

### A. Sin

1. Without a reasonable understanding of Sin, the Gospel message is significantly weakened. The topic of 'sin' has fallen into disfavor with current church thought and modern sensibilities... yet Paul wrote that he would never be ashamed of the Gospel [Rom 1:16-17] or the power of the cross over sin and death [1 Cor 1:17-18].
  - a. Sin has both an individual and corporate aspect:
    - i. Individual sin is what most people think about and relate as their sin identity... this is Sin as 'action'.
    - ii. Corporate sin is of fundamental theological importance... this is Sin as 'being'.
    - iii. OT Rabbinical thought development is of particular importance for understanding both OT and NT thinking about sin, especially of how radical Jesus' Sermon on the Mount really was to those who heard it for the first time.
      1. Jewish theological thought presumed the people of God were already living in God's Grace. The emphasis was on doing the right things in order to remain in God's preferential 'blessed' position.
      2. Rabbinical theological thoughts about how you get into heaven helps frame the differences between the Jewish sects – Pharisees, Sadducees, & Essenes:
        - a. Pharisees – traced from 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to the Hasidim
          - i. The Torah and the oral tradition were equally inspired.
          - ii. Held that free will and God's sovereignty were equally in play.
          - iii. Accepted a developed hierarchy of angels and demons.
          - iv. Held to there being a future for the dead – resurrection at least in a spiritual sense.
          - v. Held to the immortality of the soul and to reward or punishment after death.
          - vi. The emphasis of their teaching was ethical rather than theological.
        - b. Sadducees – traced from Hasmonean period around 165 BC to the fall of Jerusalem and its Temple 70 AD.
          - i. Held only to the books of Moses as Scripture, and dismissed the oral tradition.
          - ii. More literal interpretation of the Law than the Pharisees.
          - iii. Held to strict Levitical purity practices.

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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- iv. **Attributed all to free will, essentially discounting God's sovereignty.**
  - v. **Life was on earth only, did not hold to life after death or the resurrection of the dead.**
  - vi. **Rejected the belief in angels or demons, and rejected the idea of a spirit-world in general.**
- c. **Essenes – group of very strict and zealous Jews who probably originated with the Hasidim and the Pharisees, and took part in the Maccabean revolt against the Syrians in 165 BC.**
- i. **Held to a strict observance of the purity laws and the Torah.**
  - ii. **Held property in a communal social form.**
  - iii. **Held to a strong sense of mutual responsibility.**
  - iv. **Practiced daily worship and study of Scripture.**
  - v. **Held to the practice of taking solemn oaths of piety and obedience.**
  - vi. **Sacrifices had to be offered on holy days and feasts.**
  - vii. **Marriage was not encouraged, but also not condemned.**
  - viii. **They attributed all that happened to fate.**
- d. **Zealots – originated during the reign of Herod the Great and ceased to exist at the battle against the Romans at Masada 73 AD.**
- i. **Opposed the payment of taxes [tribute] to a Pagan Suzerain overlord like the Roman emperor.**
  - ii. **Their allegiance was to God alone.**
  - iii. **Held to a fierce loyalty to the Jewish traditions.**
  - iv. **Opposed the use of Greek language in Palestine.**
  - v. **They prophesized of the coming salvation of God.**
- e. **There are two other groups mentioned in Scripture that should be noted:**
- i. **Judaizers** is a term which includes groups such as Jewish Christians (also Quartodecimans, Ethiopian Christians, Seventh-day Adventists and others) who claim the necessity of obedience to the Mosaic Laws. Mainstream Christians generally consider obedience to the Mosaic Laws as applicable only to Jews. Similarly, "one who has Judaized" refers to a Christian who has accepted the necessity of adhering to the Mosaic Laws or to specific laws that are believed to be necessary for salvation including circumcision, Sabbath observance, and observation of the Passover.
  - ii. **Hellenistic Judaism** was a movement which existed in the Jewish Diaspora community following the Hellenistic Age founded by

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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Alexander the Great. Hellenistic Jews sought to establish a Hebraic-Jewish religious tradition within the Greek culture and language of Hellenism. The major literary product of the contact of Judaism and Hellenistic culture is the Septuagint translation from Biblical Hebrew and Biblical Aramaic to Koine Greek, which began in the 3rd century BCE in Alexandria. The decline of Hellenistic Judaism in the 2nd century CE is obscure. It may be that it was marginalized by, absorbed into or became Early Christianity.

