

SIN

1. What is Sin?

Sin is lawlessness [ἡ ἀμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία]. (1 Jn. 3:4)¹

All wrongdoing is sin [πᾶσα ἀδικία ἀμαρτία ἐστὶν]. (1 Jn. 5:17)

By the law is the knowledge of sin. (Rom. 3:20)

I would not have known sin except through the law. (Rom. 7:7)

Whatever is not from faith is sin. (Rom. 14:23)

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. (Jam. 4:17)

- Sin is the violation of the righteousness of God expressed in the law of God, which is love (Matt. 22:37-40; Rom. 13:8-10).

2. Other words for Sin [n. ἀμαρτία; ἀμάρτημα; vb. ἀμαρτάνειν]:

**lawlessness* [ἀνομία], *wrongdoing* [ἀδικία], and *sins* (Ex. 34:7)

**sin and do anything against* [ποιήσῃ μίαν ἀπὸ]/*actually disregard* [παριδὼν παρίδη] *the Lord's commandments* (Lev. 5:17, 21)

**ungodliness* [ἀσέβεια] *of my sin* (Ps. 31[32]:5)

**the transgressor* [ὁ παράνομος], *so as to sin* (Ps. 35[36]:2)

**sinned and done evil* [τὸ πονηρὸν ἐποίησα] (Ps. 50[51]:6)

¹ Scriptural quotations are from *The Orthodox Study Bible* (Thomas Nelson, 2008), the Old Testament being the only modern English version of the Septuagint (Greek) text used by Christ, His apostles, and the early Church.

**sins/debts* [τὰ ὀφειλήματα] (Matt. 6:12; Lk. 11:4)

**transgressions/trespases* [παράπτωμα] *and sins* (Gal. 6:1; Eph. 2:1)

**sins and lawless acts* [ἀνομία] (Heb. 10:17)

**commit sin as transgressors* [παραβάτης] (Jam. 2:9)

- “Sin” is the general term, and the other terms indicate the different ways the righteousness of God expressed in the law of God is violated, notably sin’s *negative* aspect (Gk., ἀ-) – “lack of law” (ἀνομία), “lack of rightness” (ἀδικία), and “lack of godliness” (ἀσέβεια); and sin’s *side/over-stepping* of what is right (Gk., παρά-) – “transgress” (παράνομος, παράπτωμα, παραβάτης).

3. Specific “types” of Sin:

- *Involuntary/voluntary sin* (Lev. 5:15; Num. 15:24; Heb. 10:26)
- *Great(er) sin* (Gen. 18:20; Ps. 18(19):14; Jn. 19:11)
- *Eternal sin* (Mk. 3:29)
- *sin not leading/leading to death* (1 Jn. 5:16-17)

The severity of sin is variable. All sin is a violation of the righteousness of God, but some sins are worse in their effects and/or consequences (cf. Lk. 12:47-48).

4. What is the origin of Sin?

- *The transgressor, so as to sin, says within himself, 'There is no fear of God before his eyes'; for he acts deceitfully before Him, lest he discover his lawlessness and hate it. The words of his mouth are lawlessness and deceit; he is unwilling to understand how to go good; he devises lawlessness on his bed; he sets himself in every way not good, and he does not abhor evil. (Ps. 35[36]:1-5)*
- *For behold, I was conceived in transgressions, and in sins my mother bore me. (Ps. 50[51]:7)*
- *But the soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the wrongdoing of his father, nor shall the father bear the wrongdoing of his son. The righteousness of a righteous man shall be upon himself, and the lawlessness of a lawless man shall be upon himself. (Ez. 18:20; Deut. 24:16)*

Note the following sequence from the Letter to the Romans:

- *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because (of which) all sinned...For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. (Rom. 5:12, 19; parentheses mine²)*
- *Our old man was crucified with [Christ], that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin...Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? (Rom. 6:6, 16)*
- *For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver*

² The Greek of the last half of Romans 5:12 reads: καὶ οὕτως εἰς πάντα ἀνθρώπους ὁ θάνατος διήλθεν, ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον; literally, "thus death spread to all men, because of which (that is, because of death) all sinned." "There has been much controversy about how to read Greek *eph'* (*epi*), here in the KJV (i.e., King James Version) translated correctly as 'for that,' or 'for which,' even better 'because of which,' referring to death in 'because of death all have sinned,' since *eph'* (*epi*) is causal. (See also 2 Cor. 5:4; Philippians 3:13; 4:10 for other examples.)" *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans A Pastoral Commentary*, by Archbishop Dmitri Royster, (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press: Crestwood, New York, 2008), pg. 132.

