

THE INEQUALITY OF SINS

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The sum of your word is truth,
and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

2 Timothy 2:15, Psalm 119:160

Are all sins equal before the eyes of the Lord? Is a speeding ticket equal to raping an 8 month old child? Does the comparative language matter when reading the scriptures?



By: Majola K

1. Why this paper?

It has been a quite some time since I've written a paper responding to issues, I want to point out that it is always safe and good to state your points clearly as you can without claiming that the party you're disagreeing with is wrong, because you may be wrong also, especially in this matter. On a zoom class held on Tuesday the 3rd of May 2022, a brother posed a question following a discussion regarding punishment of Israel vs Judah, this brother asked if there's great and little sins, to which I responded with a confident "Yes, God does not view sins equally", the brother immediately replied with "sin is sin, sin is a violation of God's law, there is no great or small sin" I am writing this paper to address such a matter and see if really sins are the same in sight of God.

Whatever I write here, I am open to correction, criticism and rebuke. Perhaps someone may show me a different way of looking at this issue. We will be using the King James Version of the bible, New King James, the Passion translation and the HCSB, verses will be quoted in full in each new appearance.

2. What is the issue?

The issue is not whether sin is a violation of God's law or not, the issue is also not how God will punish sins in hell. We should all understand that sin is defined in the bible this is what the bible says about sin in 1 John 3:4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness, and it should be recorded that all sins are punishable in hell, there is no doubt about that, as long as sins are not repented from, see **Romans 6:22-23** *But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

The issue is: how does God view sins, does God view all sins the same, in a sense of severity of

each sin? **Does God think that passing through a red traffic light is equivalent to raping an infant? Does God view Killing and lying equally?** Certainly not! We serve a just God who views sins according to their degrees. God is just and righteous, He does not view sins the same, at least from the passages that I will quote and exegete.

3. Why do people think sins are equal?

It can be pointed out that most brethren think sins are equal, yet there is no verse that says "All sins are equal" One brother said boldly "Sins are equal!" as if he can read that somewhere in the scriptures, my position however is at least highlighted in the scriptures (Great sin) which is a comparative language. So back to our point, why do people think that sins are equal?

- a) Mostly it is because of the destiny of all un-repented sin, that all sin is punishable by second death
- b) That all sin is a violation of God's law as alluded in number 2

In **James 2**, we can note that sin is a plain transgression of the Law of God see verse 10-11 *For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.* James points clearly that to break any law makes one a transgressor of law. He is "**guilty of all**" not that he has literally guilty of violating every law of God, but which law he breaks does not matter – He is a lawbreaker partly because the law of God is like a chain, to break one, you've broken a lot! No one disputes this.

4. The Old Testament: Sins were not viewed the same!

The main issue with the proponents of "All sins are equal" is accepting that all sin results in death (Spiritual) and in that acceptance, there must be

exclusion of the passages containing the comparative language of sins. **Sins are not equal, sins all result in death if not repented:** These statements are both true without the exclusion of the other.

There are several instances of descriptive comparative language of sin throughout the Bible. When Israel molded a golden calf at Sinai: **Exodus 32:30-31** – *Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, “You have committed a **great** So now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.” 31 Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Oh, these people have committed a **great sin**, and have made for themselves a god of gold! A “**great sin**” appears to be more serious, in some sense, than just “sin.”*

One of the things we need to note is a sin of “presumption”, or conscious rebellion, is condemned as a **greater sin than one committed in ignorance because it issues from an arrogant spirit and openly mocks God’s words.** It insults the Spirit of Grace. (This does not excuse the sin of ignorance as not being an offence to God)

Consider **Numbers 15:27-31** – *“And if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally, when he sins unintentionally before the Lord, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, for him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them. **‘But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the Lord, and he shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of the Lord, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him.’**”*

This OT law does not provide authority for developing NT doctrine, but **illustrates the principle that God notices the intent of both**

obedience and disobedience. It is no wonder that the psalmist prayed: *“Keep your servant from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be upright, and I shall **be innocent from great transgression**”* (Psalm 19:13). The “presumptuous” sin is a “great” transgression, and the practice of yielding to “presumptuous” sins soon makes the man the slave of his own weaknesses.

Another case is that of both Samaria (capital of the northern kingdom) and Jerusalem (capital of the southern kingdom of Judah) they were both guilty of idolatry, leading to their exile, **Ezekiel 23:11** *“Now although her sister Oholibah saw this, she became more corrupt in her lust than she, and in her harlotry more corrupt than her sister’s harlotry.* This describes Jerusalem’s sin as “**more corrupt than that of Israel**”.

5. The New Testament

In **John 19:11** *Jesus answered, “You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. **Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.**”*

Jesus was obviously referring to Caiaphas the high priest and his cohorts in the Sanhedrin.

The term “**greater**” is an adjective indicating a comparison. First, it implies “sin” on the part of Pilate. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, but he succumbed to the pressure and ordered Jesus to be crucified. (19:16) Jesus was not exonerating Pilate of his crimes.

The sin of Caiaphas sin was greater! He ignored the testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures and a lot of Old Testament prophecies that detailed the identifying qualities of the Messiah. He was not moved by the miracles of Jesus. His sin was not one of ignorance or weakness. It was selfish rebellion. As bad as Pilate’s sin of weakness and self-motivated “political correctness” was, **Caiaphas’ sin was greater.** His responsibility was greater, because of His broader knowledge and his opportunity to believe and yield to what was right. (Scott LA Pierre; 2018)

In **2 Timothy 3:13** – *But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.* If there was a level where sins are all equal, how could these imposters grow worse? Worse to what? To equality? NO!!

Jesus spoke of circumstances where some sinners had accrued a greater condemnation. In **Matthew 11:23-24** – *And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for you.*” Again we might notice that their condemnation is the result of neglected opportunity to believe and obey God.

In **Luke 12** Jesus’ parable concerning servants being ready for their masters **35-36** – *“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; 36 and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately.*

Peter asks Jesus if he was talking about them or everybody (v. 41). Jesus points to the greater punishment of those who knowingly rebel against their master – **47-48**– *And that servant who knew his master’s will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few.* For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more. **Some were more culpable than others, deserving of greater punishment.**

Considering **Hebrews 10:28-29** – *Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? Even*

James spoke of teachers who would receive greater accountability [*stricter judgment*] (**James 3:1**) also **Peter** tells us that those who come to the truth and then reject it are worse off than if they had never heard the truth (**2 Peter. 2:20-21**)

6. Conclusion

This is not an exhaustive paper, however, It is not enough to just say, “All sins are equal”. To see sin as it is revealed in scripture is to see all that God reveals about it – the intentions of the heart; the responsibility that is born through the opportunity to respond to God’s word; the comparative language used in many passages of the scripture should be considered. Once again, I will emphasize this point, the traditional approach to the scriptures is not a standard of authority.

The next paper will be on the beginning of the church! The traditional method teaches that the church began at Jerusalem, and that’s it! **But I and the scriptures teach that the universal church began in the cross, and the first local church was at Jerusalem. Soon we will post.**

7. References

1. <https://www.scottlapierre.org/are-all-sins-the-same-equal-in-gods-eyes/>
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