- 3. These groups each had interaction with Jesus and His followers, and careful reading of NT Scripture may provide clues as to which of these groups are being addressed. Each group had a somewhat different view of God’s Kingdom and subsequently the goal of entering into God’s Rest [the blessed state of peace in the Messianic Age] had different connotations to these groups.**
- b. Jewish thoughts about ‘sin’ and ‘afterlife’ – Everyman’s Talmud by A. Cohen – this is the “Talmud for Dummies” – starting on page 367. – Jews had a continuation view of the afterlife... that is for the most part if you are happy in this world you’ll be happy in the world to come. Being blessed in this land was evidence that God was happy with you and that His blessing would continue into the afterlife. Jesus introduction of suffering blew them out of the water.**
- i. On the positive side – Jews felt you could do these things for the guarantee of entering into heaven – these were good works that got you into heaven:**
    - 1. Prayer – Ps 145 – Jews needed to pray 3 times a day and maintain performing good works to guarantee favorable entry into the next world.**
    - 2. Prayer-works reciting – whoever say a benediction during Grace and Prayer in general, reaffirms their hope & expectation of the age to come.**
    - 3. Study of the Law – whoever was committed to study the Torah would be blessed.**
    - 4. Land promise – being in the land of Promise had immediate and eternal consequence. It was thought that whoever walks as little as 6’ in the land of Israel is guaranteed entrance. Question asked in Babylonian exile was literally “who will be as on of the world to come?”**
    - 5. Humility & study of Torah provided the promise of entering the world to come.**
  - ii. On the negative side – Jews felt that if you do these things, you would not enter into heaven – these are the bad things that would keep you out of heaven:**
    - 1. Denial of resurrection – the Sadducees denied resurrection, which the Pharisees and Essenes held to.**

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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2. Acting as an “old-school faith healer” as a Jew – taking money for giving God’s blessings.
  3. No one who either reads or says the ‘tetra-gramaton’ – YAWH.
  4. Whoever crosses a stream behind a woman – this would be a ‘peeping Tom’ sort of perversion, essentially to watch as the women hiked up their skirts to cross the water.
  5. Those who occupationally abuse others – Jewish work laws were strict in providing social justice for workers. Social justice was a big deal... especially as it impacted other Jews, but not so much for Gentiles and Pagans who were excluded from God’s blessings.
- c. Rich young ruler’s question – what do I need to do to enter God’s Kingdom? He already had the blessing now in the land. Jesus was speaking of something more that piqued this guy’s interest... this was something he knew was good that he didn’t have, and he wanted to understand it.
- i. If you were an Orthodox Jew, there was no reason for Jesus to die... Jews were blessed in their land. The hard thing for them to understand was why Pagan’s who were outside God’s blessing ruled over them [a problem Muslim’s also have].
  - ii. Isaiah’s concept of the suffering servant had no context for Jews beyond the land.
  - iii. Jesus’ declaration of fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy [Luke 4:21], and Jesus’ teaching of the Sermon on the Mount was all the more startling in this context.
  - iv. Luke 7:36-50 [especially 47] speaks of a sinful woman and a strange connection of sin, love, and adoration. This made no sense to Jewish sensibilities... sinners were to be shunned or condemned, not praised. Jesus’ intent was clarifying what was honoring to God – that being “relational focus” over “religious focus.” Specific actions were ineffective apart from genuine relational surrender. The point here is the realization of how you see yourself as an unmerited sinner receiving Grace is directly tied to how much you love Jesus.
2. Gospel centrality –
- a. Sin problem – How much you realize what Jesus has forgiven you versus what you do is the engine that starts sanctification.
    - i. People who profess they are a ‘good person’ have the hardest time with coming to grips with their need of a savior. No one is good but God alone [Mark 10:18].
    - ii. This heightens the need for the conviction of the Holy Spirit – until one recognizes their need, dependence upon Jesus makes little sense.
    - iii. If a person is not convicted, we do them a disservice in confirming that saying the ‘sinner’s prayer’ will usher them right into heaven. Jesus never made such a promise, and the sinner’s prayer is nowhere found in Scripture.

