



Around the Word
BIBLE STUDY
Summer 2016

Original Sin

part 1

Martin Luther on Original Sin:



Here we must confess, as Paul says in Romans 5:12, that sin originated

and entered the world from one man Adam, by whose disobedience all men were made sinners, and subject to death and the devil. This is called original or capital sin.

This hereditary sin is so deep and horrible a corruption of nature that no reason can understand it, but it must be learned and believed from the revelation of Scriptures.

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Introduction: A correct understanding of sin is foundational to understanding of the Gospel. The more we come to realize the severity of our condition, the more our appreciation of the Gospel's beauty grows. If our problem is only that we do bad things, then the solution is to do the right thing. If our problem is that we are "sick" or "weak", then salvation is a matter of healing and giving us spiritual strength. The Bible, though, tells us that we are "dead in trespasses and sins." This means that salvation must be God's work.

In this series of Bible Studies we will let the Formula of Concord (1577) lead us into the Scripture's teaching on Original Sin. When we see the depth of our sin we also see the height of God's great love for us in Christ.

Opening: Psalm 6

¹O LORD, rebuke me not in your | anger,*
nor discipline me | in your wrath.

²**Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am | languishing;*
heal me, O LORD, for my bones are | troubled.**

³My soul also is greatly | troubled.*
But you, O LORD— | how long?

⁴**Turn, O LORD, deliv- | er my life;***
save me for the sake of your | steadfast love.

⁵For in death there is no remem- | brance of you;*
in Sheol who will | give you praise?

⁶**I am weary with my moaning;
every night I flood my | bed with tears;***
I drench my couch with my | weeping.

⁷My eye wastes away be- | cause of grief;*
it grows weak because of | all my foes.

⁸**Depart from me, all you workers of | evil,*
for the LORD has heard the sound of my | weeping.**

⁹The LORD has | heard my plea;*
the LORD ac- | cepts my prayer.

¹⁰**All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly | trou-
bled;***
**they shall turn back and be put to shame in a | mo-
ment.**

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

"Sins" vs "Original Sin"

First, it is true that Christians should regard and recognize as sin not only the actual transgression of God's commandments; but also that the horrible, dreadful hereditary malady by which the entire nature is corrupted should above all things be regarded and recognized as sin indeed, yea, as the chief sin, which is a root and fountain-head of all actual sins.

The difference between "sin" and "original sin" is the difference between the tree and the fruit. Our sins are the bad fruit of our corrupted nature.

See Matthew 7:17-18. How does Jesus use the illustration of the tree and fruit to teach about our sins?

Martin Luther called original sin a "nature-sin" or "person-sin," thereby to indicate that, even though a person

would think, speak, or do nothing evil (which, however, is impossible in this life, since the fall of our first parents), his nature and person are nevertheless sinful, that is, thoroughly and utterly infected and corrupted before God by original sin, as by a spiritual leprosy. On account of this corruption (and because of the fall of the first man) the nature or person is accused or condemned by God's Law, so that we are by nature the children of wrath, death, and damnation, unless we are delivered therefrom by the merit of Christ.

Read Ephesians 2:3 (and surrounding verses). This phrase is particularly important, "we were, by nature, children of wrath..." How does teach original sin? What do we deserve because of our original sin?

God is NOT the Cause of Sin

Second... God is not a creator, author, or cause of sin, but by the instigation of the devil through one man sin (which is a work of the devil) has entered the world.

Read Romans 5:12. How did sin enter the world? What entered the world through sin?

Read 1 John 3:7. Who is righteous? If God is righteous He cannot be the author or creator of sin.

Even at the present day, in this corruption, God does not create and make sin in us, but with the nature which God at the present day still creates and makes in men original sin is propagated from sinful seed, through carnal conception and birth from father and mother.

See Psalm 51:5. When did we inherit our sin?

The Depth of Our Sin Must Be Believed

Third, what and how great this hereditary evil is no reason knows and understands, but it must be learned and believed from the revelation of Scripture.

See Exodus 33:3. How does the Lord show the people their own sin?

See Psalm 19:12. How is it that our sins are "hidden"? What does this mean? If we cannot see all of our sins, how are we to know about them?

Five Things We Must Say About Original Sin

1. This hereditary evil is the guilt that, by reason of the disobedience of Adam and Eve, we are all in God's displeasure, and by nature children of wrath. (Remember the passages we considered earlier, Romans 5:12ff. and Ephesians 2:3).

2. Original sin is an entire want or lack of the concreated hereditary righteousness in Paradise, or of God's image, according to which man was originally created in truth, holiness, and righteousness.

See Romans 3:23. *Who has fallen short of the glory of God?*

See Genesis 3:8-10. *After the fall into sin, how did Adam and Eve act toward God? How does this show us the fruits of original sin?*

At the same time original sin is an inability and unfitnes for all the things of God. The definition of original sin takes away from the unrenewed nature the gifts, the power, and all activity for beginning and effecting anything in spiritual things.

