

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 13, Sin, Key Biblical Texts Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 13, Sin, Key Biblical Texts, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's session 13 lecture on **Humanity and Sin** continues a biblical description of sin by examining key scriptural texts. Peterson emphasizes that **sin is fundamentally an offense against God's character and a violation of His law**, highlighting its connection to both guilt and pollution. The lecture further elaborates that **sin encompasses thoughts, words, and actions**, underscoring its pervasive and deceitful nature. Peterson utilizes various Old and New Testament passages to support these points, aiming to reinforce a comprehensive understanding of the doctrine of sin before addressing original sin in subsequent sessions.

**2. 11 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 13 – Double click icon
to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Theology → Theology, Peterson → Humanity and Sin).**



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3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 13, Sin, Key Biblical Texts

Briefing Document: Biblical Description of Sin

Introduction:

This briefing document summarizes the key theological points and scriptural references discussed in Session 13 of Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lectures on the Doctrines of Humanity and Sin. The session focuses on reinforcing a biblical understanding of sin by examining key biblical texts and highlighting four crucial aspects: sin as an offense against God's character and a violation of his law, the inclusion of guilt and pollution in sin, the manifestation of sin in thoughts, words, and actions, and the deceitful nature of sin. Dr. Peterson emphasizes the importance and often neglected nature of the doctrine of Original Sin, which will be the topic of subsequent lectures.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Sin is an offense against God's character and a violation of his law.

- Dr. Peterson asserts that sin is fundamentally directed against God, even when it appears to be against other people or things. He uses David's confession in **Psalm 51** as a prime example. Despite David's sins of adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, David cries out, "**Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight**" (Psalm 51:4).
- This is because God is the "supreme being," the "giver of his moral code," and the ultimate standard of ethics. All actions are done *coram Deo* (in God's presence), and therefore, all sin ultimately offends Him.
- The example of **Joseph in Genesis 39:9** further illustrates this point. When tempted by Potiphar's wife, Joseph refuses, saying, "**How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?**" even in the absence of explicit Old Testament law regarding this specific situation. This demonstrates an inherent understanding that sin is an offense against God.
- Dr. Peterson connects the law of God to the character of God. While certain aspects of the Mosaic Law may be "passé," the **Ten Commandments** are a lasting "revelation of the holy, just, and loving character of God."

- **Romans 8:7** supports this by stating that "the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, for indeed it cannot." This hostility towards God's law reveals a deeper opposition to God's character.
- Breaking God's commandments, therefore, is not just a transgression of a rule but a dishonoring of God himself because the commandments reflect His holy character.

2. Sin includes guilt and pollution.

- Dr. Peterson emphasizes that sin has two major theological consequences for humanity: **guilt** (condemnation and accountability before God) and **pollution** (the actual infection and corruption of our beings).
- He uses **Galatians 3** to illustrate how Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us ("**Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree,**" **Galatians 3:13**). This highlights the legal aspect of sin and Christ's substitutionary atonement to remove our guilt.
- The curse of the law applies to those who do not abide by *all* things written in the book of the law (**Deuteronomy 27:26, quoted in Galatians 3:10**).
- Through Christ's sacrifice, believers receive the "blessing of Abraham" (salvation, eternal life, peace with God, and forgiveness of sins), signifying the removal of guilt.
- **Ephesians 2:3** further describes the state of humanity before salvation as being "by nature children of wrath," emphasizing our inherent guilt and deserving of God's judgment.
- Beyond guilt, sin also **pollutes** our beings – minds, bodies, thoughts, words, and actions. **Genesis 6:5** is cited: "**The Lord saw that man's wickedness was great on earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**"
- The **deeds of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21** are presented as evidence of this corruption, encompassing sexual, religious (idolatry, sorcery), and interpersonal sins (enmity, strife, jealousy, etc.). The emphasis on interpersonal sins is linked to the problems within the Galatian churches.
- Dr. Peterson notes the chiastic structure of Galatians 5, with the "deeds of the flesh" at the center, highlighting their significance in demonstrating the deep pollution of sin.

- While Christians can still commit these sins, a life characterized *only* by the deeds of the flesh, devoid of the fruit of the Spirit, raises serious concerns about their faith.
- The need for God's grace is twofold: justification to overcome guilt and progressive sanctification to reverse the corruption, although the latter is not fully realized in this life. He quotes Anthony Hoekema: "**We are not totally new. We are genuinely new,**" acknowledging the ongoing struggle with sin even for believers.

