

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

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Series:	The Heidelberg Catechism		Pastor/Teacher
Number:	5		Gary L.W. Johnson
Text:	Romans 5:12; John 3:5, 6		
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The Fall and it's Consequences

THE FIRST PART – GUILT

3. Lord's Day

Question 6. Did God then create man so wicked and perverse?

Answer: By no means; but God created man good, (a) and after his own image, (b) in true righteousness and holiness, that he might rightly know God his Creator, heartily love him and live with him in eternal happiness to glorify and praise him. (c)

(a) Gen. 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. (b) Gen. 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. Gen. 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (c) Col. 3:9 Lie not one to another seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; Col. 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Eph. 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; Eph. 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 2 Cor. 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Question 7. Whence then proceeds this depravity of human nature?

Answer: From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise; (a) hence our nature is become so corrupt, that we are all conceived and born in sin. (b)

(a) Gen. 3. Rom. 5:12 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: Rom. 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Rom. 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (b) Ps. 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Gen. 5:3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.

Question 8. Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness?

Answer: Indeed we are; (a) except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. (b)

(a) Gen. 8:21 The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Gen. 6:5 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. Job 14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. Job 15:14 What is man, that he should be clean? And he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? Job 15:16 How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water? Job 15:35 They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit. Isa. 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. (b) John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. 12:3 Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. 2 Cor. 3:5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.

One of the great theological words is the word imputation. It means to think (cf. Romans 2:3), to count (4:3), and to reckon (6:11), or perhaps we should say, more accurately, that the verb to impute means those things. The Greek verb LOGIDSOMAI and the Hebrew verb CHASHAB, which underlie the English words in the English translations, mean essentially the same thing (cf. Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3, 6). There are three great acts of imputation in the Bible. They are these: (1) First, the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, or to the whole race of men (cf. I Corinthians 15:21-22). (2) Second, there is the imputation of the sin of the elect to Jesus Christ, who bore that sin's penalty in His death upon the cross (cf. II Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13). (3) Third, the imputation of the righteousness of God to the elect (cf. Romans 3:24-26; 4:1-8). It is to the first of these imputation that the passage in Romans 5:12 refers. In it Paul offers an important interpretation of the sin of Adam, one that is fundamental for all theology. Man does evil, Paul would say, because he is evil, and the root cause of the problem is what happened centuries ago in that beautiful garden planted by God. That is the subject of the text that we study in this message.

I. THE ORIGIN OF HUMAN SIN AND DEATH

A. The source (Romans 5:12a)

The apostle opens the discussion by the statement, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin..." And the first question the reader should have is, "What is the connection between verses twelve through twenty-one and verses one through eleven? Paul's connecting phrase, DIA TOUTO (KJV, "wherefore"), is causal and is to be rendered by for this cause. We shall by-pass the discussion of the meaning of the phrase and simply state the conclusion from my own study of the matter. Paul appears to me to be saying: For there exists this likeness between Christ and Adam. As the world was introduced to sin and death by the first Adam, so it has been introduced to righteousness and life by the Last Adam. Sin, condemnation, and death are by our human progenitor, just as righteousness, justification, and life are by our spiritual progenitor, Jesus Christ.

"The master-thought of the whole passage," Gifford believes, "is that unity of the many in the one, which forms the point of comparison between Adam and Christ."¹ So, if one should ask, "How by the well-doing of one, Jesus Christ, are the many saved?" it may be said, in reply, "How by the disobedience of one, Adam, were the many condemned?" The picture is that of solidarity, then, but of contrastive solidarity.

The apostle writes that the origination of human sin is to be traced to "one man." Paul alludes, of course, to the fall in the Garden of Eden. There, after the creation of Adam and Eve, God placed them and gave the terms of the probation to Adam, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17). The tree was not the symbol of the sex act, as some have contended,

nor was it symbolic of wine. It was a test of man's creature-hood, for the condition hinged upon man's belief in the Word of God. And, of course, it was not provocation on God's part, for the maximum of freedom was permitted man and the minimum was forbidden. Nevertheless, sin came and man fell. Adam became the instrumental cause by which sin entered the world.

B. The fact (Romans 5:12a)

The apostle writes, "sin entered." The sin of Adam in one sense was an irrational act, for no explanation of sin can be given that makes it reasonable. In this instance it arose in the heart of Adam as an inclination to take the fruit from the hand of his wife. At the moment that the inclination began, Adam sinned. The action that followed is the completion of the inclination. Adam, it is to be noted, wanted the one thing that was forbidden him. Like a little child, who has all the toys but one, and yet tries to get that one from his playmate, so Adam, the big child, acted childish and evilly by desiring the fruit from the tree in the midst of the garden.

