

A Study on Hamartiology

Hamartiology is the study of sin within theology. This is an important aspect of theology because it impacts us as human beings. From the Bible, we learn that we all sin and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). All of us are born into sin, and we cannot escape it (Psalm 51:5). The only person born into this world sinless was Jesus Christ.

Jesus grew up, lived a sinless life, died for our sins, and was raised in glory (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22). Jesus was the only person who could die for our sins because He is God in the flesh (John 1:1, 10:30). Because of His great love for us, He died the death we deserved and covered us with grace. This was long prophesied by the prophets as well as the Psalms. Psalm 130:7-8 says, "Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins."

It is important to study hamartiology because it helps us become aware of our own sins, the great sacrifice Jesus made in order for us to be redeemed, and our need for Him. Without placing faith in Jesus, we would have no payment for sins. If we die without knowing Jesus, we are left to face an angry God with no redemption (Hebrews 9:27). This is why it is important for us to be knowledgeable about sin, as we can educate others.

Understanding the Severity of Sin

"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).

Sin is a very bad thing, but it needs to be understood. Sin is what ultimately separates us from God. By having sin in our hearts, we could never have a relationship with the Father. After we die, if there is no payment for sins by placing faith in Jesus, then we will go to hell. Hell is the place where all unbelievers go because they failed to place faith in Jesus.

It is not because their sins were somehow worse than others, but rather, because they never placed faith in Jesus. As the half-brother of the Lord says, "Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death" (James 1:15). The more we sin and give into the sinful flesh, the closer we are to death. This death is not only physical, but also spiritual.

The sin nature can corrupt the entire person. It can turn a bad person into a wretched, wicked, terrible person. Without knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, this can happen rather quickly. For some people, they will become aware of their sin and turn to Jesus; whereas others will continue to pursue the sinful flesh and do anything their hearts desire. This will cause more punishment to be inflicted upon their souls, and they will become more depraved with each passing day.

The Lord tells us, "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out" (Mark 9:44). As Jesus says here, it is better to cut off your hand if it causes you to sin than it is to keep both hands and be thrown into the fire of hell. Whatever causes us to sin, we need to toss it out and leave it in the past. It will only take us further away from God, redemption, and salvation.

Challenge Questions:

- Do you understand the severity of sin? How does it encourage you to change your actions?
- Nobody is ever too far gone to turn to the Lord. Has sin ever caused you to turn to Him? Why or why not?
- What sin is present in your life? How might you cut it out?

Prayer: "Dear God, the consequences of sin are weighty. I don't want to be cut off from You for all eternity and thrown into the fire of hell. I'm choosing today to repent and turn to You. I repent of my sins, and I'm ready to start over today. Thank You for a new start, redemption, and salvation. In Your Son's Name, I pray, Amen."

Do We Ever Stop Sinning?

"In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11).

While we will never stop sinning until we are with the Lord in heaven, we do need to make every effort not to live under the sinful flesh. We are dead to sin, but alive in Christ. This doesn't mean we will stop sinning, but it does mean we are taking the effort not to sin. The Holy Spirit working inside of us will convict us and point us back to the path of obedience to the Lord.

The Apostle Paul says that we don't need to offer our bodies as instruments to wickedness anymore, but to offer ourselves to God (Romans 6:12-13). This entails that we follow God instead of the sinful flesh. It is easier to give in to the sinful flesh and do whatever it tells us, yet it is more beneficial to follow God. We have to challenge the sinful flesh every day, and the Lord will help us.

Jesus is our Lord, Savior, and Master. He is the Redeemer of our souls and the One who protects us daily (Isaiah 47:4, 54:17). Sin will only result in death and separation from Him. Rather than following the sinful nature, we can start living in obedience to the Lord. We will still struggle with sin, but continued growth and discipleship can help us to stay on the path of light rather than the road of darkness.

Whenever we are struggling, all we have to do is turn to Him. He will give us the strength to overcome any temptation. However, even if we fail and we sin, God doesn't cast us away. We can turn to Him in repentance, and He will forgive us (1 John 1:9). He will restore our weary hearts and bring our souls from death to life.

Challenge Questions:

- Have you counted yourself dead to sin but alive in Christ? If not, how might you do this?
- Are you offering your body as an instrument of holiness or wickedness?
- Jesus died in order for us to truly live a life of freedom. Why do you think it is so common for us to return to being prisoners of sin?

Prayer: "Dear Jesus, I know I will never stop sinning until I'm with You. However, I do ask that You help me to overcome temptation. It can be extremely difficult for me to do this on my own. I need Your strength and peace. I also ask that You help me to never return to the prison of sin. You have given me freedom, and I want to walk in it. I praise You, Lord. Amen."

The Need for Jesus' Redemption

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Without Jesus' redemption, we would all be lost in our sins. Salvation is only by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). This is why we need the Lord's redemption. Jesus died on the cross to bring us to the Father. By bringing us to the Father with a sin debt that has been paid in full, the Father sees us in a new light. When the Father sees us, He doesn't see sin: He sees Jesus.

For everyone who places faith in Jesus, they will be welcomed into heaven with open arms. However, for those who never place faith in Jesus, they should be afraid. They will be condemned to eternal darkness and separation from the Father. Only Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is enough to appease the Father's wrath, and without it, we truly don't have anything to show. All that is left is a sinner standing before a God who despises sin (Psalm 5:4; Proverbs 8:13).

If you have not placed faith in Jesus, start studying more about Him. Read the Bible, talk with Him in prayer, and join a local church. Understand that salvation is as simple as confessing your sins to Jesus in true repentance and confirming that you believe He is the true Son of God, the only way to salvation. Dedicate your life to Him today. Make Him not only your Savior, but your Lord, too.

If you have already placed faith in Jesus, continue to cultivate your growth in Him, share the gospel with the lost, and disciple new believers (Matthew 28:18-20). The gift of Jesus' salvation needs to be shared with everyone in order for them to have a chance to believe. It is the most important decision any of us will ever make.

Challenge Questions:

- Have you placed faith in Jesus? If not, why do you think this is?
- The wages of sin is death. Does this impact you on a personal level? Why or why not?
- Jesus is the only way to receive redemption. Do you believe there is a reason for this?

Prayer: "Dear Jesus, thank You for paying the sin debt that I owe. I would never have been able to pay for it myself. I praise You that I have been given forgiveness, redemption, and salvation through Your blood. You are wonderful, amazing, and all-powerful. Help me to share the gospel with all people. Amen."

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