemnation before a holy God. It's our standing, if you will. It's how we exist.

The wrath of God, John 3:36, abides on unsay people, whether they realize it or not. But sin is more complicated than that and more devastating. More devastating than that? Yes.

It not only puts us at odds with our maker, but it corrupts our beings and, therefore, our lives. Modern word used by Anthony Hoekema and created in God's image. It pollutes us.

It's a good word as long as you're regarded as a full pollution outside and in. I guess it means having your environment destroyed and drinking the bad water, too. Poison, I don't know.

Anyway, we sin because we're sinners. That most distressing of verses, Genesis 6:5 comes to mind again. The Lord saw that man's wickedness was great on earth.

Every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And Mahoney is right. After the fall, it wasn't much better.

Oh, my goodness. Oh. Galatians 5:19-21, we should give that a little more attention.

We just mentioned it before. The deeds of the flesh are set opposite the fruit of the spirit. It would be a profitable exercise to take any one of the fruits and run through the whole list of the deeds of the flesh and vice versa.

Deeds of the flesh are attitudes and actions produced by the sinful nature in its rebellion against God. The fruit of the spirit is, as the name implies, the workings of

the spirit to produce good attitudes and actions in God's people. They can't be properly understood unless we see them against each other in this passage.

Let us see how sin not only makes us answerable and guilty before God but corrupts us. That is the historic word for this effect of sin. Now, the works of the flesh are evident.

The first category is sexual, and it is not accidental. Romans 1, when Paul talks about God's wrath from heaven against human beings, rebellion against God, and fighting and kicking against suppressing the knowledge of God revealed in his creation, he first mentions idolatry, a religious sin. Then, he mentions sexual sins, specifically homosexuality.

He doesn't mention homosexuality here, and he reverses the order, but it is no accident. This time, it's sexual sins, and then, pardon the sad designation, religious sins. What an oxymoron that is.

There they are again. What do sexual sins and religious sins have in common? They have to do with the very identity of human beings. Babies are born either male or female.

God said, let us make man in our image, and he did. He created them in his image, male and female, and said later in chapter 2 of Genesis, for this reason, a man should leave his wife, should leave him, excuse me, a man should leave his parents and cling to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. God is a creator of gender, of sexuality, of the enjoyment of sexual relations in the married union.

We are identified as sexual beings, even in spite of modern attempts, postmodern attempts to rearrange that. That is what we are. We're also worshipers.

God made us to worship him, and we will worship someone. We will worship someone. I remember the sad situation of a counselor, his couple's engaged.

The woman sees stars in her eyes. The husband sees he's going to possess something, this woman. The counselor sees right through him, and he kills the whole thing with one question.

After he finds out a little bit about Billy, I'm changing the names. He says, Billy, he says, you have a beautiful car, don't you? Oh boy, I do. And he goes on and on about his car.

He says, Billy, this might be a hard one for you, but which do you think is more important to you, Helen or your car? That was how he showed the counselor showed

Helen that this guy was no good man, no good husband to be. He plainly valued his car way over her. Ah, you see, we're worshipers.

We are gendered beings, and we are worshiping beings. It's just a matter of how we'll use our being engendered and how we will where we will direct our worship. So, if Romans 1, first of all, speaks against false worship, idolatry, and then false use of God's gift of sexuality in homosexuality, here it's reversed.

And the deeds of the flesh, the sinful orientation, are first of all categorized like this, sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, sexual sins. We are gendered beings. It is a gift from God.

We need to use our sexuality for the glory of God. May he help us. Idolatry and sorcery are religious sins, if you will.

Idolatry and sorcery are in bad company here, as it was in the book of Deuteronomy. In chapter 15, when God talks about giving and sending his prophet, do not seek information about me from the ways the Canaanites do it, and sorcery is one of those ways condemned by God. Most of the deeds of the flesh, which show the corruption of sin, that's where we are.

We've talked about the condemnation of sin before a holy and just God. Now we're talking about the actual corruption of the human mind and body and life. Most of the descriptions is interpersonal sins, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, and envy.