me from this body of death? I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Rom. 7:22-25)

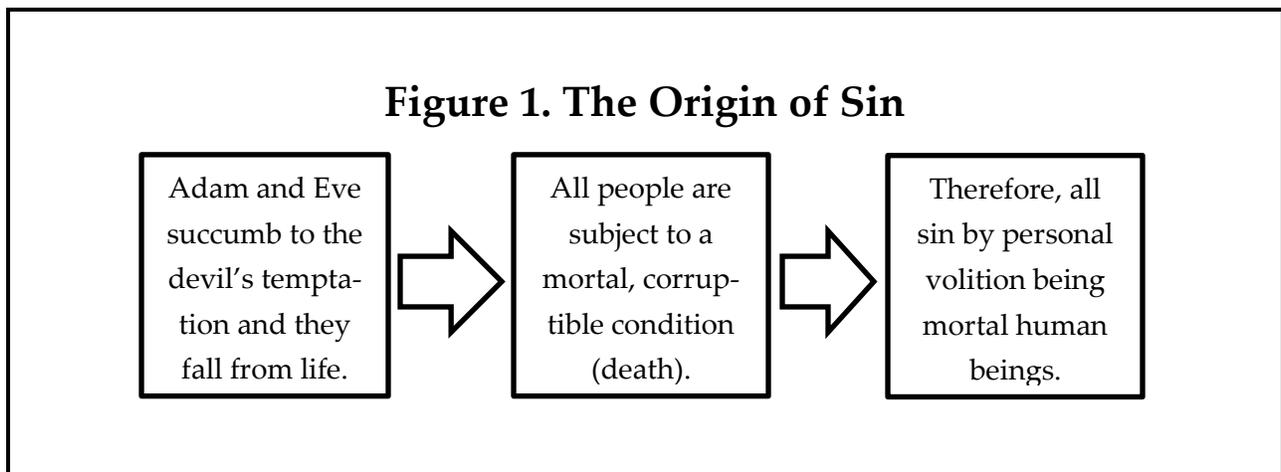
- *The woman being deceived, fell into transgression. (1 Tim. 2:14; also 2 Cor. 11:3)*
- *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (Jam. 1:14-15)*
- *He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. (1 Jn. 3:8; Jn. 8:44)*

Sin originated with the devil, that fallen angel who then enticed human beings to join him in his rebellion against God. Human sin originates in the will of man fulfilling his or her own desires contrary to God's righteous law, that is, breaking communion with God and forsaking his God-given life (Gen. 2:15-17).

Accordingly, *original sin* is the sin originally committed, the complicity of the first people, Adam and Eve, with the evil one (Gen. 3:1-7); this *original sin* is the repeated pattern of all sin especially because all human beings now live in a corruptible mortal condition susceptible to the devil's influence (Rom. 6:12; 8:20-22; Eph. 2:1-4; Heb. 2:14-15). Sin always remains personal; though each person is born into and inherits a mortal, fallen condition, each person enacts and is responsible for their own sin (Fig. 1 below, pg. 6).

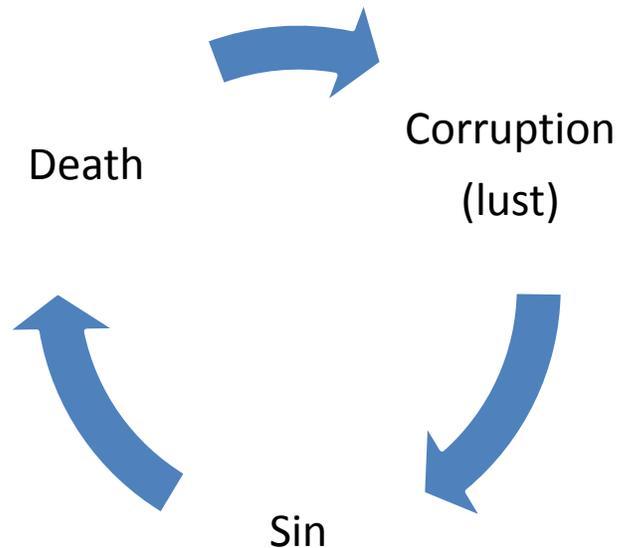
Fr. John Romanides summarizes: "Because of the action of the devil through the death of the soul, that is, the loss of divine grace, and the infirmity of the flesh, men are born with a powerful inclination toward sin. And all, whether in knowledge or in ignorance, violate the will of God. All are born under captivity to the devil, death, and sin. Moreover, as a result, they

