Christian Doctrine
Sin (Part 1)
What Is Sin?

Understanding Sin

The concept of sin is so broad that it is difficult to describe in one simple definition. Let us first look at several ideas that are included in the concept of sin:

➢ Sin is "<u>missing</u> the <u>mark</u>."
- God has given us His moral <u>law</u> as the mark of <u>holiness</u> (Rom. 2:12-15).
- Sin is missing or not conforming to God's moral law.
- It can also be said that when we miss God's mark, we hit some other mark. Hitting that other mark is sin.

➢ Sin goes against God's <u>will</u> and <u>character</u>.
- Sin is anything we do that goes against what God <u>tells</u> us to do. This includes both doing what we should not do and not doing what we should do (I Jn. 5:17; James 4:17).
- Sin is anything we do that goes against the <u>holy</u> character of God (Rom. 3:23).

➢ Sin includes wrong <u>actions</u>, <u>thoughts</u> or <u>desires</u>.
- Scripture says wrong actions are <u>sin</u> (Col. 3:5-9).
- Scripture says wrong thoughts are <u>sin</u> (Matt. 5:22, 28; Gal. 5:20; Eph. 4:31).
- Scripture says wrong desires are <u>sin</u> (Ex. 20:17).

We can see these ideas in the variety of words Scripture uses to refer to sin. Notice the meaning of these words:

> Iniquity: to twist; to make crooked; to pervert (Ex. 34:6-7)
> Transgression: to rebel; walk contrary to God's will (Is. 24:5)
> Lawlessness: transgressing God's law (I John 3:4)
> Sin: failing to hit the mark (Rom. 5:12)

Defining Sin

Putting together all of the concepts that are involved in sin, we can come to a good definition:

Sin: "Any action, thought or desire that goes against the moral law and character of God."