

IS VENIAL SIN BIBLICAL?

All Sin is Equally Rejection of God

Roman Catholicism says that venial sin is incapable of costing you your relationship with God like mortal sin does for it is not bad enough. The person who dies in venial sin goes to Heaven via Purgatory while the mortal sinner loses Heaven forever.

The Bible however though it seems to teach that there are sins greater than other sins, does not imagine that some sins are small enough not to imply a serious rejection of God. So are all sins equally bad? Yes and no. One murder can be crueller than another but that does not make one better than the other. Sin as in consequences has differences but sins are equal in that they show rejection of God.

Each sin rejects God equally. It is a declaration of independence from God. If one sin is not as nasty as another that is luck but it is not down to the sin being any less of a rejection of God. If you open the city gate to the army it does not matter if it is the little gate you open or the big one. The principle is that you are letting them in to maybe kill your people.

Lot's wife merely looked at a condemned city and God turned her into a pillar of salt (Gen. 19:26). She died for her sin small as it seems.

That was no an isolated example of God severely punishing small sins with death.

Nadab and Abihu broke a tiny rule and God murdered them with fire (Leviticus 10:1-2).

A man caught gathering sticks on the Sabbath for his fire was stoned to death because God directed Moses that that must be done (Numbers 15:35).

Achan was stoned and so was his family. Achan did the stealing but the problem with the family was how it accepted these stolen goods. And the stealing was minor in the sense that the items were taken from the spoils of Jericho. They were already stolen by God's people. Anyway God commanded Joshua to stone him along with his entire family (Joshua 7:24-25).

Uzzah put out his hand to stop God's ark from falling and God killed him on the spot (2 Samuel 6:6-7).

Ananias and Sapphira lied to the apostles in a matter that was not that big and yet God murdered them on the spot (Acts 5:1-10).

The Christian explanation of all that is that we do not see our sin as seriously as God sees it. The failure to see is a sin itself for it is a sign that we have become distant from God.

Jesus suggests that to diminish sin or to call God's ways evil or to accuse God of overreacting is the greatest sin. He said, "whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" (Matthew 12:32). Even that greatest sin does not seem to be too bad of a sin!

The Bible says that sin cuts you off from God not because it is serious but because of who it is that is sinned against, the God of infinite love and mercy and majesty. This teaching implies that the doctrine of venial sin implies a lack of respect for God for it trivialises serious insults against God and pretends they are not that important. The Mass itself is based on the notion that people can receive communion as long as their sins are not serious so thus the Mass is blasphemy.

Far from being a minor doctrine, the venial sin doctrine is plugged into the very foundation of Roman Catholicism. If it is wrong and all sin is serious, then Catholicism is a form of religion that fakes devotion to God but actually mocks him in all that it does. Its sacraments of forgiving sin would be useless. Taking communion would be mockery. The Church would be calling on the saints to ask God to pray for her as if they can get him to pay no heed or insufficient heed to their opposition to his ways and will. The whole religion collapses if the teaching of venial sin is untrue and becomes a den of spiritual vice that wears the robes of holiness. Baptising a child into such a faith would be pure spiritual abuse of the child and preparing her for a life of blasphemous error and lies.

If venial sin does not exist then all sin is mortal – it kills the fellowship with God. Or there is no such thing as sin at all!

The case for venial sin

The Church asserts there is always some trace of sin in us. When holiness is hard and demanding it is obvious that we cannot avoid Hell, the place of eternal and permanent torment, unless we refrain from all sin, hardly anybody if anybody, will make it to Heaven for one sin defiles all you do and is at the back of your good works making them sinful. And life is a Hell. At most if any, only one in a million would be worthy to get the sacraments. Baptism would only be for those who had proven themselves to be capable of unusual holiness for it is a pledge of obedience. The Church is forbidden to ever knowingly ordain a mortal sinner. Priests would be so scarce that even those who would be able for the high degree of perfection would be barred from Heaven because they did not receive their sacraments.