fail to attain to their original destiny, that is, to moral perfection, immortality, and *theosis* (lit., *likeness to God*), and are bereft of the glory of God... 'Our nature, then, became diseased by sin through the disobedience of one, that is, of Adam. Thus, all were made sinners, not by being co-transgressors with Adam, something which they never were, but by being of his nature and falling under the law of sin... Human nature fell ill in Adam and subject to corruptibility through disobedience, and, therefore, the passions entered in.'"³



³ *The Ancestral Sin*, by John S. Romanides, trans. George S. Gabriel, (Zephyr Publishing: Ridgewood, NJ, 1998), pg. 165, 168 (quoting from St. Cyril of Alexandria).

5. What are the effects of Sin?



- *From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat; for in whatever day you eat from it, you shall die by death. Gen. 2:17)*
- *Then the eyes of the two were opened, and they knew they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings...and Adam and his wife hid themselves within the tree in the middle of the garden from the presence of the Lord God. (Gen. 3:7, 8)*
- *To the woman [the Lord God] said, "I will greatly multiply your pain and your groaning, and in pain (Gk., ἐν λύπαις) you shall bring forth children. Your recourse will be to your husband, and he shall rule over you." Then to Adam He said, "Because you heeded the voice of your wife, and ate from the one tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it,' cursed (ἐπικατάρατος) is the ground in your labors. In toil (Gk., ἐν λύπαις) you shall eat from it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground from which you were taken. Earth you are, and to earth you shall return." (Gen. 3:16-19)*
- *Then the Lord God saw man's wickedness, that it was great in the earth, and every intent of the thoughts within his heart was only evil continually...Now the earth was corrupt before God and filled with unrighteousness. Thus the Lord God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh corrupted their way on the earth. (Gen. 6:5, 11-12)*

- *All turned aside and were altogether corrupted...* (Ps. 13[14]:3)
- *But the soul who sins shall die.* (Ez. 18:20)
- *...sin reigned in death...* (Rom. 5:21)
- *Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lusts.* (Rom. 6:12)
- *But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good (i.e., the commandments, which were not kept), so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful...But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?* (Rom. 7:13, 23-24)
- *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* (Rom. 8:20-21)
- *The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power...The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.* (1 Cor. 15:42-43, 56)
- *And you he made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins...* (Eph. 2:1)
- *...put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.* (Eph. 4:22-24; 2 Pet. 1:4)
- *But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.* (Jam. 1:14-15)

With the first sin of Adam and Eve, a vicious cycle was introduced into this creation. Though Adam and Eve did not immediately die physically, they lost the grace of the Holy Spirit they possessed before sinning; in other words, they died spiritually (i.e., death of the soul) and began living apart from God's will. They became corrupted in will and body using their powers apart from and contrary to God's will, succumbing instead to the dominion of the evil one in pursuit of sinful lusts leading to more and more sin and to more and more death.

Physical death eventually follows, not primarily as a punishment from God, but as a result of man purposely separating himself from the life of God (see Wis. 1:12-16; 2:21-24). God does not permit the sinner to *put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever* in his or her sin (Gen. 3:22). Thus death actually benefits man not only by revealing sin's effect but by curbing sin's extent.

6. What are the dynamics of Sin?

- *“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust (τὸ ἐπιθυμῆσαι) for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* (Matt. 5:28)
- *“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts (διαλογισμοὶ), murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”* (Matt. 15:18-19)
- *...although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts (διαλογισμοῖς), and their foolish hearts were darkened...And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind (νοῦν), to do those things which are not fitting.* (Rom. 1:21, 28)
- *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments (λογισμοὺς) and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought (νόημα) into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.* (2 Cor. 10:3-6)
- *...but the woman being deceived (ἐξαπατηθεῖσα⁴), fell into transgression.* (1 Tim. 2:14)
- *...when desire (ἐπιθυμία) has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.* (Jam. 1:15)
- *Little children, let no one deceive (πλανάτω⁵) you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins (ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God*

⁴ “deceived,” that is, “having been tricked, or defrauded.”

