

Sin: The Early History of an Idea by Paula Fredriksen.  
Princeton University Press 2012.

'Sin' is a word rarely used today outside religious circles, yet it has a deep resonance for Judaeo-Christian civilisation.

In *Sin: The Early History of an Idea*, Professor Fredriksen of Boston University and the Hebrew University explores in three chapters with a prologue and epilogue the development of the concept of sin in early Christianity. The chapters are - God, Blood, and the Temple: Jesus and Paul on Sin; Flesh and the Devil: Sin in the Second Century; A Rivalry of Genius: Sin and Its Consequences in Origen and Augustine.

By the time period of which she writes, Judaism's philosophy of sin and atonement was well-developed and, while the Jerusalem Temple stood refracted both through the medium of animal sacrifices and other offerings. When the Temple was destroyed in 70 CE the sacrificial cult came to an end, and the development of the concept and scope of sin in early Christianity is influenced by that cataclysmic change.

This is an informative text on the development of the Christian concept of sin, and a valuable source of juxtaposition for Jewish scholars seeking the root of the two faiths' different philosophies.

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