The Church says that the Bible speaks of the foundation and basic beliefs of the Church and that it is only natural that it teaches that there is sin that does not mean turning your back on God, which is venial sin and that there is sin that utterly rejects him, mortal sin. This is a lie. The Bible makes no such distinction.

The Law of Moses says that not all sin deserves death seemingly implying that not all sin is mortal. But God could command that sin that does the most damage should bring execution on the guilty parties even though all sin deserves death. You can't kill everybody. And death for a sin does not infer that the sin deserves exclusion from God for all eternity. God decreeing execution for some and not others would not mean that not all sin is mortal when his ways seem foolish to us.

Jeremiah taught that the Jews were worse than their forefathers (7:26). Jesus told Pilate that Judas committed the bigger sin (John 19:11). Pilate had no right to know this and he did not believe in Jesus. A Jesus who did this would not be a reliable guide about morality though he claimed to be sinless. Anyway, all sin could be equally evil and some sins could still be more harmful than others. This has nothing to do with a sin being venial or mortal. Romanism says that all mortal sins are not equally bad which is strange for it makes a mortal sin of harmless sexy thoughts like it does murder.

In Matthew 12:36, Jesus said that every idle thing that a person says, that person will have to account for it on the judgment day. Catholics say that they would not have to explain themselves if they were in mortal sin for they would be already sentenced to Hell. So Catholics conclude that their sin is venial. And the Church teaches that many idle things that might be said are mortal sins so it doesn't believe its own interpretation.

If the people meant were only venial sinners they would have paid for their idle words in Purgatory and have no need to talk about them as if they were on trial. God can alter the speed of time so he can make a person who has a hundred years to pay go though it in a minute so that he can be in time to judge the world a few seconds later. But it is only an assumption that only venial sinners will or won't be questioned for God might want them to be judged to show his mercy. Jesus is on about sinners so he could be on about mortal sinners only. The verse does not even look like it lends support Catholicism's delusions about mortal and venial sin.

Some think that when Jesus said that to insult the Spirit is an eternal sin and that it is not to insult Jesus (Matthew 12:32) that mortal and venial sin must exist. That would mean that Catholicism is wrong that sins like murder and apostasy and desecrating Holy Communion are mortal sins. It would mean that all sin is venial barring blasphemy against the Spirit.

All sin could be mortal and one mortal sin could express a more stubborn rejection of God than another and thus prevent pardon. Jesus is not talking about degrees of sin but about what can be forgiven. God could refuse to pardon a sin for some inscrutable purpose even though there are others ones as bad that he pardons. Christians say it is a mortal sin to insult Jesus so he certainly did not mean it was a venial sin to do it.

It seems that giving the poor a lower place at a party than the rich would be a venial sin and is one in Roman doctrine yet James 2 says it is hell deserving.

In John 3, Jesus says that everybody who will not come to him and use him as the light that shows the way to God is too attached to sin to do so and so they avoid the light and hate it because their deeds are evil. He says everybody and there is no hint of the existence of venial sin or of acceptance of any religious system that did believe in it in John's writings so he is saying that all sin is mortal.

The Church says that Hebrews 6 teaches that losing the faith is a mortal sin seeming to imply that there is venial sin. Protestants say that Hebrews warns of severe punishments for those who no longer hear God speak for they have closed their hearts to him. It does not say that the punishments include exclusion from eternal salvation.

If Hebrews does say such will be excluded from salvation then consider this. The Bible says Jesus paid for our sins so it could be that God will impute his work to us so that our mortal sins excepting one – stubborn refusal to believe - do not cut us off from him. Disbelief could be a more final and damaging sin than the others. Disbelief is only unforgiveable because

belief is necessary for salvation. It is possible that you can think you have become a true believer and be wrong. Then if you abandon the faith, it shows that you are predestined to everlasting torment. Claiming to be a believer and then apostatising could mean your damnation is guaranteed. Christians who become Catholics are predestined by God to eternal damnation. This is how Paul could write that once you are saved you are always saved but that if a believer commits sins such as homosexuality or adultery or witchcraft he or she will be damned forever. Their behaviour is a sign that they were predestined to everlasting damnation. Holiness in the believer is not required for salvation but is a sign of being chosen for salvation. It is a sign of predestination to eternal happiness with God.

