



## E3. Q.4. Major and Minor Sins

**Question 4.** What does it mean to be “*in the loins of,*” or “*of the seed of*” another? If man inherits more than just biological genes from their parents that affect our appearances, but something that affects our nature as well, is there also a kind of *spiritual* inheritance that also affects our nature\_ that determines who we are?

### Beginning at the Beginning

Rm. 3.23 “*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*”

**All have sinned**, from the infant who has never been taught right from wrong to the aged who has notions of righteousness, from the high priest who solemnly worships at the altar, to the beggar who sits outside the gates of the temple, all have sinned. Devout men and women, who have given their lives to their faith in God and seem so saintly and benevolent in deed, are in sin as well. “How have they sinned,” you may ask, “what law did they transgress?” The answer is they sinned implicitly “in Adam.” When the first man Adam sinned, he drew upon himself a power that defiled him and all the generations to follow; he became infected with this element called sin. Sin as a resident power or influence brings forth sins in deeds. This infection of sin invaded his whole being, so that the whole of his very nature was corrupted and in need of a savior for his spirit, his soul, and ultimately his body.

This corrupt nature was passed on to all future generations, as written in Gn. 5.3, “*And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.*” Adam begot Seth in **his own likeness, and after his own image**. Adam, you recall, was created in the image of God, as it is written in Gn. 1.27, “*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him;*” But after Adam had fallen into sin, he begot a son of his corrupted seed, in his own image which was sinful and defiled, weak and mortal, subject to sin and death; he begot a son not only a man like himself, consisting of body, spirit and soul, but nevertheless a sinner like himself, guilty, degenerate, and corrupt. This was Adam’s *own likeness*, the reverse of that Divine likeness in which he was made, and which, having lost the likeness himself, he could not convey it even to his own seed.

Seth was “in Adam” when Adam sinned; for he was in the seed of Adam. That seed not only bore the physical genetic likeness to Adam in terms of his stature and appearance, but it also bore his moral fallen nature as well. So future generations, the entire population of the earth,

then and now and yet to come, are born, not after the Divinely intended image and likeness of God, but *as a son in Adam's own likeness, after his image*. That is why all men die, NOT because of individual "sins" committed, but because they were "in the loins of Adam when he sinned," and that defiled seed, stained in sin, was passed on to all generations on the earth, so all stand in dire need of a savior.

It is impossible for man to right this wrong and save himself. He could repent, cry, offer sacrifices, pray, and worship; though all honorable acts and perhaps spiritually acting as a covering for their current sins, yet none are effective in dealing with the sin nature, the power of sin within, the root cause of sins. Something greater, more glorious and powerful, must happen, not just the Divine acts of love and forgiveness "to" them, but by the design of God something must happen "in" them so that the power of sin might become nullified, and the old corrupt nature become terminated, and man become an altogether new creation. This is a mystery, now unveiled.

## Christ in You

It was on the day of Pentecost following the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven that Peter was testifying of Him before a large crowd that had gathered around him, men from Judea and Jerusalem. Upon hearing the Gospel of Christ, it is written in Acts 2.37, *"they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, **what shall we do?**"* Realizing the dire straits man finds himself in, they ask, "what is their hope for salvation?" To which Peter replied, Acts 2.38-39

*"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.'"*

What is most familiar to people when hearing this, is the command to *"be baptized,"* that is, to be baptized *in the name of Jesus Christ*. People of other religions, like Hindus and Muslims, are sometimes a little tolerant if a family member reads passages from the Bible, and associate with Christian friends, or even visit a Christian church. But the line is drawn at baptism, for this act they associate with becoming a Christian believer and subsequently abandoning their previous faith. Such an act would cause extreme tension within a family, even to the extent of disavowing or disowning the new believer as a member of their family.

