

THE BOOK OF ROMANS | BONUS SESSION | ARE YOU A SINNER?

Warning: This is a “question the assumptions” session. Here are the “rules of engagement”-

1. Strictly adhere to the Word of God as your final answer.
2. The Word of God is from the mind of God and accurate in its grammar as well as its history, theology, science, etc.
3. Try to understand the point of view that brought about the current assumption.
4. Be gracious to those who still hold the assumption, while trying to teach them a more excellent way.

UNDERSTANDING PARTS OF SPEECH

- A noun is a person, place, or thing.
 - A subject noun performs an action (**John** is preaching)
 - A predicate noun modifies a noun through a linking verb (John is a **preacher**).
- An adjective modifies a noun (John is a **good** preacher).
 - A predicate adjective modifies a noun through a linking verb (John is **good**).
- An adjective is *never* a subject, and if used in the place of a subject it is assuming a silent noun. “Only the good [people] die young.”

A SURVEY OF OUR THEOLOGICAL JARGON

- For as long as we can remember, we have referred to lost people as “sinners.”
 - “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” – famous Jonathan Edwards sermon
- From the popular “ABC” method of evangelism:
 - “Admit to God that you are a sinner (Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23).
 - Believe that Jesus is God's Son and accept God's gift of forgiveness from sin (Romans 5:8; Acts 4:12; John 3:16; John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:11-13).
 - Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Romans 10:9-10,13).¹

THE GREEK WORD *HAMARTOLOS*

- One Greek text book states, “Some words, among them “hamartolos”, were originally adjectives but were used so frequently as nouns that they are normally regarded as both.”²
 - The *big lie* in propaganda, “Make the lie big, make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it.”
- The use of *harmartolos* in pre-KJV translations:
 - Latin: changed to a noun.
 - “many publicans and sinners came...” Douhy-Reams
 - The Geneva Bible – Luke 19:7 “a sinful man”
 - The Tyndale Bible – Luke 19:7 “He is gone in to tary with a man that is a synner.
 - The Wycliff Bible – Luke 19:7 “And when all men saw, they grumbled [they grutched], saying, For he had turned to a sinful man
- Summary: The Latin changed an adjective to a noun, the Pre-KJV versions took the Greek literally, the KJV and beyond took the Latin (and Catholic) rendering.

LOOKING AT ADJECTIVES IN THE BIBLE

- Matthew 9:10, **many publicans and sinners**
 - **publicans** is a noun
 - **sinners** is an adjective
 - Other adjectives in Matthew 19 –

¹ <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Becoming-a-Christian-can-be-as-easy-as-A-B-C>

² Learn to Read New Testament Greek" by David Alan Black, pg. 45

- v. 10 **many publicans**
- v. 27, 28 **two blind men**
- v. 37 **the laborers are few**
- The use of an adjective describing the opposite of a sinner:
 - Matthew 13:17, 43, 23:28, 25:37, 46, etc.
- The use of *evil* as an adjective:
 - Matthew 7:11, 12:34, 15:19
 - Luke 11:13
 - 2 Timothy 3:13
- In 911 uses of an adjective in the Greek New Testament, this appears to be the only time an adjective was turned to a noun (Except for perhaps designation of locality, as in Luke 13:2, though adjectives of such type are often used in such a manner).

CONSIDERING ROMANS 7

- Romans 7:17 & 20 declare that it is not **I who do it** but rather the fact that **sin dwelleth in me**.
- Romans 7:18 tells us that in the flesh **dwelleth no good thing**, but in the **will** has a desire that is good.
- Romans 7:21 tells us that the problem Paul experienced was because of **evil** that was **present with me**.
- Romans 7:22 tells us that the **inward man** delights after God (and that, in context, the flesh is the problem).
- Romans 7:24 longs for a freedom from the **body of this death**.

CONCLUSION

- If you want to speak Biblically, speak of *sinful men* not *men who are sinners*.
- What difference does it make?
 - “A leopard cannot change its spots” –but a sinful man can change his actions.
 - If I am a *sinner*, then I can blame my Maker. If I am *sinful*, I have nobody to blame but myself, for giving sin an opportunity.
 - All humans are created in the image of God, and that image is not (and never has been) the image of a *sinner*. When man *sinned*, he became *sinful* not a *sinner*.
- Good news for sinful man: *God forgives all sin and cleanses all unrighteousness!*