

SIN - What is, what isn't. How can we be blameless?

HIGH-LEVEL STUDY GUIDE

Finding the Ancient Path

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jr89AEuFczk&t=86s>

Designed to align with the companion presentation and the supplied teaching transcript.

Teaching Summary

This Teaching examines sin by asking Scripture to define both what sin is and what it is not. Beginning in Genesis, it presents humanity's recurring problem as altering Yahovah's word and placing human judgment above His instruction. It uses Genesis 4 and 1 John 3 to define sin as lawlessness and argues that Yahovah's ways existed before Sinai. The Teaching then distinguishes Torah violations from religious traditions that may be unwise or unhelpful without necessarily being sin, while also identifying everyday Torah commands that are often overlooked. It follows the struggle between flesh and Spirit through Genesis, Galatians, James, Romans 7 and Romans 8. The final emphasis is that blamelessness is not sinlessness: the Teaching describes it as wholehearted, repentant obedience produced as a believer walks by the Spirit, with Yeshua alone presented as sinless.

Key Scriptures

- **Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-6** - The original command and the Teaching's discussion of adding to or reshaping what Yahovah said.
- **Genesis 4:3-7** - First explicit use of 'sin'; sin lies at the door, desires mastery, and must be ruled over.
- **1 John 3:4-6** - Sin is lawlessness; the Teaching uses this as its central New Testament definition.
- **Romans 7:7** - Paul says he would not have known sin except through the law.
- **Psalms 103:7** - Yahovah made His ways known to Moses; the Teaching argues the ways were revealed, not newly invented.
- **Genesis 18:19** - Abraham is to command his household to keep the way of Yahovah.
- **Mark 7:6-13** - Human tradition can be given authority that belongs to God's command.
- **1 Corinthians 6:12** - Lawful does not necessarily mean helpful, profitable, or free from mastery.
- **Leviticus 19** - Prompt wages, honor for the elderly, impartial justice, and prohibitions relevant to gossip/defamation.
- **Deuteronomy 19:14; 22:1-3** - Property boundaries and returning lost property.
- **Galatians 5:16-25** - The conflict of flesh and Spirit and the call to walk and keep in step with the Spirit.
- **James 1:13-15** - Desire, temptation, sin/lawlessness, and death.
- **Romans 7:14-25** - The struggle with flesh and the need for deliverance through Yeshua.
- **Romans 8:1-14** - Life according to the Spirit and setting the mind on the things of the Spirit.

- **Ezekiel 18:4,20** - The Teaching uses personal responsibility for sin to reject inherited guilt.
- **Genesis 8:21** - Human inclination toward evil 'from youth,' used in the Teaching's corruption-versus-original-sin discussion.
- **Jeremiah 31:31-34** - Yahovah writes His Torah on the heart.
- **Ezekiel 36:26-27** - Yahovah puts His Spirit within His people and causes them to walk in His statutes.
- **Genesis 17:1** - Abraham is commanded to walk before Yahovah and be blameless.
- **Job 1:1** - Job is described as blameless and upright.
- **Luke 1:5-6** - Zacharias and Elizabeth are described as righteous and walking blamelessly in Yahovah's commandments.
- **Matthew 5:48** - Yeshua's call to be perfect/complete, used in the Teaching's discussion of attainable blamelessness.

Key Takeaways

- The Teaching's foundational definition is 1 John 3:4: sin is lawlessness.
- It presents the Garden pattern as humanity reshaping Yahovah's words and substituting human judgment for divine instruction.
- Genesis 4 is used to show that sin seeks mastery but that a person is told to rule over it.
- The Teaching argues Yahovah's ways predate Sinai, citing Abel, Noah, Abraham, Genesis 18, and Psalm 103.
- Religious rules should not automatically be called sin; the Teaching insists that Scripture, not tradition, must define sin.
- It also stresses that something may be lawful yet still unhelpful, unprofitable, or capable of mastering a person.
- Everyday Torah obedience includes matters such as paying wages promptly, honoring the elderly, respecting property, returning lost items, impartial justice, and guarding speech.
- Temptation and desire are distinguished from the completed act of lawlessness; James 1 is used to describe the progression.
- The Teaching reads Romans 7 as describing the weakness of trying to obey through flesh rather than the normal victorious pattern of a Spirit-led believer.
- It rejects inherited guilt as 'original sin' while affirming that humanity inherits mortality and a corrupted disposition toward rebellion. This is the Teaching's theological position.
- Walking in the Spirit is connected with Yahovah writing His instruction on the heart and causing His people to walk in His statutes.
- Blamelessness is not sinlessness. The Teaching defines it as moral wholeness, wholehearted devotion, obedience, and repentance.
- Yeshua alone is presented as sinless; believers are called to pursue blamelessness as an ongoing process of maturation.

