

Jason Upchurch - Systematic Theology - Anthropology - Original Sin

This morning we are returning to the doctrine of anthropology. Which is the study of? Man. What does the Bible say about who we are. This is pretty foundational. And the biblical view is basically counter to every secular, pagan, evolutionary view out there and really serves as the foundation of our understand of who people are.

And last time we looked at the doctrine of sin also known as? Hamartiology.

Hamartia (noun) - or hamarto (verb) - is the Greek word for sin and so hamartiology is the doctrine of sin. Sin falls under the doctrine of man because our biggest problem is that we sin. That's why people go to hell, that's why Jesus came, lived a sinless life, died a vicarious and brutal death on the cross, was buried, rose the third day and ascended into heaven: because of our sin. For all eternity we will be praising the Lamb who was slain for our sin. That's how bad our sin was. In 20 billion years in heaven we will still be singing the praises of Jesus who died for the sin you committed this morning, and yesterday and 3 years ago and next week.

That's how profoundly wicked our sin is, and how amazingly gracious the Lord Jesus Christ is.

This morning I want to return to the doctrine of sin. And specifically the doctrine of original sin. Where did sin come from, are we basically good or evil or neutral. That's what we're talking about. This might seem in the weeds but it really gets to the foundational issues of family and society as a whole and affects our view.

And a wrong view of sin is basically everywhere in society. From advertisement to politics psychology. All your favorite popular figures in society, for the most part, have a messed up view of sin.

Anne Frank (Diary of a Young Girl): "In spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart."

So in spite of all the atrocities of WWII people are really good. Whatever views you have about WWII and who did what or should have done what, I don't think we walk away thinking: Man, people are basically good.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau: "Nature has made man happy and good, but society corrupts him and makes him miserable."

I know you probably don't spend a lot of time skimming through Rousseau - he was a philosopher in the 1700s and he was one of the most influential philosophers and thinkers of the time. His works really fueled the thought process of French revolution which was a thoroughly secular revolution. It was brutal and barbaric in many ways. Very different that the American revolution.

But his statement is pretty common among most people: "Nature - not God - has made man happy and good, but society corrupts him and makes him miserable."

So people are good, it's society that corrupts. This is false on its face. How so? Who makes up society? People do. So if we all start off happy and good, how do we become corrupt in the first place? What this does is say that individuals are good but groups of individuals are bad.

It takes away personal responsibility, and blames the society for all our woes. Does that sound familiar?

Ronald Reagan: "I know in my heart that man is good, that what is right will always eventually triumph, and there is purpose and worth in each and every life."

He got a one thing right: There is purpose and worth in every life. But right will only fully triumph at the return of Jesus. And man's heart is bad and evil.

Reagan wasn't a theologian. And most people aren't either. But they do get this fundamentally wrong. Humans are not innately good. We are born with a sin nature. We are fundamentally at odds with God.

Psalms 51:5: I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Genesis 8:21: The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.

Psalms 58:3: The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray speaking lies.

Ecc. 7:20: Surely there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.

Eph 2:1-3: And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked...and were by nature children of wrath.

From the moment of conception we are born with a sin nature. That is, we innately desire to sin. Just like we breath oxygen by our nature, so too we have an inclination to sin by our nature. How did this all happen? **Read 12-14**

So when we say "original sin" what we're talking about is where did sin originate? Where did it come from? It came from Adam in the Garden. Paul and Jesus and the rest of the writers of the Bible all view Adam and the Garden as a literal, historical event that not only happened but had lasting affects for humanity.

And so Adam sinning in the Garden is why you and I have a sin nature, that's why we die, that's why the world is the way it is, because one man sinned. Sin came in through one man. It was like a virus that tainted our soul and tainted all of creation.

And the result was death. Adam died, Eve died, everyone dies. God did not originally create humans to die. Had Adam not sinned, he would still be alive today in the Garden. We'd be talking to Noah and Abraham and David. Noah would have never built a boat, Abraham would never had to almost sacrifice Isaac, there would be no Goliath story, no Bathsheba story, no showdown with Pharaoh. If Adam didn't sin, we'd all be naked in a Garden in the middle east eating and feasting forever and ever in joy and in communion with God.

But Adam did sin, his eyes were opened and death came through that sin. How do we know there's sin? Because we die. You didn't eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and neither did I, but we keep dying. Why is that?