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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- b. **Justification is not by works, but exclusively by faith – totally different paradigm from conventional Jewish thinking... though it shouldn't have been.**
  - i. **The Law was a shepherd until Messiah came as the Good Shepherd.**
  - ii. **But the Law could only convict one of their sin and their need. David's admission of his personal sin and great need led to his dependence upon God, but many Jews could not follow him there.**
- c. **Love of God and personal appreciation of His solution of the Sin-problem by forgiveness through faith in Jesus leads to trust and eternal life.**
  - i. **NT demonstrates God's interaction with people at various levels of sophistication – it was not a one size fits all program, people were responsible before God with what they believed, what they knew, what they had, and what they did.**
  - ii. **It is easy for children to trust because they have no self confidence – they know they are dependent upon others. They were also dependent and trusted those who were responsible for them that they would be properly cared for.**
  - iii. **It is easier for old people at life's end to trust because they are at the end of their self confidence – death is after all the great equalizer... as we enter life in dependence, we also leave it in dependence.**
  - iv. **It is much harder for people in their prime years and at the height of their careers to trust because they have been trained that their self confidence is tied to their performance and their success. In most cases, our personal identity is in our works... the things we know we can do, and not merely in faith believing.**

### B. Humanist Manifesto 1 – 1935

- 1. **“Religious Humanism” is also known as “Secular Humanism” – it is a faith expressing the sufficiency of humankind to know and define what is true and proper, and to order their reality accordingly. They hold there is no concrete objective standard, but that standards will change over time as a result of cultural development. They believe:**
  - a. **FIRST:** Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.
  - b. **SECOND:** Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as a result of a continuous process.
  - c. **THIRD:** Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected.
  - d. **FOURTH:** Humanism recognizes that man's religious culture and civilization, as clearly depicted by anthropology and history, are the product of a gradual development due to his interaction with his natural environment and with his social heritage. The individual born into a particular culture is largely molded by that culture.
  - e. **FIFTH:** Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values. Obviously

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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- humanism does not deny the possibility of realities as yet undiscovered, but it does insist that the way to determine the existence and value of any and all realities is by means of intelligent inquiry and by the assessment of their relations to human needs. Religion must formulate its hopes and plans in the light of the scientific spirit and method.
- f. **SIXTH:** We are convinced that the time has passed for theism, deism, modernism, and the several varieties of "new thought".
  - g. **SEVENTH:** Religion consists of those actions, purposes, and experiences which are humanly significant. Nothing human is alien to the religious. It includes labor, art, science, philosophy, love, friendship, recreation — all that is in its degree expressive of intelligently satisfying human living. The distinction between the sacred and the secular can no longer be maintained.
  - h. **EIGHTH:** Religious Humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now. This is the explanation of the humanist's social passion.
  - i. **NINTH:** In the place of the old attitudes involved in worship and prayer the humanist finds his religious emotions expressed in a heightened sense of personal life and in a cooperative effort to promote social well-being.
  - j. **TENTH:** It follows that there will be no uniquely religious emotions and attitudes of the kind hitherto associated with belief in the supernatural.
  - k. **ELEVENTH:** Man will learn to face the crises of life in terms of his knowledge of their naturalness and probability. Reasonable and manly attitudes will be fostered by education and supported by custom. We assume that humanism will take the path of social and mental hygiene and discourage sentimental and unreal hopes and wishful thinking.
  - l. **TWELFTH:** Believing that religion must work increasingly for joy in living, religious humanists aim to foster the creative in man and to encourage achievements that add to the satisfactions of life.
  - m. **THIRTEENTH:** Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. The intelligent evaluation, transformation, control, and direction of such associations and institutions with a view to the enhancement of human life is the purpose and program of humanism. Certainly religious institutions, their ritualistic forms, ecclesiastical methods, and communal activities must be reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.
  - n. **FOURTEENTH:** The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit-motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls, and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanists demand a shared life in a shared world.