Why such an emphasis on interpersonal sins? Because that is the problem of the Galatians. We see it before the fruit of the spirit and deeds of the flesh in Galatians 5:15. If you bite and devour one another, watch out that you're not consumed by one another.

Watch out. You don't gobble each other up. What a powerful use of imagery. And how about verse 26 of chapter five? So, there are bookends here for interpersonal sins.

It's actually more complicated. It seems to me to be a four-point chiasm. And this is the second rung in from the end.

I guess now I'm committed to explaining more about that, am I? Anyway, Galatians 5, 26, let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Real fast. The whole passage seems to me to be chiastic, an inverted parallelism.

A, the whole law is fulfilled in one word. Verses 13, I didn't even read it. 14 says, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

That's A, okay? 6:1, and 2, a godly man passed his prime when I came into his life, but still his influence percolated the school that I was in. This is Alan McRae, an Old Testament scholar. He taught everybody by his own example, and sometimes it wasn't pretty.

To read, whenever he read the Bible publicly, he read into the next chapter of the Bible. I'll never forget. 6:1, and 2 are A prime of Galatians.

Brothers, if anyone is caught in a transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself lest you to be tempted. I'm sorry, verse 2 should be included.

Oh, I said that, 1 and 2. Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. It's the law of love, and commentators agree. Love in 5:13, and 14.

Love in 6:1, and 2. You come in one rung on these circles if you will. B is interpersonal sins. 5, 15, biting and devouring each other.

B prime, prime is just a slightly raised numeral one. To distinguish B, for example, from B prime, they're not identical. They're not the very same word.

Sometimes they are, but here they're not. B prime is 5, 26, and that is conceit, provocation, envy: love, interpersonal sins, the Holy Spirit.

Walk by the Spirit, 1:6, 5:16. Live by the Spirit.

Let us keep in step with the Spirit. 5:25. What does this mean, though? If we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Isn't that an exhortation? Let us, yes. Isn't it a command in 5:16, walk by the Spirit? Yes, that's a command. Walk by the Spirit, Old Testament imagery.

Live by the Spirit. Walk hand in hand with the Holy Spirit, obeying Him. 25 of chapter 5 is a little different.

If we live by the Spirit, if we have been given eternal life, if we've been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. That exhortation is very similar to the command, walk in the Spirit. Love, exhortations to love, pointing out interpersonal sins, mentioning living by the Spirit, which is the antidote to those interpersonal sins, and the way to fulfill the love that God commands.

And then inside of that, we have, through the Spirit, deeds of the flesh. They're in the center of the chiasm, and they are thereby emphasized in the passage, being at the

heart of this pattern. I might mention one thing that gets left out sometimes, and that is verse 24.

Of course, there's a reference to union with Christ in the passage. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Not only is the Spirit involved as the handyman, the worker on the job site to help us, but the Lord Jesus Christ died, and we died with Him.

Thereby, He broke the power of sin and its stranglehold over our lives. All this is to say, the deeds of the flesh demonstrate the corruption, the deep pollution of sin in human lives. There's thus both a legal dimension to the effects of sin. We're condemned, we're under God's wrath, and there's a moral dimension.

We are personally ruined, corrupted, and polluted by sin. To finish the deeds of the flesh, they are sexual, religious, and interpersonal, and then they involve sins of utter abandon, utter excess, other wanton living, and self-control. That's the opposite.

That's taking the food of the Spirit and reading the list of the works of the flesh in light of it. Drunkenness, orgies, and things like that. Paul is so careful.

Obviously, Christians can be guilty of some of these things. It's not just a hypothesis. The second rung in of the fourfold chiasm is interpersonal sins, and the biggest list of the deeds of the flesh is interpersonal sins.

Nevertheless, he has an important point to make. I warn you as I warned you before, those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Isn't he contradicting himself? No, no.

Christians can do such things but not do such things in the matter of a pattern or habit of life. Those whose lives are characterized only by the deeds of the flesh, the works of the flesh, and are totally devoid of the fruit of the Spirit look like they're not believers at all. Speaking of a pastoral standpoint, I would say be careful on that one, because on a bad day, you and I may not look so good.