Because Adam was our federal head - our representative. And when he sinned, his eyes were opened. The idea is that he now had a new sinful nature that was in rebellion to God. He wanted to determine what was right and wrong. And he passed that rebellious, sinful nature down to all his offspring. Down to me and you.

Paul's point here in Romans is that from the time of Adam to Moses people kept dying. They didn't eat of the tree, and they weren't violating Moses's law - it hadn't been given yet. Why were they dying? Because they had a sin nature and they sinned in a variety of ways.

Sin now tainted everything about creation and especially humans. RC Sproul: We're not sinners because we sin. We sin because we're sinners.

We sin because it's in our nature to do so. Just like we breath oxygen and drink water because it's part of our nature. We sin, we violate God's law because it's part of our nature.

Voddie Bauchum used to say children are vipers in diapers. And while that's clever, and it does get to the truth that children do have a sin nature I think it's a little overstating the issue. Children are sinners, but it is incumbent on the parents to use diligent teaching and the rod of discipline to drive foolishness far from our children.

I heard about a couple this week who wants to get married but they absolutely do not want kids because they don't want to bring monsters into the world. That was the statement. They're actually going to get surgery before they even get married to eliminate the possibility of pregnancy once they're married.

If it were me, I would refuse to marry them and encourage them to end the relationship. Even after Adam fell, God's design for marriage was to have children - that never changed. Children are not innocent and without sin, but they are never described as monsters. They need the gospel and they need constant teaching and correction to know what Jesus wants and doesn't want because without that, they have a sin nature and they will go astray.

This is why Jesus's birth had to be miraculous, by the way. This is why the Holy Spirit had to give him conception. Had Jesus actually been born of Joseph then he would also have a sin nature just like everyone else. He would have been a sinner, he would have sinned and he would not have been able to bear the punishment for the sins of his people as a sinless, perfect Lamb of God. Sacrifices had to be absolutely perfect to be effective. The reason Jesus is an effective sacrifice is that he has no sin nature and no sin.

Remember, Jesus has 2 natures. He is truly God. So in his divine nature he is perfectly holy and without sin. But he's also truly human. But the only way to escape the corruption that every other human faces is to have been miraculously conceived.

So our sin comes from Adam and Jesus reverses that. **Read 15-17**

So Adam gave us sin and death, Jesus gives righteousness and eternal life to all who believe in him. This is why Jesus is often called the second Adam. Adam was the federal head of all humanity. Jesus is also a federal head. Not of all humanity, but of the redeemed, of Christians. **Read 18-21**

This puts it all together. Adam's trespass led to death and condemnation for all men.

So that's our definition of original sin: we are guilty sinners because of Adam's sin.

1689 6:2: "By this sin our first parents fell from their original righteousness and communion with God. We fell in them, and through this, death came upon all. All became dead in sin and completely defiled in all the capabilities and parts of soul and body."

Now, think about that. Doesn't that seem unfair? That we feel the effects of sin just because some other guy ate some fruit?

Years ago I knew a guy who said that this was the reason he rejected Christianity. That somehow we all burn in hell forever because some naked guy ate an apple that he shouldn't have.

He rejected Christianity because of the doctrine of original sin.

Two things: First, that's actually what the Bible says, so I believe that. A naked guy ate fruit because a serpent told him to, even though God told him not to.

We believe a lot of wild things: Red Sea parted, God created all things from nothing, a fish swallowed Jonah for 3 days, Jesus walked on water, Jesus rose from the dead. These are just plainly taught in the Bible so we just own that.

Second, what happened in the Garden was treason against an infinitely holy God who had given Adam and Eve every possible food to eat. The description is that God was extremely lavish in all that he gave them. There's was only 1 prohibition. Only one tree out of the tens of thousands that he couldn't eat. And that's the one he ate because the Serpent told him to.

This is rebellion and treason against the most high God.

Imagine being in the grocery store and you can eat anything in the whole store. Anything at all - whatever you like. And God says: You can't eat the Nilla Wafers. Anything else you want is yours. And 10 minutes later he comes back and sees you hiding behind the frozen ice cream with boxes of empty Nilla Wafers. He found you because there's this train of Nilla Wafer crumbs to the frozen aisle.

That's what happened with Adam and Eve. Thousands of food options, they ate the 1 thing they were told not to. And because Adam was God's vice regent over the whole of the Earth, he was king. King over all creation. He represented all of us and so when he rebelled we rebelled.

His guilt was imputed to us.

