



Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries
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THE HARDENING OF THE SOUL

The OSN is the source of temptation to personal sin and human volition is the cause of personal sin. Personal sin is disobedience to God and His expressed will for us.

HARDNESS OF THE HEART (καρδία) which is closely related to unbelief (Mark 16:14; Romans 2:5), likewise belongs to the essence of sin. It means refusing to repent and believe in the promises of God (Psalm 95:8; Hebrews 3:8, 15; 4:7). It connotes both stubborn unwillingness to open our life to the grace of God (2 Chronicles 36:13; Ephesians 4:18) and its corollary- insensitivity to the needs of our neighbor (Deuteronomy 15:7; Ephesians 4:19).

Whereas the essence of sin is unbelief or hardness of heart, the chief manifestations of sin are pride, sensuality, and fear. Other significant aspects of sin are self-pity, selfishness, jealousy, and greed.

The effects of sin are moral and spiritual bondage, guilt, death, and hell. James explained: "Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death" (1:14-15). In Paul's view, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23, I Cor. 15:56 that is spiritual death or separation from God).

According to Pauline theology, the law is not simply a check on sin but an actual instigator of sin. So perverse is the human heart that the very prohibitions of the law that were intended to deter sin serve instead to arouse sinful desire (Romans 7:7-8).

Biblical faith also confesses that sin is inherent in the human condition. We are not simply born into a sinful world, but we are born with a propensity toward sin. As the psalmist says, "The wicked go astray from the womb, they err from their birth, speaking lies" (Psalms 58:3, 51:5).

CONVICTION OF SIN: The biblical teaching revolving chiefly around the concept of "conviction" does not cover all shades of meaning of ελεγχω. The word sometimes entails the ideas of "exposing" and "correcting" in addition to that of "proving wrong" or "showing the guilt of."

A sinless person cannot be the object of this conviction (John 8:46; I Peter 2:22). The world can, however, notably for its disbelief in Christ (John 16:8-9). A sinning member of the Christian community can be an object of conviction, too (Matthew 18:15 and also Ephesians 5:11). Similarly a whole congregation may be reprovved (I Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 3:16; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:15; James 2:9; Revelation 3:19).

The conviction of sin originates with the hypostasis of the Godhead: the Father (Hebrews 12:5), the Son (Jude 15; Revelation 3:19), and the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-11). It is mediated through Christian witnesses, especially preachers, as they spread and implement the word of God (Matthew 18:15; John 16:7, 8; Ephesians 5:11, 13; I Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:15). Their witness intensifies the

convicting work already present through the Mosaic Law (James 2:9) and self-revelation to the conscience resulting from illumination by Christ's first advent (John 3:20).

The outcome of this convicting work varies. In one sense, it is always effective because the object invariably receives divine illumination to see issues clearly (John 16:7-8). In another sense, it is only relatively effective because the object may respond with repentance (Matthew 18:15; I Corinthians 14:24) or rejection (Luke 3:19). What conviction does is to make clear the dire results if the guilty party persists in his wrongdoing. Without conviction he remains a victim of satanic blindness (2 Corinthians 4:4). Once convicted, he must respond with a choice to rebound or to ignore the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.