The psalmist in the psalm De Profundis wrote that if God should mark our guilt then nobody would survive. This means that all have committed sins that deserve death. The only reason some sins are not granted the death penalty is because God will not give everybody exactly what they deserve for he would have nobody.

In James 3:2, we read that we all do wrong in many things daily. Since James preached against sin in this letter and included himself in it, it is assumed that he was saying that he was in a right relationship with God despite his sins. It is assumed that he would not condemn sin if he were separated from God by sin. It is assumed that the sins he means are venial. But he could preach against mortal sin when he said we commit mortal all the time. There would be no hypocrisy in that when he said we all do it and are too weak not to. It is not hypocrisy especially when you want to stop.

James could have meant that all sin is mortal and we all commit it every day but Jesus took care of it so that we won't pay the price for it and will still be considered right with God. In other words, Jesus has done it all for us.

Protestants must hold that God won't let Roman Catholics into Heaven just because they mistook their mortal sins for venial. They are sins and must be given their full punishment, everlasting agony. You don't get off with murder just because you said that you thought it was not a serious crime. You knew it could be and you still did it so you did mean to commit a serious crime.

BIBLE SAYS THERE IS ONLY MORTAL

We know by now that the doctrine of venial sin is not in the Bible. But does the Bible actually oppose the doctrine?

In many places, the Bible states that mortal sin divorces one from God. It says that some sins are worse than others but only in the sense that they do more harm than others. The person who steals a car with a totally black heart and will and to express that evil is as bad as a murderer with the same heart morally speaking and as regards his intentions even though he did not do as much outward harm. Sin is in the will for you can try to do good and end up making a real mess.

James 2:10 says that the person who breaks one law in the Law breaks them all meaning that all sin is equally evil before God. Rome says that he means if you commit one mortal sin you break every law. But Rome does not believe this herself for she says that it is worse to commit the mortal sin of murder than the mortal sin of adultery. James was writing to people who did not even know how to treat the poor at parties in the Christian way so he thought them benighted. He would have been clear if he had had mortal sin as distinct from venial sin in mind.

Catholicism and the Bible regard heresy as a grave sin. Heresy is choosing to believe something contrary to what God wants you to believe. Using James' logic, if to sin against the law of God in one thing means sinning against the whole law, then if you dismiss one doctrine revealed by God you dismiss all. No wonder Pius XII when he made it obligatory upon Catholics to believe that Mary was bodily in Heaven said that those Catholics who choose to dissent make a shipwreck of their faith. You wouldn't expect rejection of such a minor doctrine as that to be that serious.

The first commandment says that God is to be honoured above all things and that idolatry is to be avoided and to fail to do that is to be infinitely malign and to become an idolater. James is saying that to break any of God's commandments is turning one's back on God and so is mortal.

Adam only ate an apple and God rejected him for it. Rome say that though Adam's sin would have been venial under normal conditions it was mortal in his circumstances for he was the representative of the human race and he was to decide their standing with God. It was mortal because it caused all mankind except Jesus and Mary to be bought into the world in sin and put a leaning towards sin in all people. The Bible does not teach this though it does teach original sin. Adam could not have intended to do all that damage for it is not said that he knew what would happen. Genesis says he did not know good and evil. Christianity says he knew what sin was when he sinned but if he knew what the results would be then he did know good and evil. Some say that Adam was told by God he would die the day he disobeyed and since he did not die God meant spiritual death. But Adam believed he could become God and God should not be trusted so he did not mean for anything serious to happen. Adam's sin is proof that all sin is mortal.

Every sin affirms the sin of Adam with all its results so all sin is equally bad and very serious. You would do what Adam did if you could.

Jesus said that merely calling a person a fool is a mortal sin and deserves a severe penalty even from the Sanhedrin meaning that he wants his political system to be very strict and tough (Matthew 5:22).