There are some who reject this belief. We saw that earlier. They believe that humans are basically good, or at the least that we are neutral and have the ability in ourselves to obey the Law of God and to choose for ourselves to follow Jesus without the work of God in them. They are called Pelagians after a man in the 4th century named Pelagius.

Pelagius was condemned as a formal heretic because his view is so at odds with Scripture. This is what we call a formal heresy because it is a rejection of biblical truth that is so foundational it will keep you out of the Kingdom.

And this hasn't gone away.

Mormons are Pelagian - they reject original sin.

Unitarian Universalists

Many self-described evangelicals, especially Pentecostals.

Charles Finney - the crazy evangelist of the 1800s

Roman Catholics are sometimes in this camp. Pope Francis is

Methodists - this used to be a Methodist church.

Charles Wesley was a semi-pelagian. He didn't reject original sin, but he did believe that it basically didn't keep someone from coming to faith in Jesus on their own without the work of the Holy Spirit.

But the Bible teaches that Adam's guilt is fully imputed to every human at conception and we are dead spiritually and will die physically.

And by the way, we might not like the idea of Adam's guilt imputed to us, but the whole of the gospel is that the second Adam's righteousness was imputed to us. We don't deserve that either, but celebrate it, don't we?

So in Adam we all sin and that sin influences all that we are..

1689: 6:4: All actual transgressions arise from this first corruption. By it we are thoroughly biased against, and disabled and antagonistic toward all.

That's right. This is why a correct understanding of Genesis - and especially Genesis 1-11 - is so important. If you miss the implications there, you miss all kinds of things.

We generally call this total depravity. We are depraved in every area of life. We're not utterly depraved, we're not as bad as we could possibly be. But we are totally depraved: sin taints everything in some ways.

It affects our physical body: that's why we get sick and weak and die.

It affects our soul: we are dead in our trespasses.

It affects our ability to reason. Have you ever had a conversation with someone and they have no ability to make reasonable conclusions? All of their arguments are fallacies that have nothing to do with the issue at hand? Sin affects our ability to think and reason, it's called the noetic effect of sin. Noetic means relating to our mind or intellect.

It affects our relationships: this is why good fences make good neighbors, because we sin against each other. This is why we make contracts and vows - because in our sin nature we would renege on our agreements.

It affects the physical world around us: Romans 8 says the whole creation is groaning and waiting for the return of the Son of God.

There are weeds and thistles that prevent a flourishing world. Animals kill people, we have to work hard for the earth to bring forth food.

It affects the spiritual world: Satan and his angels - demons - fell into sin as well. There's no redemption for demons. There's redemption and forgiveness available for humans who repent and trust in Jesus. But there's no redemption for fallen angels, unclean spirits and demons.

Sin has affected all things and taints us in every area. Charles Spurgeon once said as salt affects every drop in the Atlantic Ocean, so sin affects every aspect of our being.

So we need to be on guard for this around us and in our own lives. One of the things I think Christians need to do more often is have self-reflection about where they can grow and where they are weak. And ask close friends: hey what do you see in my life that needs to change to be more like Jesus?

One of the things I've learned as a coach is that the best players don't just want to get better. They constantly seek out advice on how to get better and then go implement it. Often times on their own. They want to stop their weaknesses, they want to improve on fundamentals.

I was watching an interview with famous baseball player Alex Rodriguez. He was 6'3" 195lbs and he was told he was too tall for short stop. So he realized Cal Ripken was 6'4" and legendary at the position. So he watched hundreds maybe even thousands of hours of Cal Ripken playing the position and made some adjustments in his motions to accommodate his size.

All of this so he could catch a white ball and throw it 100ft a little bit faster.

1 Tim. 4:8: Physical training is of some value - it's good. But godliness is valuable in every way as it holds promise for the present life and the life to come.

Listen, we're going to be battling sin all our lives. We've got an uphill battle because of it: make sure you're battling. Are you weak in an area, start training to get stronger. Maybe you need to be more gentle, more kind, more loving. Maybe you need to put off laziness, put off anger, put off lust, put off greed. Maybe you need courage to stand firm on convictions. Let's go.

If A Rod can dedicate hundreds of hours on a white ball for a little trophy, we can dedicate our lives to godliness for the King of kings.

A question that often comes up: If we are all sinners at conception and guilty sinners at conception, then what happens to babies who die in infancy or in utero? They never heard the gospel or comprehended the gospel. We know that the children of believers are not automatically saved.