3. Sin includes thoughts, words, and actions.

- Dr. Peterson emphasizes that sin is not limited to outward actions but extends to our inner lives.
- **Exodus 20:17 ("You shall not covet")** illustrates that even desires can be sinful. Coveting is defined as "to desire inordinately something that is not yours."
- Jesus' teachings in **Matthew 5:22** expand on this, stating that harboring hatred in one's heart towards a brother is akin to spiritual murder. Similarly, desiring someone other than one's spouse is considered spiritual adultery.
- This demonstrates that Jesus addressed not just the "letter of the law" but also its "spirit," which aligns with the underlying principles of the Ten Commandments and God's desire for inward righteousness.
- The lecture then focuses on **sins of speech**, using **James 3:1-12** as the primary text. James warns against the dangers of the tongue, highlighting its power to cause immense harm, comparing it to a small fire that can set a whole forest ablaze. "**The tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell**" (James 3:6).
- The contradictory nature of the tongue is also noted – blessing God and cursing those made in His likeness. "**With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be**" (James 3:9-10).

4. Sin is deceitful.

- This point, previously mentioned, is reiterated. Sin can blind us to our own faults.
- The illustration from **Matthew 7** of the person with a "telephone pole" in their eye trying to remove a speck from another's eye exemplifies this self-deception. **"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's observation that humans readily recognize when they are sinned against highlights our skewed perception of sin. **"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 mentions "the deceitfulness of sin," and **Jeremiah 17** speaks of "the deceitfulness and wickedness of the human heart."

Conclusion:

Dr. Peterson's Session 13 provides a comprehensive overview of the biblical understanding of sin, emphasizing its multifaceted nature as an offense against God's character and law, encompassing both guilt and pollution, manifesting in our thoughts, words, and actions, and inherently deceitful. This foundational understanding is crucial for appreciating the doctrine of Original Sin, which will be addressed in subsequent lectures. The session underscores the profound impact of sin on humanity and our constant need for God's grace in both justification and sanctification.

Quotes to Note:

- **Psalms 51:4:** "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight."
- **Genesis 39:9:** "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"
- **Galatians 3:13:** "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree."
- **Genesis 6:5:** "The Lord saw that man's wickedness was great on earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
- **James 3:6:** "The tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell."

- **James 3:9-10:** "With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be."
- **Anthony Hoekema:** "We are not totally new. We are genuinely new."

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 13, Sin, Key Biblical Texts

Study Guide: The Biblical Description of Sin

Key Points to Review

1. **Sin as an Offense Against God:** Understand that all sin, even when directed towards others, is ultimately an offense against God's holy character and a violation of His law. Explore the connection between God's law and His character. Consider examples like David's sin with Bathsheba and Uriah and Joseph's refusal of Potiphar's wife.
2. **Sin Includes Guilt and Pollution:** Grasp the dual nature of sin as both a legal condemnation (guilt) before God and a moral corruption (pollution) that affects our entire being (thoughts, minds, bodies, actions). Understand how these two aspects impact our relationship with God and our lives.
3. **Sin Encompasses Thoughts, Words, and Actions:** Recognize that sin is not limited to outward behavior but extends to our inner thoughts (coveting) and our spoken words (as detailed in James 3). Reflect on Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount regarding the inner dimensions of sin (anger as akin to murder, lustful thoughts as adultery).
4. **The Deceitfulness of Sin:** Appreciate how sin can blind us to our own faults and the true extent of our sinfulness. Consider the illustration of the person with a log in their eye trying to remove a speck from another's. Understand the inherent tendency to recognize sin when it is committed against us more readily than when we are the perpetrators.

Quiz: Short Answer Questions

1. Explain the primary argument for why all sin is ultimately an offense against God, even when it seems directed towards other people. Provide a biblical example to support your answer.
2. Describe the two main theological components of sin discussed in the lecture. Why is it important to understand both of these aspects?
3. According to the lecture, how does Jesus broaden the understanding of sin beyond outward actions? Give a specific example from His teachings.