For one year, David kept the sins of adultery and murder in his heart. So, here's how I say it pastorally. If there seems to be no fruit, if there seems to be a lot of weeds if you will, it's a very bad sign, is how I say it.

I commend to you the word weeds reminds me of John Sanderson's good little book, probably out of print now, unfortunately. Email PNR Publishing and say, please put that back in print—the Fruit of the Spirit, John Sanderson.

It is a very fruitful book. He does call the deeds of the flesh weeds, and there's some justification because as the chapter as he goes on in chapter six, Paul returns to this

horticultural metaphor, talking about sowing and reaping and so forth. Anyway, enough, enough.

I made the point. I made the point. Sin has huge deleterious, deleterious, pardon me, consequences for humankind.

It makes us subject to the wrath of God and condemnation because of guilt, not just guilt feelings. Whether we feel guilty or not, we are guilty before a holy and just God. And not only so, it ruins our lives as it corrupts us. And thus, we need the grace of God in justification to overcome the guilt.

And we need the grace of God in progressive sanctification to reverse the corruption in significant measures. Not totally in this life, but here's what: I love Hoekema's expression: Tony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace*. Many times, teaching adult Sunday school, somebody will say, I honestly say, yeah, but I still struggle with sin.

And sometimes I wonder, dear Lord, am I even a Christian man? Hoekema's words come to me. We are not totally new. We are genuinely new.

And that cry, Lord, help me, sounds like Paul in Romans 7. I've got some notes for some friends, and they might remind me later. Who will deliver me from this body of death? I'm struggling terribly, oh Lord. Romans 8 tells us because we have the spirit, we groan.

So, somebody not bothered at all by his sins, it's like Martin Luther, the Lord's supper is for sinners. Some poor guy overwhelmed with his sins, he says, is well qualified. Let him confess his sins.

Do you stay away from the doctor when you're sick? Do you avoid the hospital when your disease is raging? But he says the person who has no knowledge of any sins ought to stay away from the Lord's supper. Oh, man. Sin, thirdly, includes thoughts, words, and actions.

Thoughts. Exodus 20 in verse 17, you shall not covet. To covet is to desire inordinately something that is not yours.

And it's wrong. It is a sin against our neighbors, and we're supposed to love our neighbors as ourselves. As Jesus says in Matthew 22, quoting the law.

And sin against our neighbor, as we learned in the first point here, is sin against God, whom we're to love with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. In other words, with everything. So, sin, including thoughts, sounds like Jesus in Matthew 5:22. If you hate your brother, if you speak evil of your brother, if you hate him in your heart, you just committed murder spiritually.

Oh, Jesus, what a teacher. He's going to the heart. He's penetrating.

He's putting a spiritual x-ray on us and just slaying us. It's a violation of the sixth commandment. Adultery means actually physically getting involved with someone other than one's spouse, right? Yes.

But is that the whole matter? No. Jesus says to desire a person other than one's spouse. He says a woman.

Of course, that's true. But another option also would be wrong, which is to commit adultery spiritually. Oh Jesus, not only speaks to the law, the letter of the law, but the spirit of all, which is what the 10th commandment did in the first place.

And already the Lord, in the context of the second or third commandment, showing loving kindness to thousands of generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. Calvin is right. Although Hebrews 12 can quote the 10 commandments and the fireworks and go on and the Lord shouting from Mount Sinai and the people trembling and so forth.

Therefore, the law is a great way to show people their need for Christ. But Calvin is right. In its original context, I'm the Lord, your God, who delivered you out of Egyptian bondage.

Love me and keep my commandments. Jumping down to the second commandment. It is a guide for the Christian life.

It was the way Israel was supposed to live in light of the Abrahamic covenant of God's grace, faith, and the Redeemer to come. They were to love the Lord, your God, and obey his law. Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments.

It's not different. Oh, it's different because it has become Christologized. Love me, keep my commandments.

Of course, he means to love the Father and the Holy Spirit too. Sin involves words. James 3:1 through 12.

What a section of the Bible. It warns people like me, Lord, it's not my fault you gifted me only in one way. Let not many of you become teachers, my brothers.