Jesus said that the servant who was given money by his master to keep for him and who buried it instead of investing it and making more money like the other servants did was rightfully cast out of the house into darkness to wail and gnash his teeth in agony (Matthew 25:30). Then Jesus started to reveal about eternal punishment hinting that this was what God would do to the person who did what the servant did. The servant did no real harm and he was honest but lazy. Yet his sin though harmless was mortal not because of his attitude but because of what it was, a failure to make money. He meant well. The master had not told him to make money out of the money for him when he admitted so readily to the master that he kept the money intact and made nothing. The servant really believed he wasn't doing wrong. It is a clear warning to Catholics who commit mortal sin while believing it is venial sin they are committing. Catholics will be damned if all sin is mortal.

God says no one can be right with God and destined for Heaven by doing what the Law of Moses requires for no one can manage perfect obedience (Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16-21). This would be untrue if venial sin existed. Sincerity won't save you according to this. You have to be a Christian.

Galatians 3:10 says that unless one keeps every commandment in the Law one will be cursed by God. The context is on about the inability of the Law to reconcile one with God for it will not be kept right which plainly proves that the curse is separation from and rejection by God.

1 Corinthians 6:9,10 says that the greedy and thieves will be barred from Heaven just like homosexuals and adulterers will be. Yet the Church says that not all greed and theft is mortal sin. Here we are told the opposite. God in Revelation 21:8 sentences all those who cast spells, all superstitious people keep superstitions for magical purposes, and all those who lie or who are cowards to everlasting torment. Yet none of these sins are necessarily mortal. Also, the cowards could be said to be only partly responsible for their sin through weakness but it does not matter to this God.

If venial sin existed the Jews would have saved themselves by keeping the Law in so far as it proscribed mortal sin. But Paul said they could not (Romans 3:19,20; 4) so venial sin is a lie. Paul said that the Law brings only wrath and faith is the only hope because it is God's saving free gift (Romans 4:15,16). Notice he said that it is the Law and not one's understanding of the Law. Nobody can say that they sinned mortally whenever they sinned because they did not believe in venial sin and should have. That would have been God's fault and Paul is clear that God is opposed to all sin. When the Law was given to expose sin how could it fail to distinguish between venial and mortal sin if they were not the same?

The Bible say that God would do infinite good to you so you owe him infinite love. To sin is to refuse that duty and to commit an infinite offence. An infinite offence can't be any worse. So, all sin is a total turning away from God.

In Matthew 5:19, Jesus says that whoever breaks the least of the commandments of the Law would be called the least in the kingdom of God. It makes no sense to say he means the smallest venial sinner will be the worst in the kingdom. He means that all sin is mortal for all who sin even in the least harmful things will be called the least in the kingdom. Everybody who enters Heaven is the least compared to Jesus and the angels.

The Apostle James in his letter James 2:10 wrote "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all." Notice his use of the word "stumbles." It means to make a mistake or fall into error. James is painting a picture of a person who is trying to do the right thing and yet, perhaps unintentionally, commits a sin. What is the consequence? God, through His servant James, states when a person commits even unintentional sin, he is guilty of breaking the entire law and is thus entirely rejecting God. He is a mortal sinner.

If Jesus died for all as the Bible says then he didn't die for venial sinners for the doctrine of the Catholic Church claims you can pay for venial sin yourself. And as for saying Jesus saved us by taking away original sin from us he didn't need to die for us for that. After all, God could simply remove original sin if its not our fault. The traditional idea that original sin is our fault though we didn't commit it is no longer endorsed these days. But it could make a comeback with the acceptance of the fundamentalist Protestant idea that Jesus made himself guilty of our sins on the cross!

If venial sin existed then God would have made it clear in the Bible what sins were venial and what were not. He didn't so it's all mortal sin.

CONCLUSION

Venial sin is against the clear teaching of the Bible. This being the case, it follows that top Catholic priests and theologians

are lying to the flock about the Bible teaching. They are condoning the blasphemy of mortal sin by pretending the sin is venial. If you go to Hell for not seeing how bad your sin is then priests are leading you to Hell. If you want Jesus to save you from sin, you have to see sin as God sees it - period!