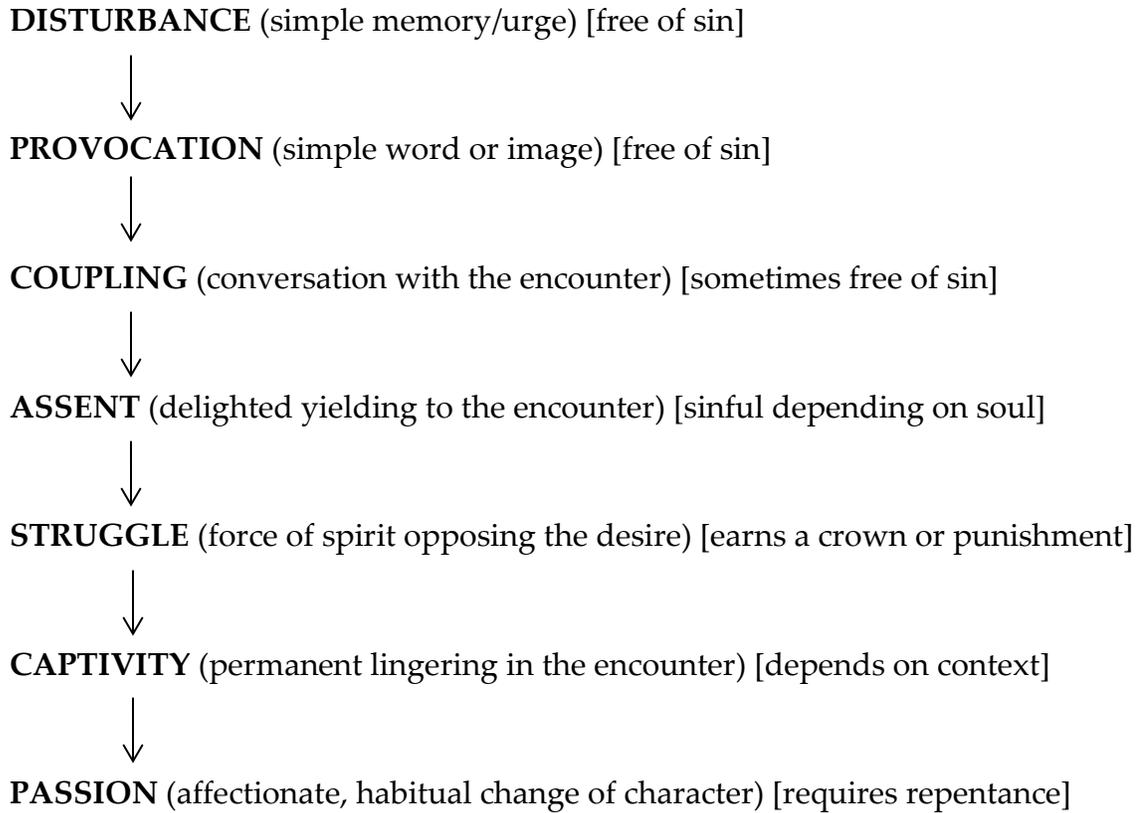
⁵ “deceive,” that is, “lead astray/mislead.”

was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin (ἀμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ), for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. (1 Jn. 3:7-9)

“Our *nature* has been endowed by God with virtue, and that He is the source and author of all good, without whose co-operation and assistance we are powerless either to will good or to do it (see Phil. 2:13). Moreover, it depends on ourselves whether we are to persevere in virtue and be guided by God who invites us to practice it; or whether we are to abandon virtue, which is to become attached to vice and be guided by the devil, who, without forcing us, is inviting us to practice vice. For evil is nothing else but the absence of good, precisely as darkness is the absence of light. Consequently, when we persevere in what is *according to nature*, we are in a state of virtue; but, when we abandon what is *according to nature*, that is to say, virtue, we come to what is *contrary to nature* and become attached to vice. Repentance (μετάνοια) is a return through discipline and toil *from that which is against nature to that which is according to it*, from the devil to God.” (St. John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, II.30; italics mine)

Sin begins as a desire contrary to nature, that is, against God’s design, or will. This is lust, or passion, and it takes place in the heart and mind (i.e., spiritual faculty) of a person as a matter of thought(s). Such thought(s), if entertained, eventually ripens into action. The devil continually tempts us to desire contrary to nature, to lust after that which is contrary to God’s design, and to translate our passionate thoughts into actions completing the working of sin and implanting it into our souls and bodies.