4. What does the lecture mean by the "pollution" aspect of sin? How does this affect humanity according to the provided material?
5. In the context of the lecture, summarize Joseph's response to Potiphar's wife and explain what makes his actions significant regarding the understanding of sin.
6. Explain the relationship between the Ten Commandments and God's character as presented in the lecture. Why are the commandments still relevant for believers today?
7. Briefly describe the analogy used in James 3 to illustrate the power and potential danger of the tongue. What is the main point of this passage regarding sin?
8. What is meant by the "curse of the law" in Galatians 3, and how does the lecture explain Christ's redemption from this curse?
9. Explain the concept of "children of wrath" as described in Ephesians 2:3 and its connection to the nature of sin.
10. How does the lecture illustrate the deceitfulness of sin? What practical implication does this understanding have for self-examination?

Quiz: Answer Key

1. The lecture argues that all sin is ultimately against God because He is the supreme being, the giver of the moral code, and the one in whose presence all actions occur (coram Deo). David's sin with Bathsheba and Uriah in Psalm 51 is a prime example, where he confesses, "Against you, you only, have I sinned."
2. The two main components are guilt (legal condemnation and answerability before God) and pollution (moral corruption affecting our being). Understanding both is crucial because sin separates us from God legally and damages our ability to live in a way that honors Him.
3. Jesus extends the understanding of sin to include inner thoughts and attitudes, not just outward actions. For example, He teaches that anger in the heart is akin to murder and lustful looking is already committing adultery in one's heart (Matthew 5:22, 28).
4. The "pollution" aspect of sin refers to the corrupting influence of sin on our entire being – our minds, bodies, thoughts, words, and actions. This inherent corruption means we sin because we are sinners, affecting all aspects of our lives and relationship with God.

5. Joseph refused Potiphar's wife's advances by asking, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" His God-centeredness, despite being away from his family and without the full Old Testament, highlights that the primary reason to avoid sin is its offense against God.
6. The lecture states that while the Jewish dress of the Ten Commandments is passé, the commandments themselves are a revelation of God's holy, just, and loving character. They remain relevant as they reflect God's unchanging nature, and breaking them is an offense against Him.
7. James uses the analogy of a bit in a horse's mouth and a rudder on a ship to illustrate how a small member like the tongue can control a large entity. The main point is that the tongue, though small, has immense power to do both good and evil, emphasizing the need for careful control over our speech.
8. The "curse of the law" refers to the penalty and condemnation that the law brings upon those who fail to perfectly obey it. The lecture explains that Christ redeemed us from this curse by becoming a curse for us, taking the penalty of the law upon Himself through His death on the cross (penal substitution).
9. "Children of wrath" is a Hebrew idiom meaning people who deserve God's wrath due to their sinful nature, inherited from birth. It signifies that by our very nature as fallen human beings, we are objects of God's righteous anger and judgment.
10. The lecture uses the illustration of someone with a telephone pole in their eye trying to remove a speck from another's eye to show how sin deceives us, making us blind to our own significant faults while readily noticing the smaller sins of others. This implies the need for honest and thorough self-examination, recognizing our tendency towards self-deception.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the implications of understanding sin primarily as an offense against God's character rather than merely breaking a set of rules. How does this perspective shape our motivation for holiness and our response to sin?
2. Explore the interconnectedness of guilt and pollution as consequences of sin. How do these two aspects necessitate both justification and sanctification in the process of redemption?
3. Analyze the scriptural evidence presented in the lecture for the claim that sin encompasses thoughts, words, and actions. Why is it crucial to recognize the comprehensive nature of sin in these three domains?
4. Evaluate the concept of the "deceitfulness of sin" and its practical effects on the Christian life. How can believers cultivate greater awareness of their own sinfulness and combat self-deception?
5. Considering the lecture's emphasis on both the condemnation and corruption caused by sin, discuss the balance between acknowledging the seriousness of sin and embracing the grace offered through Christ.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Original Sin:** The doctrine that humanity inherited a corrupted nature and propensity to sin as a result of Adam's transgression.
- **Guilt:** The state of being answerable and condemned before God due to the violation of His law. It carries the liability for punishment.
- **Pollution:** The moral corruption and defilement of human nature caused by sin, affecting thoughts, desires, and actions.
- **Lawlessness:** A biblical term for sin, indicating a rebellion against and a transgression of God's commands and moral standards.
- **Coram Deo:** A Latin phrase meaning "before the face of God," emphasizing that all of life and actions are lived in God's presence and under His scrutiny.
- **Penal Substitution:** The theological doctrine that Christ died on the cross as a substitute for sinners, bearing the penalty (curse) of God's law that they deserved.
- **Justification:** The act of God declaring a sinner righteous in His sight, based on Christ's atoning sacrifice and imputed righteousness, received through faith.
- **Sanctification:** The ongoing process by which believers are progressively made holy and conformed to the image of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- **Chiasm:** A literary structure where parallel elements are presented in an inverted order (AB-BA), often used for emphasis.
- **Theonomy:** A theological system advocating that Old Testament civil laws should be the basis of law in modern societies. The lecture presents a critical view of this perspective.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 13, Sin, Key Biblical Texts, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on the Biblical Description of Sin