Study Outline

1. What is the first recorded human sin?

- The Teaching begins in Genesis 3 and focuses on the woman saying Yahovah prohibited both eating and touching the tree.
- Its point is that adding to, softening, or redefining Yahovah's word places human judgment over divine instruction.
- The broader pattern is described as rebellion disguised as interpretation.

2. Scripture's definition of sin

- Genesis 4 introduces sin as something lying at the door whose desire is for Cain.
- The Teaching explains the underlying idea as offense, guilt, or missing the mark and asks: offense against what?
- 1 John 3:4 supplies the central answer: sin is lawlessness.

3. Did Yahovah's law exist before Sinai?

- The Teaching challenges the claim that Yahovah had no law before Sinai.
- It asks how Abel knew sacrifice, Noah knew clean and unclean animals, and Abraham could obey commandments.
- Psalm 103 and Genesis 18 are used to argue that Yahovah revealed existing ways to Moses and that Abraham already knew 'the way of Yahovah.'

4. When sin is not sin

- The Teaching warns against giving man-made religious traditions the status of Yahovah's commands.
- Examples discussed include dancing, alcohol, meeting attendance, caffeine, tobacco, gambling, tattoos, makeup/jewelry, contraception, and other disputed practices.
- Its point is not to recommend every practice; 1 Corinthians 6:12 is used to distinguish lawful from helpful or mastering.

5. Torah commands often overlooked

- Prompt payment of wages and honoring the elderly are drawn from Leviticus 19.
- Respecting boundaries, returning lost property, impartial justice, and guarding speech are presented as concrete obedience.
- The Teaching argues that some genuine Torah violations receive less attention than man-made religious rules.

6. Temptation seeks mastery

- Genesis 4 says sin's desire is for Cain but he should rule over it.
- The Teaching compares the wording with Genesis 3:16 and interprets 'desire' as a drive to influence or control.
- Galatians 5 and James 1 are then used to describe the conflict between flesh and Spirit and the progression from desire to lawlessness.

7. Reading Romans 7

- The Teaching says Romans 7 should not be read as proof that believers are helpless against sin.
- It interprets Paul as exposing the weakness of attempting obedience without the Spirit.
- Romans 8 is presented as the solution: freedom and power through the indwelling Spirit.

8. Corruption versus inherited guilt

- The Teaching explicitly rejects the doctrine that people inherit Adam's guilt.
- Ezekiel 18 is used to emphasize that each person bears guilt for his or her own sin.
- At the same time, it teaches that humanity inherited mortality and a corrupted disposition that tends toward rebellion.

9. What does it mean to walk in the Spirit?

- Romans 8 describes people according to where their minds are set.
- Jeremiah 31 says Yahovah writes His Torah on the heart; Ezekiel 36 says He puts His Spirit within His people and causes obedience.
- The Teaching connects Spirit-led living with an inward desire and power to walk in Yahovah's instruction.

10. How can we be blameless?

- The Teaching distinguishes blamelessness from sinlessness.
- Noah, Abraham, Job, Zacharias, Elizabeth, and others are examples of people called or commanded to be blameless.
- Blamelessness is described as wholehearted devotion, obedience, repentance, moral wholeness, and a life free from legitimate accusation—not moral perfection.

11. Walking is the process

- The Teaching says the call to blamelessness is attainable because Scripture commands it.
- Walking in the Spirit is the continuing process of learning, practicing, repenting, trusting, and maturing.
- Being blameless is described as the condition that Spirit-led walking increasingly produces; Yeshua alone is sinless.

Discussion & Reflection

1. How does the Teaching distinguish altering Yahovah's word from faithful interpretation?

2. What does 1 John 3:4 contribute to the definition of sin?

3. What evidence does the Teaching use to argue that Yahovah's ways existed before Sinai?

4. Why is it important to distinguish a religious tradition from a biblical definition of sin?

5. How does 1 Corinthians 6:12 qualify the idea that something may be lawful?

6. Which everyday Torah commands in the Teaching are easiest to overlook?

7. What does Genesis 4 mean in the Teaching when it says sin's desire is for you?

8. How do Galatians 5 and James 1 describe the movement from desire toward sin?

9. How does the Teaching interpret Romans 7, and why does Romans 8 matter to that interpretation?

10. What distinction does the Teaching make between inherited corruption and inherited guilt?

11. How do Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 connect the Spirit with obedience?

12. What is the difference between being blameless and being sinless?

13. What practices in your own life support the Teaching's idea of walking in the Spirit as an ongoing process?

Personal Application

Prayer Focus: Ask Yahovah to expose places where tradition, self-will, or desire has replaced His instruction, and to form a heart that walks by His Spirit in obedience, repentance, and maturity.

- Am I allowing Scripture itself to define sin?

- Are there lawful things that nevertheless exercise unhealthy mastery over me?

- Where do I need to repent rather than excuse rebellion as interpretation?

- What would a blameless, wholehearted walk look like in my relationships and daily responsibilities?