A more detailed description of the dynamics of sin is given by St. John of the Ladder (Step 15), as follows:



7. How is Sin overcome?

a) Sin is the transgression of God's will; therefore, sin is overcome by not transgressing God's will, that is, in the opposite, namely, the doing of God's will.

- *So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you extremely sorrowful? And why has your countenance fallen? Did you not sin, even though you brought it rightly (i.e., his sacrifice from the fruits of the ground), but did not divide it rightly? Be still; his (i.e., Abel, his brother's) recourse shall be to you; and you shall rule over him. (Gen. 4:6-7)*
- *Then the Lord God saw man's wickedness, that it was great in the earth, and every intent of the thoughts within his heart was only evil continually...But Noah found grace in the presence of the Lord God...Noah was a righteous man, who was perfect in his generation and well-pleasing to God. (Gen. 6:5, 8, 9)*
- *Then the Lord said, "Shall I hide from Abraham, My servant, what I am about to do?...For I know he will order his sons and his house after him. They will keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken to him." Then the Lord said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah has been completed, and their sins are exceedingly great." (Gen. 18:17, 19-20)*
- *But if a lawless man turns from all the lawless deeds he commits, keeps all My commandments, does righteousness and shows mercy, he will surely live and not die. None of the transgressions he commits will be remembered. In the righteousness he does, he shall live. (Ez. 18:21-22)*
- *Afterward Jesus found [the paralytic] in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." (John 5:14)*
- *When Jesus raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman (i.e., caught in adultery), He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." (John 8:10-11)*

b) In this mortal condition in which we are born, sin is overcome in the doing of God's will by release from captivity to sin, death, and the devil. Release from this bondage is accomplished by the Person of the God-man,

Jesus Christ, who forgives our sins, restores our nature in holiness, and re-establishes our life in communion with God by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

- *“And [Mary] will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”* (Matt. 1:21)
- *Then [Jesus] said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”* (Luke 24:46-47)
- *Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”* (John 8:34-35)
- *[Jesus says,] “If I depart, I will send [the Helper, the Spirit] to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world (i.e., the devil⁶) is judged.”* (John 16:7-11)

This work of Jesus Christ to deliver us from sin, death, and the devil, and to restore us to the righteous life in communion with God, is called by several different terms in the Scripture: *Gospel* (lit., *good news*; 1 Cor. 15:1-8), *salvation* (Eph. 2:1-10); *redemption* (1 Pet. 1:17-21), *justification* (Rom. 5:12-17), *sanctification* (Heb. 2:10-11), *reconciliation* (2 Cor. 5:16-21).

Jesus Christ *binds the strong man*, the devil (Matt. 12:29), by *destroy(ing) [his] works* (1 Jn. 3:8; Heb. 2:14) in His own flesh, our flesh. Christ *was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin* (Heb. 4:15; Lk. 4:1-13). Christ offered our nature back to God the sinless, perfect offering (i.e., sacrifice). *But this Man*,

⁶ See John 12:31 and 14:30.

after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified (Heb. 10:12-14). In Christ, we all have freedom from bondage to the evil one, forgiveness of transgressions, and power to withstand temptation in the desire to accomplish God's will (Rom. 6; et al.).

c) In Christ our spiritual powers are restored so that renovation and healing from sin can take place. This renovation and healing is the overcoming of sin known as *repentance, faith, and love* which characterize the Christian life.

- *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent (μετανοεῖτε⁷), for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 4:17)*
- *[Jesus said:] "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to the Father...If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth...If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (John 14:12, 15-17, 23)*
- *[Jesus said to the Apostle Paul:] "I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me." (Acts 26:17-18)*
- *[God's own Son] condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:3-6)*

⁷ Present, active imperative: "Be repentant," or "Keep on repenting." Gk., vb. μετανοεῖν; n. μετανοία (to repent/repentance), lit., "have a change of mind/thinking."