However, all too often neglected, or taken soberly by faith, is the second aspect of Peter's reply, and that is, *"and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* The act of baptism is outward, submerging in water symbolizing both a cleansing of sin and of death to the old nature; it is a time of repentance and the beginning of a new lifestyle. However, the subsequent gift of the Holy Spirit happens "within" the repentant believer. This means from that hour forward the newly baptized believers will live their lives in union with, or joined to, the Spirit of Christ; and by faith acknowledge that this new Spirit from God will be working in

them as a source of guidance, peace, and sanctification--meaning the further setting apart of one's life in devotion and service to God.

It is this promise of the *gift of the Holy Spirit* that we must look into in greater measure. Recall this promise Jesus made to His disciples in Jn. 14.16-18,

*“16And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— 17the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and **will be in you**. 18I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.”*

This *helper*, sometimes called the *comforter*, describes the Holy Spirit spoken of by Peter. One cannot but help notice the interplay of pronouns used, sometimes Jesus using the pronoun “*He*” referring to the Spirit, and sometimes using “*I*” referring to Himself, as in, “*I will come to you*”—He and I seemingly synonymous with one another, and actually they are. There is a truth regarding the Spirit that must be more fully understood, and this truth is implied in Rm. 8.9-11,

*“9But you are not in the flesh but in the **Spirit**, if indeed the **Spirit of God dwells in you**. Now if anyone does not have the **Spirit of Christ**, he is not His. 10And if **Christ** is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the **Spirit** is life because of righteousness.*

This is a most powerful passage of Scripture. Here, it is the self-same **Spirit**, who is also referred to as the **Spirit of God**, and also referred to as the **Spirit of Christ**, and ultimately as **Christ**. Whatever the title, the most gripping truth of all the Bible passages presented here, Acts 2.38-39, Jn. 14.16-18, and Rm. 8.9-11` is the fact that **He dwells in you!** What was then received at baptism is now present in your daily life and will also be present at your coming death and resurrection. This great mystery is revealed in Col. 1.27, “Christ in you the hope of glory.” “*In you*” mind you, not in your midst, not in heaven, not surrounding you, not in the temple or church building, but within you, the Spirit of Christ now in union with your own spirit. Just as the fertilized seed in a woman needs the environment of the womb to nourish, protect, and give growth to the fetus, this Holy Spirit receives the deposit of the seed of Christ in the heart of the believer, nurtures it, protects it, and gives it growth into becoming a new man in Christ.

## The Seed of Christ

**Herein is our hope**, being “born anew,” a new creation born of the seed of Christ, as it is written,

*“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come!” 2 Cor. 5.17*

The phrase, *“he is a new creation,”* does not imply a mere act of repentance and a more religious lifestyle, but it is a divinely inspired phrase that argues the greatest change imaginable, an inward change brought about by no other power than the power of God. The same expression is found in Galatians 6.15, *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a **new creation.**”* He is a *new creation*. By being born anew in the spirit his soul becomes enlightened and grows in understanding, his judgment and moral compass are corrected, he entertains new ideas and concepts of spiritual things, he contemplates and pursues the fellowship of the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, he seeks a new walk in the Kingdom of God and contemplates his destiny and hope for the age to come. His will comes into union with the will of God, and his nature, his disposition, his words and actions are all changed. There is a new source of power working within, *Phil. 2.13 “for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”*

The salvation of our souls begins with becoming a new creation, who are born not of the corrupt and defiled seed of Adam, but as Jn. 1.13 reads, *“... born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;”* being born of a Divine seed, the seed of Christ, as it is further written in 1 Pet.1.23,

*“having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,”*

The importance of the seed is seen at creation. After forming all things, God gave life to all living things, plants, animals, and man. As a means to preserve and continue that life, they were created *seed bearing*; so that not only life was in the seed but also all the genetic blueprint, encoded in DNA, that dictates traits, and growth, and individual characteristics of the new life; so all living things could reproduce life after their own kind. Thus, since creation, all life is transmitted in the seed.

