

Lesson 14

Part Five – Anthropology and Hamartiology: The Doctrines of Man and Sin (Cont'd)

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 1. Satan Raises Doubt

Satan raised doubt concerning God's word (Genesis 3:1). The temptation created suspicion about the goodness of God; it raised a question whether God was dealing wisely and fairly with Adam and Eve. Eve succumbed to the temptation in that she exaggerated God's prohibition by her response to Satan (Genesis 3:3). God had said nothing about TOUCHING the fruit.

2. Satan Lies

Satan lied by saying they would not die (Genesis 3:4). Satan made a categorical denial of God's earlier statement; Satan said, "You surely will not die!"

3. Satan Confuses

In Genesis 3:5, Satan told them that they would be like God, knowing good and evil if they ate the fruit. It was true that they would know good and evil, but Satan didn't tell them the rest – he didn't tell them about the pain, suffering and death that would occur through their sin. The test was in three areas, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16).

iii. The Results of the Sin

1. Judgment on the Serpent

Genesis 3:14. The serpent had earlier been a noble creature; as a result of the judgment it was altered in form and shape. Because the serpent exalted itself it would now be forced to crawl on its belly and eat the dust of the earth as it crawled along.

2. Judgment on Satan

Genesis 3:15. This must be understood as addressed not to the serpent but to Satan. There would be enmity between Satan's seed (unbelievers) and the woman's seed (believers, but specifically Christ). "He shall bruise you on the head" indicates Christ delivered a death blow to Satan at the cross (Colossians 2:14-15; Hebrews 2:14). Christ would have the major victory in defeating Satan but the "bruise Him on the heel" comment suggests that Satan will have minor victories. Isn't it a wonderful display of God's divine irony that the death Satan thought he caused is the source for his own defeat? Amen!

3. Judgment on the Woman

- Pain in childbirth. This word "pain" (yizabon) is similarly used in reference to Adam's "toil" in Genesis 3:17. Both would suffer in their respective roles.
- The husbands rule over the woman AND a desire to rule over or usurp the authority of her husband.

4. Judgment on the Man

- Genesis 3:17-19. The first judgment was against the ground. No longer would the earth spontaneously produce its fruit but only through hard toil by the man.
- Death. Adam had been made from the elements of the ground. The death process would return the man to the dust from which his body had been taken.

5. Judgment on the Human Race

- Romans 5:12. The result of Adam's sin was passed on to the entire human race. All humanity became subject to death.

6. Judgment on Creation

- Genesis 3:17-18. All animal and plant life would be affected by the sin of Adam. Animal life and nature would resist the man. Animals would become wild and ferocious; plant life would produce weeds to hinder productivity. All creation would groan with the effect of the fall and anxiously long for the day of restoration (Romans 8:19-21).

II. The Doctrine of Sin

a. Definition of Sin

Sin can best be defined as a transgression of the law of God. In the theological language of Spurgeon's Catechism (which mirrors the Westminster Shorter Catechism), "*A Sin is any want of conformity to, or transgression of the law of God.*" Let's look first at sin as...

i. A Transgression of the Law of God

God gave the Mosaic law to heighten man's understanding of His righteous standard and the seriousness of transgressing that standard. According to **Romans 4:15**, "*the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.*" **Question:** Does this mean that, before the giving of the law on Mt Sinai, there were no sins? Look at **Romans 5**. In **verses 12 and 13** we read:

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Gill says, “*This **looks** like an objection, that if there was no law before Moses's time, then there was no sin, nor could any action of man be known or accounted by them as sinful, or be imputed to them to condemnation; or rather it is a concession, allowing that where there is no law, sin is not imputed; **but** there was a law before that law of Moses, which law was transgressed, and the sin or transgression of it was imputed to men to condemnation and death, as appears from what follows.*” And indeed it does. Look at **verse 14**. Paul says:

***Nevertheless** death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.*

So, it's clear that even before the giving of the law on Sinai, there WAS a law in place which had been known by mankind ever since the fall. I think it's important that we view the Decalogue as the official codification of the Law of God and not its beginning. If you read everything written in your Bibles concerning God's dealings with mankind up until **Exodus 20**, you'll see that God's righteous standard can be clearly seen. This will be clear, I think, in the remainder of our expanded definition of sin. Not only is sin a transgression of the law of God, as our catechism definition states, it is also...

ii. A Failure to Conform to the Standard of God

The Greek word hamartia means “*to miss the mark.*” Hence, it means that all people have missed the mark of God's standard and continue to fall short of that standard (**Romans 3:23**). This involves sins of both commission and omission. According to **Romans 14:23**, whatever is not of faith is sin.

iii. A Principle Within Man

Sin is not only an act but also a principle that dwells in and is operative in every man. In **Romans 7:14, 17-25**, Paul refers to the struggle with this sin principle. According to **Galatians 3:22**, everyone is confined by this sin nature.

iv. Rebellion Against God

Another Greek word often translated as sin is “*anomia*” which means “*lawlessness*” (**1 John 3:4**). It denotes lawless deeds (**Titus 2:14**) and is a sign of the last days in which man will be “*without law or restraint*” (**Matthew 24:12**).