The apostle's use of the word, "entered" (EISELTHEN) should be noted, too. The word, which looks at the fall by its tense (aorist), suggests that sin was in existence in the universe before the fall (cf. I Timothy 2:14). Paul gives us no details of that fact, although there are some hints in other parts of Scripture that seem to say that sin began in heaven with the sin of Lucifer (cf. John 8:44; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:12-17). At any rate, Adam's sin was the original human sin, so far as the devastating results for the human race are concerned.

C. The result (Romans 5:12a)

The catastrophic result of the first human sin is stated in the words, "and death by sin." The fact that sin is said to be the basis of universal death strongly implies that Adam's sin has produced universal sin. The clause, "and death by sin," clearly teaches that death is a penal evil and, as Hodge points out, "not a consequence of the original constitution of man."² That which was implied in I Corinthians 15:21-22 is here stated plainly. While Chrysostom, Augustine, and H.A.W. Meyer regarded the death here as physical, the greater number of commentators regard it as both physical (cf. 5:14; Genesis 3:9) and spiritual (cf. 5:18; 21; 6:23: here the death is contrasted with the spiritual life, for Paul writes, "eternal life").

There are three aspects to the death that is the result of sin, although the penalty is really one penalty:

1. This aspect has to do with spiritual death. It is clear from the fact that Adam was told "in the day" that he ate of the fruit he would die that the reference to death is fundamentally spiritual, for he did not die physically when he ate the fruit. Thus, death in Genesis 2:17 must be spiritual death.
2. This aspect is seen in Genesis 3:19, where, after Adam had fallen, it was said that he should eventually become dust. The words are, "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." There the reference is plainly physical death.
3. The final aspect is found in Genesis 3:22-24, where man is driven forth from the Garden of Eden, and the way back is barred to sinning man forever. More clearly, however, is the death that is eternal found in Revelation 20:11-15.

CONCLUSION: To sum up, when Adam sinned, he died spiritually immediately. In Adam's case, he was brought to faith and thus escaped the eternal effects of spiritual death. He did not, however, escape the effects of physical death, and he eventually died physically. When the unbelieving man dies, he dies physically, for he was already dead spiritually. Thus, spiritual death leads to physical death and, if

salvation does not come, then that spiritual death, which leads to physical death, is prolonged to eternal death. The three aspects of death, then, are spiritual, physical, and eternal.

The remedies of death are set forth in the Word of God also. The remedy for spiritual death is eternal life, the gift of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the suffering and crucified Savior. The remedy of physical death is the bodily resurrection, which takes place at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for believers. For eternal death there is no remedy!³

One final and very important point. It has become very fashionable in many Evangelical circles to reject the classical interpretation of Genesis 1-3. The BioLogos people are in the forefront in their attempt to persuade Evangelicals to embrace Darwinian evolution hook, line and sinker. The price is too high – for with a rejection of the historicity of the Fall of Adam Paul’s analogy between Adam and Christ collapse as well. “The literal interpretation of Genesis 3 is as true today as it ever was. The truth of this ancient narrative needs to be preached to the modern world, for without the Fall the great problem of man is an enigma. And even if Genesis 3 were not in the Bible, most of the details and facts could be reconstructed from the many cross-references: ‘Now the Serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan (Rev. 12:9; 20:2), was crafty (II Cor. 11:3). He deceived Eve (II Cor. 11:3) and both she and her husband Adam, the son of God and the father of Seth (Lk. 3:38), transgressed (I Tim. 2:14; Rom. 5) in the garden of God (Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13) where there were trees (Ezek. 31:8-9). The Serpent tempted them by lying (John 8:44) and causing them to think that they could be like God (Ezek. 28:9). Because man broke his covenant with God (Hos. 6:7), he tried to hide his iniquity (Job 31:33), the first sin of the world (Rom. 5:12). But it could not be hidden, and as a result man would eventually return to the dust (Job 34:15; Ps. 104:29-30) and die (I Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5). The Serpent, because of his actions, would east dust (Isa. 65:25) and finally be crushed (Rom. 16:20), though he would wage a fierce battle against the woman’s seed (Rev. 12:47). And so, God drove man out of the Garden (Ezek. 28:16), the location of the tree of life (Rev. 22:1-2, 14).’”⁴

ENDNOTES

¹ E.H. Gifford, *The Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans* (rpt. James Family, 1977), p. 75.

² Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on Romans* (rpt. The Banner of Truth, 1972), p. 145.

³ I am again indebted to Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, my former professor of Theology for the substance of this analysis. His article: “Romans 5:12 – An Exercise in Exegesis and Theology” in R. Longenecker and M.C. Tenney eds. *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, was described by D.A. Carson as the finest exegetical study he had ever read.

⁴ John Mincy, “The Literal Interpretation of Genesis 3” in *Biblical Viewpoint* (Vol. VIII, No. 2, Nov. 1974), p. 153.