For you know, we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. When I, the Lord brought me to himself as a 21-year-old, whatever I went to do, I ended up teaching. And I couldn't do most of the other stuff.

Anyway, God is good. He gives us all at least one gift. I have a friend who has so many gifts.

I said you're in trouble. There's no way you can do all those things that you're gifted for. And he's learned to manage and help others and lead others and so forth, including me.

In any case, man, we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he's a perfect man, able to bridle his entire body. He then uses these examples of huge creatures.

On my Facebook page, I put beautiful pictures of horses. And sometimes little children are riding them or next to them. They are big animals, man, they're big animals.

But we control their entire bodies with a bit in their mouths. And a ship can be huge, far bigger than James even conceived of. But a little rudder.

I know we have different things today, but similarly, instruments can move the whole ship in the way that the pilot wants it to go. So, the tongue is also a small member, yet it does both. It's capable of good and evil.

It's not what he says. He says it boasts of great things. He hardly says anything good of the tongue.

Is that the Bible's total message? No. Proverbs says both good and ill come out of it. Here, he emphasizes the ill.

My goodness, does he. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire. A whole forest burned down by a careless campfire or a spark from a lightning bolt.

And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body. Maybe you've seen in a movie or sadly in real life, an absolutely handsome human being or man or gorgeous woman.

And then they open their mouths. And oh, it is just so sad because their beautiful appearance, a gift from God, is so marred by a filthy mouth that you just can hardly stand the contradiction. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body and setting on fire for the entire course of life. Gehenna sets it on fire.

I forget, it's used 12 times, 13 times, something like that. 12 of them by Jesus in the Gospels. Here's the other use.

The tongue comes over some bad company. Wow. So, before we give somebody a piece of our mind in a heated exchange, just be quiet.

The book of Proverbs says that a fool, even if he's quiet, will be thought to be a wise man. Oh, my gosh. Every kind of beast and bird, reptile and sea creature.

That's remarkable. He could write that in the first century to me. It can be tamed and has been tamed by humankind.

But no human being can tame the tongue. How much does it weigh? How big is it? Not very big. It doesn't weigh a few ounces.

It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. He's using a metaphor comparing the tongue to a serpent, a poisonous serpent. And then here she says something good about the tongue, as we saw previously.

With their tongues, we bless our Lord and Father. Yeah, it's good, right? No, not in the context. With it, we curse people who've been made in the likeness of God.

Yikes. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be.

Next, he shows such use of speech to praise God and curse God's image bears, which, in fact, is cursing God. It's unnatural. Does a spring pour forth in the same opening, both fresh and saltwater? I don't think so.

Can a fig tree, my brothers, produce bare olives? No, figs. Can a grapevine produce figs? No, grapes. Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

Whew, my word. I rest my case. Sin involves sins of speech.

By the way, if James does give a remedy, it's in the next verses, which speak of wisdom from God, wisdom from above, which in Jewish parlance is connected to the Spirit of God. But whew, man, oh man. We said previously sin is deceitful.

I'll just briefly review it. Matthew 19, I'm not sure if it's a deceitful sin. It's secret sins.

Sins know no need to the speaker. He asked God to forgive those too. Matthew 7 is that ludicrous illustration of the guy with the telephone pole in his eye trying to help a guy or a woman with a speck in her eye.

How absurd. How can we possibly be so blind spiritually that we don't see the telephone pole in our own eyes because sin is deceitful? C.S. Lewis said it well. We

know well, Romans chapter 2, that human beings react when they are sinned against.

He said we know well because we react when we're sinned against. Oh, it's just innate to do that since the fall. Hebrews 3 specifically speaks of the deceitfulness of sin.

And Jeremiah 17, the deceitfulness and wickedness of the human heart. On this less-than-happy note, we will move in our next lecture to discuss a very important and neglected matter: the ultimate origin of sin. That is the fall and the doctrine of original sin.

This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on the Doctrines of Humanity and Sin. This is session 13, Biblical Description of Sin Continued, Examination of Key Biblical Texts.