See 1 Corinthians 2:14. *Notice the "does not" and "cannot" in this verse. How does this text teach us our total lack of spiritual strength?*

3. Original sin in human nature is not only this entire absence of all good in spiritual, divine things, but that, instead of the lost image of God in man, it is at the same time also a deep, wicked, horrible, fathomless, inscrutable, and unspeakable corruption of the entire nature and all its powers, especially of the highest, principal powers of the soul in the understanding, heart, and will, so that now, since the Fall, man inherits an inborn wicked disposition and inward impurity of heart, evil lust and propensity. We all by disposition and nature inherit from Adam such a heart, feeling, and thought as are, according to their highest powers and the light of reason, naturally inclined and disposed directly contrary to God and His chief commandments, yea, that they are enmity against God, especially as regards divine and spiritual things.

See Romans 8:7-8. *Is it possible for the sinner to please God? Why not?*

(In other respects, as regards natural, external things which are subject to reason, man still has to a certain degree understanding, power, and ability, although very much weakened, all of which, however, has been so infected and contaminated by original sin that before God it is of no use.)

4. The punishment and penalty of original sin, which God has imposed upon the children of Adam and upon original sin, are death, eternal damnation, and also other bodily and spiritual, temporal and eternal miseries, and the tyranny and dominion of the devil, so that human nature is subject to the kingdom of the devil and has been surrendered to the power of the devil, and is held captive under his sway, who stupefies and leads astray many a great, learned man in the world by means of dreadful error, heresy, and other blindness, and otherwise rushes men into all sorts of crime.

See Romans 6:23. *What are the wages that we deserve because of our sinful*

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nature?

See Colossians 1:13. *What kingdom are we born into? (See John 8:34 and 8:44 for more on this.)*

5. This hereditary evil is so great and horrible that only for the sake of the Lord Christ it can be covered and forgiven before God in the baptized and believing. Moreover, human nature, which is perverted and corrupted thereby, must and can be healed only by the regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost, which, however, is only begun in this life, but will not be perfect until in the life to come.

See 1 Corinthians 15:57. *Who gives the victory over sin? When and how does He give it?*

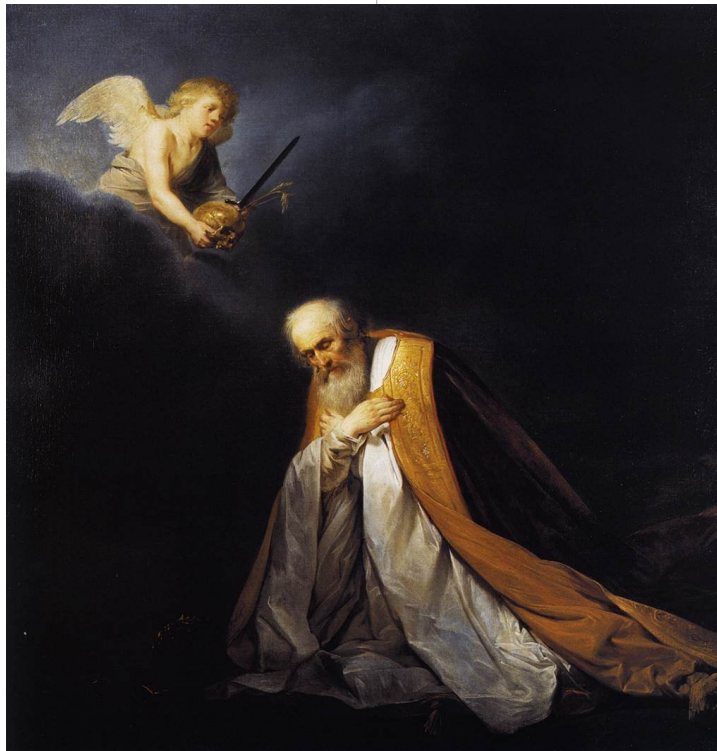
Closing Hymn: All Mankind Fell in Adam's Fall

1. All mankind fell in Adam's fall,
One common sin infects them all;
From sire to son the bane descends,
And over all the curse impends.

2. Through all man's powers corruption creeps
And him in dreadful bondage keeps;
In guilt he draws his infant breath
And reaps its fruits of woe and death.

3. From hearts depraved, to evil prone,
Flow thoughts and deeds of sin alone;
God's image lost, the darkened soul
Nor seeks nor finds its heavenly goal.

4. But Christ, the second Adam, came
To bear our sin and woe and shame,
To be our Life, our Light, our Way,
Our only Hope, our only Stay.



5. As by one man all mankind fell
And, born in sin, was doomed to hell,
So by one Man, who took our place,
We all received the gift of grace.

6. We thank Thee, Christ; new life is ours,
New light, new hope, new strength, new powers:
May grace our every way attend
Until we reach our journey's end! Amen!
—Lazarus Spengler, 1524 (TLH 369)

**The non-italicized portions of this study are excerpted (with slight amendments) from the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration I: 5-14. (Triglotta: The Lutheran Confessions, which is in the public domain. See www.bookofconcord.com for more.)*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller is pastor of Hope Lutheran Church in Aurora, CO (www.hope-aurora.org), editor of Around the Word, and co-host of Table Talk Radio.