- *For we through the Spirit eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love...I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish...And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (Gal. 5:5-6, 16-17, 24-25)*
- *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. (Tit. 2:11-14)*

The purpose of the Church/Christianity is the restoration of the human person to the life of God. This restoration is made possible because of the work of Christ Jesus, the perfect God-man, who re-establishes communion with God in the grace of the Holy Spirit. Access to God in Christ and the Holy Spirit means the real overcoming of sin and death in the everyday lives of the people of God.

Thus the Christian not only has real knowledge of sin but the power to overcome it personally by communion with the divine life in Christ. The believer turns from sin, sin is forgiven, and the Christian begins to desire and practice true righteousness; with purified heart and mind, the Christian begins to walk in (be led by) the Holy Spirit – to change one's direction toward God, to believe, and to love.

d) Communion with the divine life in Christ is fulfilled only in the Church, which is not an institution but the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the Family of God the Father; consequently, the Church⁸ is the place in which the means for overcoming sin are fully available for the healing of human persons.

- [Jesus said:] *“And if he refuses to hear them, take it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector (i.e., an unbeliever). Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you (pl.) bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you (pl.) loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”* (Matt. 18:17-18; Jn. 20:21-23)
- *Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call...And [the baptized] continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship (Gk., κοινωνία [communion]), in the breaking of bread, and in [the⁹] prayers...And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:38-39, 42, 47)*
- *But now I have written to you not to keep company with (Gk., συναναμίγνυσθαι)¹⁰ anyone named a brother (i.e., fellow-Christian), who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an*

⁸ The Greek word ἐκκλησία (*ecclesia*) usually translated as *church* literally refers to an assembly of people called-out for some purpose (see Acts 19:32). In the Orthodox sense, Church is first and foremost the *Eucharistic assembly*, that is, the local assembly of believers in Divine Liturgy to participate in Holy Communion. The Apostle refers to this when he says, *when you come together as a church* (1 Cor. 11:18), or *the whole church comes together in one place* (1 Cor. 14:23), or *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some* (Heb. 10:25). Context shows that Church is the *Eucharistic assembly* par excellence in whatever location (i.e., town, city) the believers gather.

⁹ While not in most English translations, the definite article “the” is in the original Greek text, meaning the church continued steadfastly in “the prayers” which were commonly known by all, including what we would call the “services” of the Church (cf. Acts 3:1; 13:2-3; etc.).

¹⁰ Lit., “to be mixed up together/compounded, or associated, with” (see below, 2 Thes. 3:14).

extortioner – not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside (i.e., non-Christians)? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.” (1 Cor. 5:11-13; quoting Deut. 17:7; 19:19; 22:21, 24; 24:7)

- The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (Gk., κοινωνία) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion (Gk., κοινωνία) of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. (1 Cor. 10:16-17)
- For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free – and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. (1 Cor. 12:13-14)
- This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. (2 Cor. 2:6-8)
- For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you (pl.) sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you (pl.), what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you. (2 Cor. 7:10-12)
- Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (Eph. 2:19-22)
- But as for you, brethren (i.e., fellow-Christians), do not grow weary in doing good. And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with (Gk., συναναμίγυσθαι) him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. (2 Thes. 3:13-15)
- Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders (Gk., τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους [(parish) priests¹¹]) of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your

¹¹ The English word *prester*=*priest* is a shortened form of the Greek word πρεσβύτερος (*presbyteros*) usually translated as “elder” in most English versions of the Bible.

trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (Jam. 5:14-16)

- *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship (Gk., κοινωνία [communion]) with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 Jn. 1:7-9)*

- *Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you (pl.¹²) and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares (Gk., κοινωνεῖ [communes]) in his evil deeds. (2 Jn. 9-11)*

The Church is the unique dwelling place of God into which believers are incorporated (lit., en-bodied) for life in the kingdom of God – thus the necessity of Holy Baptism, Chrismation, and Holy Communion. As long as the Church remains in this world, its members will be engaged *together* in the overcoming of sin, death, and the influence of the devil – thus the necessity of Confession, mutual admonition and encouragement in what is *of God*, and common spiritual disciplines to overcome the desires of the flesh (e.g., fasting, prayer, and works of mercy). As such, the Church is the place in which true perfection can not only be pursued but even realized (see Matt. 5:44-48; Eph. 4:11-16; 2 Pet. 1:2-11).

¹² The Apostle is addressing *the elect lady and her children* (2 Jn. 1), that is, the church which typically met in someone's house as there were no official church buildings at this time.