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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- o. FIFTEENTH AND LAST:** We assert that humanism will: (a) affirm life rather than deny it; (b) seek to elicit the possibilities of life, not flee from them; and (c) endeavor to establish the conditions of a satisfactory life for all, not merely for the few. By this positive morale and intention humanism will be guided, and from this perspective and alignment the techniques and efforts of humanism will flow.
- p. So stand the theses of religious humanism.** Though we consider the religious forms and ideas of our fathers no longer adequate, the quest for the good life is still the central task for mankind. Man is at last becoming aware that he alone is responsible for the realization of the world of his dreams, that he has within himself the power for its achievement. He must set intelligence and will to the task.

### **2. Theological implications of Religious Humanism:**

- a. It is easy to see how this manifesto ties into post-modern thinking:**
  - i. The emphasis is placed on the ‘common good’ – If it is good for humanity... then it’s alright.**
  - ii. Sin is redefined as people who have a narrow [Christian] mindset.**
  - iii. Emphasis is on social progress rather than fundamental personal transformation in response to God.**
- b. Humanists disavow an external deity. The idea of an “undefined spiritualism” that brings personal relevance is all that is relevant.**
- c. If sin is the center of the Gospel – then removing the Christian understanding of sin undermines Gospel faith.**
- d. Without sin – which is our fundamental rebellious nature that refuses to submit to God’s Holy requirements – we are left only with an abstract ethical and moral standard that is being redefined each generation, and situational ethics.**
- e. Problem – “Fundamental Questions” become:**
  - i. “Who is God?” An enigmatic “Force” of all living things? A Person we can know and have a relationship with? Etc.**
  - ii. What is the goal of your life... or your faith? Pleasure... satisfaction... happiness – without a moral and ethical fixed compass situational ethics and feel good morality rule.**
  - iii. What can you say in terms of your life’s calling and purpose? Is it mine for the making, God’s for the decreeing, or some combination?**
  - iv. What can a teacher in public school or a worker in corporate America say about faith? More and more faith values are restricted, moral and ethical values are moderated, while political and social values are freely passed along.**
  - v. What can a 12 step counselor say about God? The 12 step program specifically excludes “God” in favor of a “higher power” of the person’s own conception.**

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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- vi. Daniel and his 3 pals made a difficult statement about their faith without trying to change the society in which they lived and worked. This could well be an example for us to ponder in our post-modern world [Daniel 1:7-20].
- f. Solution – Christians need to stand upon the Living Word [not just quoting Scripture [or proof-texting] because that’s a standard the world no longer accepts, but in speaking Truth in plain language in a winsome and loving way – judgmental moral/ethical statements or ‘Christianese’ will not avail.
  - i. What is Sin?
    - 1. SIN = the fallen state of humanity – our corporate spiritual status before God. This is the aspect we call “being” born in sin.
    - 2. Sin = the failures of the fallen state as they play out in the individual – the personal status of our flesh before God. This is the aspect of “doing” sinful things.
  - ii. How do you approach a fallen dominant social order?
    - 1. This is what Daniel and his 3 pals did successfully. They stood their ground on the truth they knew honored God; they trusted God’s help and intervention, but purposed to be obedient regardless the consequences.
    - 2. People aren’t ready to deal with or even properly comprehend the fallen state of humanity until they’ve walked with God awhile. It is easier to draw attention to personal action and personal failures as a means to foment a dialogue on spiritual change.
    - 3. If you press the fallen state before acknowledging their personal state in action, they will either discount your thinking outright or accept a defensive posture as a victim of social/cultural circumstance.
    - 4. Once someone accepts their own responsibility for their failures, they can be open to understand the bigger picture.
  - iii. General precepts:
    - 1. Can someone use the Alcoholics Anonymous 12 [AA-12] step program without wanting God? Yes.
    - 2. Can someone come to eternal life in Christ without acknowledging and dealing with SIN? No.
    - 3. How do the AA-12 steps play out? What is the goal – making my life work, or knowing the Eternal God?
    - 4. The AA-12 steps on their own are not the Gospel – it may improve your life, but it won’t save it. It has no power to convict or transform, but it can advance a person’s receptivity to the Gospel. Often in working through their own failures and need, they become open to the gospel.

