

# ORIGINAL SIN

Genesis 3:6; Romans 5:12-21

## INTRODUCTION

- “What is wrong with humanity?” – this question is asked by people as they look at the many problems in the world caused by man
- Their answers are varied:
  - ✓ Religion
  - ✓ Education
  - ✓ Poverty
  - ✓ Capitalism
  - ✓ Whiteness
- They believe that man’s problems are external factors, and that if the right conditions could be produced, man could have a perfect existence
- This is a belief in the inherent goodness of man – the idea that man is a morally good being, with a pure heart, and it only his negative experiences that produce negative behaviours
- French Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued strongly for man’s inherent goodness, and his ideas contributed to the French Revolution
- He taught that “Man is born free, but is everywhere in chains”, and posited the idea of the “noble savage” – that civilisation negatively impacted man, and that if people were left in their primitive state they would flourish in an idyllic existence
- In Christian theology, the heresy of man’s inherent goodness has plagued the church for many centuries
- Pelagius (c. 360–418 AD) denied original sin, and taught that man has the moral ability to remain sinless by keeping God’s commandments by his own will
- Charles Finney (1792–1875), the “Father of Modern Revivalism” was a Pelagian whose teaching and methods had a great impact on evangelicalism

- Many modern day positive-only preachers prefer to make people feel good about themselves, rather than tell them of their true depraved state
- In a 2022 article by John Ecob in the Herald of Hope, he made the claim that “Every baby born is sinless in God’s sight”
- Yet both scripture and reason refute the notion that man is inherently good
- *“The corruption of human nature might be a doctrine of theology, but it was also a fact in natural history. If a naturalist could come from Jupiter or Saturn to describe the inhabitants of this earth, he would say that man alone had instincts and tendencies which were constantly leading him to courses of action injurious and fatal to himself and to the race to which he belonged. This corruption was a fact in natural history.”* (Duke of Argyll in the House of Lords, June 28, 1883).
- Samuel Johnson, the famous British lexicographer, said, *“With respect to original sin, the inquiry is not necessary, for whatever is the cause of human corruption, men are evidently and confessedly so corrupt, that all the laws of heaven and earth are insufficient to restrain them from crimes.”*
- It is a denial of reality to assert that man is good
- Many people say they don’t believe in God because there is so much evil in the world
- But rather than disprove God and the Bible, the existence of evil proves the truth of the Genesis account of creation and the fall
- The book of Genesis is the seed-plot of the Bible
- All the major doctrines and themes of the Bible trace their source to Genesis
- This is particularly true of the doctrine of sin
- Here we find the origin of sin, consequences of sin, as well as the cure for sin
- Today we will consider the consequences of Adam’s sin with regards to the whole human race
  - ✓ Are we sinners because we sin, or do we sin because we are sinners?
  - ✓ Did Adam’s sin pass on to the rest of us?
  - ✓ How precisely did he pass this sin onto us?

- ✓ What does this mean for me?
- ✓ Is fair or just for me to suffer because of what another person did?
- Man is inherently sinful, even from the womb, and this sinful nature can be traced back to our first parents
- “In Adam's fall we sinned all.”

## **I. OUR REPRESENTATION IN ADAM**

- A. His decisions and actions had consequences for all his posterity
  - 1. Adam represented us in a similar way to our elected members of parliament represent us and make decisions that affect us
    - a. One leader of a people makes a foolish decision, and multitudes of his people suffer the consequences
    - b. A nation's ambassador makes a treaty on behalf of his nation
    - c. Our parliament makes a decision to declare war against another nation, putting all of us into war
    - d. Parents make choices that significantly affect their children's entire lives
  - 2. Adam is our “federal head” and is sometimes called a “public person”
  - 3. Adam's probationary test in Eden was our test; his failure became our failure and his sin our sin (Romans 5:12-21)
  - 4. Adam was perfectly equipped to represent us, being created in holiness and with power to fulfil God's commands
  - 5. All mankind were in Adam in two ways
    - a. Representatively, as our federal head
    - b. Virtually, as our natural father
  - 6. Put simply, “federal headship” means that one represents another, as a father represents his descendants

7. This is seen in Hebrews 7:8-10 where it says that “Levi...paid tithes in Abraham”
- B. All people descend from Adam by ordinary generation
1. There is only one “race”, the human race (Acts 17:26)
  2. Jesus Christ is excluded from Adam’s headship
  3. Christ, in his humanity, did not descend from Adam by ordinary generation, but came by the effect of miraculous, supernatural creating power (Luke 1:35; Hebrews 10:5)
  4. The coming of Christ was not on account of the blessing of fruitfulness (Genesis 1:28), but by virtue of a promise made after the fall of man (Genesis 3:15)
  5. Adam’s sin could not be imputed to Christ, seeing Adam did not represent Him

## II. OUR RUINATION IN ADAM

Original sin is upon us by two means – imputed and inherent

- A. We sinned in Adam by imputation
1. *“It is improper to say, Adam’s eating of the forbidden fruit was personally and inherently an act of mine. It was personally his, and imputatively mine; personally his, because he did it; imputatively mine, because I was then in him. Indeed, the effects of his personal eating is found in my person—to wit, defilement and depravity.”*  
(John Bunyan)
  2. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”  
(Romans 5:12)
  3. “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners”  
(Romans 5:19)
  4. We possess no righteousness of our own (Romans 3:10)
  5. Legally, we are declared to be sinners before God, bearing the guilt of Adam’s first sin
- B. We are sinners in Adam inherently