This introduces the thought of the importance of the physical seed in all living things in recreating new life on the earth—from a tiny acorn mighty oak trees grow; from the loins of Abraham the nation of Israel was born. This idea of being of the “seed of Abraham” holds immense significance for the Jewish people of Israel; for the covenant promises made to Abraham was to him and his descendants (Gn. 17.7); they were to be a chosen people, promised a great nation, and great blessings from God; and with a special relationship and role to play for God in His plan for the world.

But what we must now understand is that all covenants and the history of the Old Testament are physical in nature dealing with the natural life and are to be considered a shadow, or a pre-figuring, of the spiritual New Covenant in Christ to come. The New Covenant is not a continuation and perfecting of the Old Testament; rather, it is altogether new because it is based on greater promises, not focused on an earthly land, a physical kingdom, and earthly people but on a spiritual kingdom, the Kingdom of God, a redeemed people regenerated by the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of the body, and of eternal life. We have to ask ourselves,

“what does all this mean to me; specifically, what are the spiritual implications of the “seed” and “covenant promises” to all believers in whom dwells the Spirit of Christ?”

The Old Testament, for those who wish to live by it, is a physical covenant based upon the Law and all its ordinances given to Moses\_in the first five books of the Hebrew Bible there are 613 commandments. It is a religion of “legalism” requiring strict obedience, as God instructed Moses to tell the Israelites in Ex. 19.5-6

*“**5**Now therefore, **if** you will indeed **obey** My voice and **keep** My covenant, **then** you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. **6**And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”*

Note the action words in the covenant: “obey” and “keep,” and the conditional words: “if” and “then.” It was not a covenant of grace but of works; but it was a needful covenant to a people who were spiritually dead in order for them to have some measure of a relationship to the Living God, and that they might be a testimony to the only true God. This religious covenant was set in place until Christ would come with a New Covenant of grace and spiritual reconciliation and restoration of a people to our Father in heaven. Those of the New Covenant would be born of the seed of Christ...as it is written in 1 Jn. 3.9,

*“Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for **His seed remains in him**; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.”*

Nothing under heaven, on the earth or under the earth, can add to or subtract one iota from the truth and power of this revelation: “**being born of God, of the seed of Christ.**” It is the power that saves one from eternal destruction, transforms him into His likeness, and prepares him for the age to come. We have to look more deeply into this scripture and receive it as it truly is... the word of God. But first, let’s consider this element of sin a little further, because the scripture reads, “*does not sin*,” so we have to know a little more about that.

## Major and Minor Sins

Previously, we have made the distinction between sin as a noun which identifies this kind of sin not as something one does, but as a thing, a power or force acting within. The second use of the word for sin is when it is written as a verb which indicates a word of action, in this case one doing immoral acts or trespasses. Following is now a further elaboration and distinction of sin as a verb as being either “**minor sins**” or “**major sins.**” This distinction is very important to understanding the blood of Christ, access to God, forgiveness, and death.

**Minor sins** randomly occur in our lives, these are sins committed without full reflection and mental consent; sometimes unintentional, yet are offensive to the law, will, and heart of God.

James 3.2 reads, *“For we all stumble in many things.”* To stumble conveys the idea of making a mistake or committing a minor offense, highlighting human fallibility and the need for divine grace. Sometimes we stumble more than we ought.

**“Major sins”** often control lives; they become a frequent part of one’s life, they are willfully and deliberately committed. Here, I am intentionally and deliberately avoiding the Catholic terms of venial and mortal sins, and the academic terms of physical and moral sins; though similar they vary in definition. They are, however, considered the most serious transgressions, often leading to severe consequences; they include sins like idolatry, adultery, all kinds of sexual promiscuity and deviant lifestyles, murder, dishonesty, slandering, etc.

Now concerning minor and major sins, we have to agree that sin is sin; and if the definition of sin is “missing the mark,” as in shooting an arrow at a target, if you miss the bull’s eye by 2 inches or 2 feet you still miss the mark, and you receive no reward. However, as long as we are in these unredeemed mortal bodies subject to the inducing power of sin, some incidental thoughts and actions would be offensive to God. These are minor sins, stumblings, yet still need to be confessed and repented, and the blood of Christ cleanses us of all sin. We want nothing to interfere with our fellowship with God, such as the single act of a major sin having drastic consequences.