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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5. The AA-12 steps are a tactic to move people to a healthier place, but it is no substitute for a proper understanding and conviction of sin, and acceptance of forgiveness in Jesus.
- g. AA-12 step structure – involves personhood versus Sin, making life work versus knowing God, and my individual actions in the context of fallen humanity. The AA-12 steps as theologically defined:
- i. Pre-evangelical steps:
    1. I admit to being powerless over alcohol [drugs, pornography, whatever] and that my life has become unmanageable.
    2. I came to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity.
    3. I made a decision to turn my will and life over to the care of God as I understand it/Him.
    4. I made a searching and fearless inventory of myself.
    5. I admitted to God, to myself and to another human being the exact nature of my problem and wrongs committed.
  - ii. Centrality of Gospel – the primary step of transformation:
    1. I am entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character because I know I cannot.
    2. I have humbly asked Him to remove my shortcomings and heal me.
  - iii. Process of sanctification:
    1. I have made a list of all the persons I have harmed and I'm willing to make amends to them all.
    2. I made direct amends to such people wherever possible; expect when to do so would cause further injury to them or others.
    3. I continue to take personal inventory and when I was wrong, have promptly admitted it.
    4. I sought through prayer and meditation to improve my conscious contact with God as I understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for my life and the power to carry it out.
    5. Having made these professions and realized a spiritual awakening as a result, I will try to carry this message to others such as myself, and to practice these principles in all my affairs.
- h. 12 step assessment:
- i. To take the 12 steps on their own is not the Gospel.
  - ii. The 12 steps are a tactic to move people toward mental and physical health.
  - iii. The critical steps are the gospel central steps dealing with:
    1. The Cross and forgiveness.

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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2. Spiritual transformation through faith.
3. Hope of eternity in resurrection with Jesus.
- i. The Sermon on the Mount is central to Grace:
  - i. Each culture has to find ways to make Grace relevant in terms with Sin – with Sin itself being culturally relevant as well as spiritually relevant in accordance with God’s decrees.
  - ii. 12 step process is similar to other examples of Moralism – without Jesus it doesn’t deal with the root problem of Sin. This especially applies to the moral/ethical approach of Mormonism, Islam, and Jehovah’s Witnesses.
  - iii. The Romans at the time of Christ were no better than the Babylonians at the time of Daniel and his 3 pals. There are ways of living a Godly life in an unholy age – it is not easy, but it is possible especially in community of fellow believers [fellowship].

### C. Aspects of Sin – how Scripture differentiates sin

1. Active vs. Passive
  - a. Omission = knowing what you should do, and having the ability to do it – then failing to do so. Such was the parable of the Good Samaritan.
  - b. Commission = being told specifically what to do – but instead of doing the good thing you should, you do harm instead.
2. Inward vs. Outward
  - a. Inward = Christians should have feelings and thoughts that are reflective of their faith – failure to have them is sin.
  - b. Outward = Christians whose actions are inconsistent with Kingdom perspectives – knowing the Truth but not abiding by it is sin.
3. Allegiance vs. Treachery – 1 John 2:15-17 - <sup>1JN 2:15</sup> Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>1JN 2:16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. <sup>1JN 2:17</sup> The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.
  - a. This has to do with the conflict between the Kingdom principles of Christian morals & ethics, and the religious and worldly principles of the age we live in.
  - b. This is why it is harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom... they are heavily vested in the dominant world order.
4. Venial vs. Mortal Sin
  - a. Although all sin is under condemnation, there are some that are worse than others – this has to do with the degree of error and general depravity, and the harm done to others.

