

THEOLOGY I: Doctrine of Sin (Part 2)

Session 2 - Dr. Jeremy Kimble

QUESTIONS

- How do we define sin?
- Is there a core sin from which all other sins spring?
- What do you think are the most predominant sins in our culture today?

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

- **Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.**
(Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology)

We can sin by doing what we should not do (sins of commission) and by not doing what we should do (sins of omission).

- Sin includes our attitudes. (Ex 20:17; Matt 5:22,28)
- Sin includes our moral nature. (Rom 5:8; Eph 2:3)

But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:8

*Among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were **by nature** children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. Eph 2:3*

*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For **sin will have no dominion over you**, (since you are saved) since you are not under law but under grace. Rom 6:12-14*

- Sin is directly opposite to all that is good in character of God, and just as God necessarily and eternally **delights** in himself and in all that he is, so God necessarily and eternally **hates sin**. (Ps 5)
- Genesis 3 and the Origin of Sin.
 - Scripture gives us very little information on the sin of **Satan** and his **angels** that led to their dismissal from heaven. (Isa 14, Eze 28) More generally, it seems that the ultimate cause of human sin lies in God's choice to make us **innocent** and seemingly **free** creatures capable of communion with God. The corollary of this freedom was the possibility of their misusing it to our eternal detriment.

- What we do know is that God does what He does for His **glory**. (Isa 45:5-7)
- The fall is actual **history**, not a mere **symbol**.
 - First, the Bible itself indicates that the fall is a **historic event**. Genesis 4 clearly connects Adam with the stream of history (cf. Rom 5:12; 1 Tim 2:14).
 - Second, there is a theological problem if there is no historic fall. Clearly humans today are sinful. They emerge from the womb fully equipped to sin as soon as they are capable of moral action. It does not need to be taught. Yet Scripture affirms that God created humans good. The only way to harmonize these two facts is to say that God created humans **originally good**, but there has been a **historic fall**.
 - Thirdly, the affirmation of a historic fall has been the overwhelming position of the **Church** down through its **history**, until very recently.

GENESIS 3

*Now the **serpent** was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. Gen 3:1a*

*And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient **serpent**, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world - he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. Rev 12:9*

He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" Gen 3:1b-3

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Gen 2:16-17

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. Gen 3:4

Constant battle of our lives... Will I believe lies of the enemy or the truth from the living God?

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. John 10:10

For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Gen 3:5

*So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be **desired** to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Gen 3:6*

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life - is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. 1 John 2:15-17

Turn these stones into bread... cast yourself off the temple... bow down and worship me. Temptation of Jesus Matt 4

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you”? And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” He said “Who told you that you were naked?

Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?”

The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

*The Lord God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; **he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.**’ (1st mention of the gospel)*

To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.” And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever -" therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. Gen 3: 7-24

- **The serpent.**

- It is only in the NT that we are told clearly that the serpent was the instrument of **Satan** (Rev 12:9), for whom **deception** is a key characteristic (Rev 20:3). In some manner, Satan was in the serpent, speaking through him (cf. Peter in Matt 16:23).
- It is possible that we should also see an indication of Satan's involvement in the prophecy of Gen 3:15. The enmity between the seed of the **woman** and the seed of the **serpent** is often seen as the struggle between **Christ** and **Satan** (See Rom 16:20), and thus Gen 3:15 is the first Messianic prophecy.

You are of your Father the devil. John 8

- **The temptation.**

- Some wonder why the serpent approached Eve. It is a mistake to try to draw too much from this point, since Scripture simply doesn't say why Eve was the serpent's target. At any rate, v.6 says Adam was with Eve, and should have been able to warn her. But he said **nothing**, and readily **shared** in her sin, offering no **resistance**.
- Second, and more important, many have noticed the steps in the tempter's approach. First, he tested Eve's **knowledge** of God's word, and at the same time tried to paint God as **unreasonable**, and any restriction as **outrageous**.
- There are problems with Eve's response. The emphasis in Gen 2:17 is on their **freedom** to eat from all trees except one. God's restriction was not onerous in the least. Also, to God's command not to eat from the tree, Eve added that they were not even to **touch** it, and she omitted the emphasis on the certainty of **death** as the result.
- The next step in the temptation was a direct challenge to the **authority** and **character** of God. The serpent said God lied maliciously, to keep them from something good. God is painted as the enemy; Satan as their friend.

- As a result of the serpent's words, Eve experienced a **threefold** temptation: the fruit was "good for food," it was "pleasing to the eye," and it was "desirable for gaining wisdom." Some have seen here a parallel with the threefold temptation mentioned in 1 John 2:16 or the threefold temptation of Christ in Matt 4 (cf. James 1:13-15).
- The lesson is very obvious: **sin is appealing** in many ways. Don't try to convince yourself **otherwise**. It's just that there are **consequences** that are not appealing. The point is to see God **better** than sin, trust God's goodness (Ps 84:11), and remember the consequences.

*Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, for my people have committed two evils: they have **forsaken** me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed (dug) out cisterns (wells) for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water. (We'd rather suck water out of the mud) Jer 2:12-13*

*For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. **No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.** O Lord of host, blessed is the one who trusts in you! Ps 84:10-12*

- Eve took and ate, as did Adam. Many centuries later, Jesus said to his disciples, "Take and eat" (Matt 26:26). But this time, they did so by the command of God. And in so doing, they symbolize the **reversal of the fall** accomplished by the cross.

- **The Results of the Fall.**

- Guilt and shame (v 7).
- Distortions in relationships (vv 8-19)
- **Pain** in childbirth (v 14)
- **Knowledge** of good and evil (v 22)
- Cursing of the ground (v 17)
- Death (vv 22-24; cf Rev 2:11, 20-14-15).
- Original **sin** for Adam's descendants.

- **Other Key Passages:**

- Gen. 6:5-8; Ex 20:1-21; Ex 34:1-29; Lev 18-19; Num 13-14; cycle of Judges, kings of Israel (Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles); Ps 51; Neh 9:1-38; Amos 1:3-2:16; reality of sin and call to repentance in the NT (Rom 1-3).

The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Gen 6:5