Take for example a case in the Corinthian Church in which a young man was living in sexual immorality with his stepmother. (1 Cor. 5.1-8) The church just tolerated it and looked the other way, but Paul rebuked them and said they should have removed him from fellowship, that this major sin is not only of him but acts like a leaven spreading as a spiritual influence into the church affecting others. Paul’s charge to the church was,

1 Cor. 5.4-5 *“4In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”*

Major sins like this are detrimental to the whole church and are catastrophic to the sinner. Major sins firstly lead to separation of fellowship in the Church, then separation of fellowship with God, and finally leading to death: *“5deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”*

Personally, I believe the stepmother, if she was a professed believer, should be excommunicated from the church as well and turned over to Satan for the destruction of her flesh. All major sinners must by all means be excommunicated from the Church, considering them not only individually a danger to themselves but to all the church as well. Major sinners harbor a dark spirit that is present wherever they are, out of church as well as in church. No matter their likeable personality, they are Satan’s representative to the church, carrying an infectious spirit to old and young alike.



It seems that all major sinners, those who knowingly and willfully persist in gross sin, are liars as well; that the lying spirit attaches itself to all other major sins. So beware, deception is a part of those in major sinner's lives. Do not rely only on visible and tangible facts, which may or may not be true. Pray earnestly for spiritual **discernment** to be able to perceive good and evil, right from wrong, as written in Heb. 5. 14,

*"**14**But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to **discern** both good and evil."*

Spiritually mature believers, especially the true elders in the Church, should diligently seek the power of spiritual discernment. Discernment acts like a natural gas detector that begins to beep in the presence of carbon monoxide, but in this case, a discerning spirit that senses good or evil in a person\_ as well as in doctrine, false prophecies, and nice personalities that mask over corrupt characters. The Church must, by all means, be kept pure and holy. Never, never bring a sinner into the church hoping they would hear the Gospel message and repent and be saved. Individual believers equip yourselves in knowledge and prayer, and then you, perhaps with another, present to the sinner the word of God. If they truly repent of their sin and be cleansed anew by the blood of Christ, then, and only then return them or bring them into the Church.

The Church must be guarded at all times against attempts of the evil one to infiltrate and pollute the church, that the Church might become impure and polluted with darkness instead of being a holy dwelling place of God. Sin separates the sinner from God, and the Spirit of God separates from an unholy church, as warned by Christ to the seven Churches of Asia, in Rev. 2,

*"**5**Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent." And,*

***16**Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth."*

This is most serious to the well-being of the errant believer as well as to the Church. We cannot take this charge lightly, but we must be most sober, alert and awake.

The good news drawn from 1 Cor. 5.5 is the statement that once turning over the unrepentant sinner to Satan for his mortal death, *"that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."* That this gross sinner, yet a fallen believer once born of God, is not abandoned by God to eternal damnation, but keeps his spirit alive to the resurrection. Judgment will yet come, and the loss of rewards for missing the mark will surely follow; he will live in the Kingdom to come, on the new earth, but not with the fullness of a sanctified, holy believer.

We will continue this thought next time with Part 2 of Sin and the Seed.

### S5.E3. Questions for Discussion

1. Explain how every living soul who have lived on this earth, down through all the ages until today, could not be just considered a sinner, but be a sinner and thus alienated from God.
2. Explain how, under the Old Covenant, the lamb sacrifice made for a sin offering was sufficient for covering their daily sins but could not redeem the people from sin.
3. Explain the difference between the verb sin and the noun sin. Why is this important?
4. What is the often neglected promise made at baptism (Acts 2.38-39), and what is its significance in your life.
5. Explain the awesome significance of 2 Cor. 5.17, and how religion pales in the light of it.
6. Explain 1 Jn. 3.9, “*Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for **His seed remains in him**; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.*” And distinguish between what may be called “physical sins” and “moral sins.”