

THEOLOGY 101 – FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

The AFES Doctrinal Basis

The AFES upholds the fundamental truths of the Christian faith, including...

- * **The universal sinfulness and guilt of humanity since the fall, rendering men and women subject to God's wrath and condemnation.**

3. The doctrine of human sinfulness

- A. Human sinfulness has its starting point at a definite point in history (Gen. 3:1ff) – called by theologians “the Fall.” Sinfulness is not part of our created state: men and women were created good, and in the image of God (Gen. 1:26–28, 31) – i.e. to share in his holiness, goodness, truth, righteousness and love. The awfulness of our sinfulness and guilt is measured by the greatness of the glory of God for which we are made. Sinfulness is non-discriminatory: men and women share in this terrible inheritance, just as they share in the created glory of God together.
- B. The disobedience of the first couple has rendered the whole human family sinful and guilty (Rom. 5:12–21, Psa. 14:2–3, Rom. 3:9–18, 23.) Our sinfulness is not defined by sinful deeds, but rather our sinful deeds flow from our sinfulness. Every person is in this situation from conception onwards (Psa. 51:5.) There is a solidarity in the human race; so, what is born of flesh is flesh – we inherit or share in the situation of our parents; we cannot simply escape it by some generational evolution or improvement. Sinfulness is not a compartment of our existence, but spreads through all we do and say, so that even our “goodness” is sinful – it is possible for God to hate our offerings, our prayers and our worship (e.g. Isa. 1:11–17.)
- C. Sinfulness and guilt are matters that have to do with our relationship with God. We don’t actually sin against another person, only God – although we sin “before” another and so cause them great harm and do terrible abuse to them (Psa. 51:4, Luke 15:18.) The sinfulness of these actions is about what they mean for our relationship to God in His holiness, goodness, truth, righteousness and love. Guilt is not primarily about a subjective experience of regret in us, but about the Father’s objective verdict concerning us. It is possible to be guilty and not feel guilty about it. Sinfulness and guilt cannot then be dealt with simply by rectifying the human messes to which our sins lead.
- D. This universal sinfulness and guilt means that the whole human race stands under God’s wrath and condemnation (Psa. 7:11–13, Rom. 1:18–32, Eph. 2:1–3, Col. 1:21.) God is angry with the sinner every day and His wrath is being revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and wickedness of human beings who suppress the truth of who He is by their wicked acts. This wrath is expressed in His giving over people to their sins. This wrath has its final expression in the final judgment of hell into which all who refuse faith in Christ will be taken.
- E. This doctrine is part of the basis of the universal claim of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, paired with His lordship established in His death and resurrection. As all are sinful and all are subject to the wrath of God, and as Christ has died for all and borne the sins of all, then those who believe in him are called to proclaim the gospel to all.
- F. Since Christ has dealt with sin in his dying under sin’s penalty on the cross (Rom. 8:3–4), those who believe in Christ have the guilt and shame, the penalty, and the power of sin broken for them, but the presence of sin remains with us until the resurrection from the dead. That day will be the final liberation we long for from all that is evil and sinful (Rom. 7:21–25, Gal. 5:16–18, Rom. 8:22–25.)