1. Not only we accounted as sinners by imputation, but sin actually dwells in us
2. This is *“that natural corruption which cleaves to us, dwells in us, consisting in the privation of original righteousness, and propensity to all unrighteousness; the sad issue and effect of the former sin”* (David Clarkson)
3. “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” (Genesis 6:5)
4. Terms we use for this are the Adamic nature, the flesh, the natural man, the old man
5. We are sinners from conception (Psalm 51:5)
6. We enter this world spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1)
7. We are *by nature* the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3)
8. From this original sin flows the multitude of actual sins we commit (Matthew 15:19-20)
9. Sin is an inherited disorder, it is not something we have to learn or discover

### **III. OUR RESTORATION IN CHRIST**

- A. There are two men who represent the human race – the first Adam, and the second Adam, Jesus Christ
- B. Adam is a type of Christ
  1. Adam is “the figure of him that was to come” (Romans 5:14)
  2. Christ is called “the last Adam” and “the second man” (1 Corinthians 15:45-47)
- C. Christ is the antitype of Adam, only in that he, like Adam, is made a federal head and representative of mankind (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)
  1. Adam is our representative for sin and death
  2. Christ is our representative for righteousness and life

D. Christ came in human flesh do undo what Adam did in the Garden of Eden

1. Christ came in the *likeness* of sinful flesh (Romans 8:1-4)
2. Christ was tempted, and overcame
3. The law that Adam transgressed, Christ fulfilled

E. Christ is our justification

1. To justify is to declare as righteous
2. Justification is a judicial act of God whereby the believing sinner is forgiven, pardoned and accepted as righteous for the sake of Jesus Christ
3. Through justification, “the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us”, as if we ourselves had kept and fulfilled all the law (Romans 8:3-4)

F. Christ’s righteousness becomes ours by *imputation*

1. Imputation means “to put on someone’s account; to reckon; to lay to one’s charge”
2. Imputation is God’s act of reckoning righteousness or guilt to a person’s credit or debit
3. Even as Adam’s sin is imputed to every one of us, so Christ’s righteousness is imputed to all who believe (Romans 5:19)
4. Justification involves “double imputation” (2 Corinthians 5:21)
  - a. Our sin is imputed to Christ
  - b. Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us
    - i. This includes His “passive obedience” (in paying the penalty for sin by his death)
    - ii. And His “active obedience” (in fulfilling all the precepts of the law perfectly)

5. It is possible for God to accept us as righteous because Christ's righteousness is made ours by imputation (Romans 4:1-8)
  - a. Christ shall "justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11)
  - b. Christ is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30)
- G. But not only does Christ recover our *imputed* sin, he heals our *inherent* sin
  1. He brings us regeneration
    - a. Christ restores the image of God that was lost in the fall (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10)
    - b. Adam effaced our original righteousness, holiness and knowledge, but Christ restores them in us
    - c. This takes place in the new birth
    - d. This recreation is an ongoing process as "the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16)
    - e. He performs this gracious work of regeneration in order that we would serve and glorify him in this world (Ephesians 2:10)
  2. He brings us resurrection
    - a. Christ as the second Adam not only had to suffer and die for us, he had to rise from the dead
    - b. In doing so, he became the "firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:21-23)
    - c. Those who are in Christ "shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17)
    - d. Presently we dwell in these vile, Adamic bodies, awaiting resurrection (Philippians 3:21)
    - e. The contrast between this mortal body and the resurrection body is given in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44
  3. He brings us exaltation

- a. The glory that Christ has prepared for his redeemed ones is inconceivable (Romans 8:17-19; 1 John 3:2)
- b. The final position of the believer is not merely equivalent to what Adam originally enjoyed in Eden, but is far greater
- c. We will be perfectly united with Christ, dwelling with him, reigning with him (Revelation 21:1-4; 22:1-6)

## **CONCLUSION**

1. When you begin to understand that you are a sinner, not because of what you've done but because of what you are, you realise the impossibility, the absurdity, of the notion that you can somehow make yourself clean by your own efforts.
2. This would require there the renewal of our very nature – it would require a new heart
3. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” (Jeremiah 13:23)
4. This is why “Ye must be born again” (John 3:7)
5. All those who are in Adam will die and suffer eternal judgment
6. All those who are in Christ will live and enjoy eternal blessedness
7. Are you in Adam or in Christ?
8. It is only through repentance and faith in Christ that we can be freed from Adam's condemnation and brought into a state of justification and life
9. A person's life reflects who their head is – those in Adam are characterised by sin; those in Christ are characterised by righteousness (1 John 3:6-10)
10. Do you, like Adam, yield to temptation? Or do you like Christ, overcome it?
11. As believers we still have the old, adamic nature dwelling in us, striving against the Spirit
12. We are to put off the old man and put on the new, by daily yielding to God, striving against sin, using the word of God and prayer (Ephesians 4:21-24)