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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- b. Minor infractions and major horrors will be judged correctly by our Father –though both are sin they are not equally evil.**
- 5. Sins of the moment vs. Premeditated sin**
  - a. Sins of the moment are reactive and usually unintentional.**
  - b. Premeditated sins are actively planning and carrying out evil intentions.**
- 6. Being Religious versus Living in Grace – Mat 7:21-23** <sup>MT 7:21</sup> “ Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter.* <sup>MT 7:22</sup> “ Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ <sup>MT 7:23</sup> “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’
  - a. Those who are acting merely from religious convictions fall under the condemnation of the Law.**
  - b. Those who are relationally committed and joined with Jesus are under Grace and are not under condemnation.**
- 7. Motivation versus overt action –** <sup>1CO 13:3</sup> And if I give all my possessions to feed *the poor*, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.
  - a. Doing the right thing for the wrong reasons does not help me.**
  - b. God knows our heart and our motivations, and will judge us correctly.**
- 8. Transgression [breaking the Law] versus Volition**
  - a. Actively breaking the law as opposed to violating the spirit of the Law.**
  - b. This is central to Jesus Sermon on the Mount.**
  - c. Transgression usually refers to a lesser degree of wrong doing, while volition is willful and wanton evil action.**
- 9. Sin within relational spheres**
  - a. Personal Sphere is the Self – internal, addictive, emotional, destructive, lusts, etc.**
  - b. Family Sphere is Spouse, children, parents – has to do with my culpability to those I am most responsible and most dependent upon me – having to do with the affects of my sin and the balance of authority with grace.**
  - c. Social Sphere includes your community – work, church, spheres of friends and influence. Sin in this category has to do with the affects of overt sin on others, and/or bearing one another’s burdens in love.**
- 10. Sins within social/cultural arenas**
  - a. As a child of God I have a role to play in God’s sovereign providence – as Esther and Joseph had a specific roles God prepared them for.**
  - b. Failure to shoulder our responsibility is sin – such as Bonheoffer and others who refused to capitulate to the Nazis demands, but instead stood their ground on Kingdom principles... and suffered because of it now, but will be blessed in the age to come.**
- 11. Sins against God**

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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- a. Such as quenching the Spirit – this is a surprisingly misunderstood matter... the Spirit resides within each believer and the Spirit's responsibility is to convict of sin, to lead us into truth, and enable us to please God and perform His delegated work. The Spirit is always nudging us in one way or another, and often speaking in a whisper to our heart and mind. When we cultivate an ear to hear and eyes to see – life in the Spirit is wondrous, joyful, and fulfilling. When we ignore the Spirit or deliberately suppress the Spirit's leading, we grieve the Spirit and become numb to God. This is what Satan wants from us – to be so self-absorbed and self-centered that we are made comfortably numb. In this state we are no use for God's Kingdom.
- b. Moses striking the rock rather than speaking to it at Meribah – Moses was asked to 'speak' in a reflection of God speaking creation into existence. In Moses' anger he blew God's intent.
- c. Jonah deciding to run away from God's purpose – God wanted to plant a seed in the most oppressive and decadent city of the time... the capital of the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians had decimated Israel, and every self-respecting Jew wanted them destroyed. Jonah would prefer to be killed than help the Assyrians... but that was not God's plan.

### 12. Conscious versus unconscious sin

- a. OT sacrificial remedy was for unintentional, accidental, and unconscious sins.
- b. Deliberate sin was not redeemed by minor ritual conventions – but could be forgiven by God [David & Bathsheba].

### 13. World/social impact

- a. Having wealth and not using it properly was sin. All of the righteous wealthy handled their blessings in a way that helped others in the community – such as Boaz in the Book of Ruth. The unrighteous wealthy are usually not named or suffered a bad ending.
- b. Being generous was accepted as a means of acknowledging that God had blessed you. Being selfish was an act of indifference by those with poor reputation.

### 14. Mere civility versus transformed living

- a. Transformational living is what God is looking for.
- b. Pharisees as white washed tombs is indicative of bowing only to social convention.
- c. The Jews of Jesus age often demonstrated some form of deference toward those who were afflicted, but it never occurred to them to actively help or support those in need.

### 15. Sins of different religious backgrounds

- a. Pagan cultures had some areas of sin that was different than the Jews. They took an 'us vs. the' approach and treated them as second class citizens if not inhuman.

## Theology 2.4 – Word made flesh

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- b. Liberal Christians believe that guilt was dealt with universally and as a result no individual acceptance of Jesus is necessary. This universalism negates any sense of individual personal accountability or responsibility.**
- c. Each culture and sub-culture will have its own issues... some may seem unique but all are really common to all of humanity [Ecc 1:9-10].**