III. Original Sin

a. Definition

Original sin is defined as “the sinful state and condition in which men are born.” It is so designated because: 1) it is derived from the original root of the human race, Adam, 2) it is present in the life of every individual from the time of his birth, and 3) it is the inward root of all the actual sins that defile the life of man. Original sin refers to the corruption of our whole nature. That is to say that there is not one good thing which dwells within anyone born of man which would be sufficient to merit the grace and favor of God.

b. Results

First, man is totally depraved. **NOTE:** Once again, total depravity does not mean that everyone is as thoroughly depraved as he could possibly be, nor that everyone will indulge in every form of sin, nor that a person cannot appreciate and even do acts of goodness; but it does mean that all the corruption of sin extends to all men and to all parts of all men so there is nothing within the natural man that can give him merit in God’s sight.

Secondly, man has an innate sin nature. Every part of man is affected by the fall: His intellect (**2 Corinthians 4:4**); his conscience (**1 Timothy 4:2**); his will (**Romans 1:28**); his heart (**Ephesians 4:18**), and his total being (**Romans 1:18-3:20**).

IV. The Imputation of Sin

The word “imputation” comes from the Latin word “imputare,” meaning “to reckon,” “to charge to one’s account,” and relates to the problem of how sin is charged to every person.

The Scriptural basis for imputation is Romans 5:12, which teaches that sin entered the world through Adam. The interpretation of this verse determines how one views imputation. Historically, there have been four major views of how sin is imputed to the human race:

a. Pelagian View

Pelagius was a British monk born around A.D. 370 who taught his strange doctrines at Rome in A.D. 409. Modern Unitarians continue his basic school of thought. Pelagius taught that God created every soul directly and that every soul therefore was innocent and unstained. No created soul had any direct relation to the sin of Adam; the only significance of Adam's sin upon humanity was the bad example. Pelagius, therefore, did not view Romans 5:12 as affecting all humanity. No sin of Adam was imputed to the human race; only those acts of sin that people themselves committed were imputed to them. Moreover, man did not die because he sinned but because of the law of nature. Adam would have died even if he had not sinned. Pelagius and his doctrines were condemned at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 418. In Pelagius' view, each person would require their own individual fall in order to be condemned. (See Page 34 of Sproul).

b. Arminian View

Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) was a Dutch theologian. The Arminian view is often referred to as semi-Pelagianism and is represented in the Methodist church, Wesleyans, Pentecostals, and others. The reason it is often called "semi-Pelagianism" is because, like Pelagius, Arminius also taught that man was not considered **guilty** because of Adam's sin. He differs from Pelagius in that he did believe we inherited a sin nature but that "God bestows upon each individual from the first dawn of consciousness a special influence of the Holy Spirit, which is sufficient to counteract the effect of the inherited depravity and to make obedience possible, provided the human cooperates, which it still has the power to do." This means that it's only when one voluntarily and purposely **chooses** to sin, going against the power they have to live righteously, does God impute Adam's sin to them and count them guilty.

Thus Arminius recognized an effect from Adam's sin but not in the sense of total depravity. Through divine enablement, man is still capable of making righteous choices. This explains their view of "*prevenient grace*" or the belief that through a special allowance of God's grace, sinful man CAN choose to be saved.

c. Federal View

The federal view was originally introduced by a man named Cocceius (Cox-say-oos) in the mid-17th century and became a standard of belief in Reformed theology. It was taught by men like Charles Hodge, J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., and Louis Berkhof. This view is called the federal view because Adam is seen as the federal head or representative of the entire human race. God entered into a covenant of works with Adam whereby He promised to bless him and thereby the entire human race with eternal life if Adam obeyed. Disobedience would bring suffering to the entire human race. As a result of Adam's sin, since he was the representative of the human race, his sin plunged the entire human race into suffering and death. Through the one sin of Adam, sin and death are imputed to all humanity because all humanity was represented in Adam. Charles Hodge defines this view as follows: "In virtue of the union, federal and natural, between Adam and his posterity, his sin, although not their act, is so imputed to them that it is the judicial ground of the penalty threatened against him coming also upon them."

d. Augustinian or Seminal View

This view is named after Augustine (A.D. 354-430) and has been more recently held by Calvin, Luther, Shedd, and Strong. This view teaches that the statement "all sinned" in Romans 5:12 suggests that all humanity was a participant in Adam's sin. Just as Levi (although not yet born) paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham in that Levi was "seminally present" in Abraham (Hebrews 7:9-10), in a similar way, all humanity was "seminally present" in Adam when Adam sinned, and therefore all humanity participated in the sin. Therefore, the sin of Adam and the resultant death are charged to all humanity because all humanity is guilty. God holds all humanity guilty because all humanity *is* guilty.