1. How is sin primarily defined in relation to God? Sin is fundamentally an offense against God's character and a violation of His holy law. This is demonstrated in Psalm 51, where David, after sinning against Bathsheba and Uriah, recognizes his actions as ultimately being against God. God's law reflects His holy, just, and loving character, as seen in the enduring relevance of the Ten Commandments. Therefore, disobeying God's commands, even in thought or spirit, dishonors Him. All actions are ultimately done in God's presence (*coram Deo*), making all sin ultimately sin against Him.

2. What two crucial aspects does sin encompass theologically? Theologically, sin has two significant dimensions: guilt and pollution. Guilt refers to our legal condemnation and accountability before God, making us deserving of His wrath and in need of deliverance. Pollution describes the moral corruption that sin brings to our entire being—minds, bodies, thoughts, words, and actions. We are not only declared guilty but also inherently corrupted by sin, affecting every aspect of our lives.

3. How did Jesus Christ address the guilt associated with sin? Jesus Christ redeemed humanity from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. This penal substitution, clearly seen in Galatians 3, means that Christ took the penalty and the wrath of God upon Himself on the cross, in our place. By His vicarious death, He absorbed the punishment our sins deserved, allowing us to be forgiven and declared righteous before God based on His sinless life and sacrificial death.

4. In what ways does sin manifest as "pollution" or corruption in human beings? Sin corrupts human beings deeply, affecting their attitudes and actions, often described as "deeds of the flesh." These manifestations can be broadly categorized as sexual (e.g., sexual immorality, impurity), religious (e.g., idolatry, sorcery), and interpersonal (e.g., enmity, strife, jealousy). The emphasis on interpersonal sins in Galatians highlights how sin disrupts relationships. Ultimately, these deeds reveal the profound pollution of sin in human lives, requiring God's grace in sanctification to be reversed.

5. Does the biblical understanding of sin extend beyond outward actions? Yes, the biblical understanding of sin includes not only outward actions but also thoughts and words. The tenth commandment against coveting (Exodus 20:17) demonstrates that sinful desires in the heart are also transgressions against God and our neighbor. Jesus' teachings in Matthew 5 further illustrate this by equating hatred in the heart with spiritual murder and lustful desires with spiritual adultery, showing that sin penetrates to the deepest levels of our being.

6. What does the book of James teach about the sinfulness of human speech? James 3 extensively addresses the destructive power of the tongue, highlighting that even though it is a small part of the body, it can cause immense harm. The tongue is described as a restless evil, full of deadly poison, capable of both blessing God and cursing those made in His likeness. James emphasizes the contradiction of using the same mouth for praise and cursing, illustrating the profound sinfulness that can manifest in our words.

7. In what ways is sin described as "deceitful" in the Bible? Sin is portrayed as deceitful because it can blind us to our own faults and the true extent of our sinfulness. Matthew 7's analogy of the person with a log in their eye trying to remove a speck from another's eye exemplifies this spiritual blindness caused by sin's deceit. Hebrews 3 also specifically warns against the deceitfulness of sin, highlighting its ability to harden our hearts and lead us astray. Our innate reaction to being sinned against, while often failing to see our own transgressions, further underscores this deceitful nature.

8. How does the understanding of sin relate to the need for God's grace? The profound impact of sin, encompassing both guilt before God and the deep corruption of our being, necessitates God's grace for restoration. Justification by grace overcomes the guilt of sin, providing forgiveness and a righteous standing before God. Furthermore, the ongoing process of sanctification, also through God's grace, is essential to combat and reverse the pollution of sin in our lives. While not fully eradicated in this life, this progressive work of grace enables believers to grow in holiness and increasingly reflect God's character.