So this is a difficult question. Many of you have lost little ones. We've had several miscarriages just in the last couple of years so we've had to work through this very thing as well.

The simple answer is I don't think we can know for certain. That's not satisfying in many ways, but I think we simply have to trust God that he is just and loving and merciful and even the fate of our own children is in his perfect sovereign control.

Some will say all children are immediately taken to heaven. This was John MacArthur's position, he even wrote a book on the subject. And he offers verses that others have offered as well.

Remember when the Lord punishes David's sin with Bathsheba by striking the baby with an affliction and the baby dies. And David says I will go to him but he won't come to me? And many people make that verse to mean that the baby is in heaven and David will also go to heaven and meet the baby there. The problem is that

that's just not what the passage means. David's point is that he will die like the child died, but the child will not return to life.

Other passages cited are when Jesus says: let the little children come to me. Presbyterians use this passage all the time to say we should sprinkle infants in baptism because, see, they believe! It doesn't say that. We have no report of any children during the ministry of Jesus - or after - getting baptized. And no assurance that they're all regenerate Christians. A person only becomes part of the covenant through faith in Jesus.

Some will use **1 Cor. 7** that says that the children of believers are holy, therefore they are in heaven. Paul doesn't mean that they are forgiven, covenant participants because he also says unbelieving spouses of Christians are holy, in a sense. What sense? That the children of mixed marriages and the unbelieving spouses of Christians aren't to be shunned. There's a non-saving sanctification that affects the household where there's a Christian.

So there's nowhere that teaches infants automatically are saved.

There's also nowhere that says they are damned. Although they are sinful by nature, the judgement of God is based on our works and babies have no works, no law violations. But they die, so we know they have the imputed guilt of Adam.

The Bible also does not teach an age of accountability, where kids get a free pass until they're a certain age or condition. Even those who make that argument seem to make the age older and older and older. And we just have to be honest with what Scripture does and does not say.

So here's my full hand: I don't think we know. God hasn't revealed that to us and I think it's in his wisdom he hasn't. There's no verse that says "all babies go to heaven." It could be there, but it's not. If we knew all babies were in heaven we'd applaud Planned Parenthood for sending tens of millions of babies to heaven. If they were all in hell we'd have no comfort at all. We have neither verse and instead know that abortion is not a mercy, it's murder because these little ones are precious.

The 1689 tries to deal with this in **10:3**: Elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit; who works, when, and where, and how He pleases; so also are all elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

So elect infants are saved. Well, which ones are elect? We don't know. This is called a tautology. The saved are those who are elect. Who are elect? Those who are saved. It doesn't actually answer the difficult question of "Where is the baby I just lost?"

And although it tries to address those who are mentally challenged in their comprehension of the gospel, I think it misses there as well.

Here's the reality of the situation: we simply trust God. God is the one who is merciful. God is the one who is just. All souls - mine, yours, my childrens', my neighbors' - all souls belong to who? God.

God is the just judge of all the earth and he will never ever do what is wrong. No person is in hell unjustly. Every one of the damned fully deserves the eternal flame they are experiencing. Every one in glory is utterly unworthy of the joy and pleasure they are experiencing and should be experiencing torment except for the grace and mercy of God in Christ.

I will simply say that I'm optimistic about children who die. God can do whatever he wants with whoever he wants. But, pure speculation here, I think we should anticipate heaven to be full of the little ones we've lost.

Turn to Rom 6 for a minute. A last word on practical application. Do we still have a sin nature? In a sense we do.

The Bible calls it the Old Man. The way. And we need to put him to death.

The Old Man, sin, was also our slave master and we're often tempted to go back. Paul says don't go back. Just like a freed slave wouldn't return to his master, so we should never return to sin. **Read 5-11**

So our old self was crucified. And we need to be reminded of that. The battle begins in our mind where we consider ourselves dead to sin.

You might be tempted to eat a bunch of cake when you know you shouldn't. But a dead person isn't tempted to eat a bunch of cake. Why? Because they're dead.

You used to be tempted to drunkenness and fornication and lying before you were saved. But now you're in Christ. That old self is dead to sin.

How do you fight that urge? Remind yourself of the grace you have in Jesus. **Read 12-14**

Don't let it reign in your bodies. Why? Because you have the grace of God. Not only has he forgiven you, but he's raised you and equipped you with the Holy Spirit through Jesus to conquer what the first Adam destroyed in us.

Look to Jesus, who pardoned all our sin.

Pray