



Around the Word
BIBLE STUDY
Summer 2016

Original Sin

Part 3: Sin, Redemption, Sanctification, & Resurrection

Martin Luther on Original Sin:

Whether we call original sin a quality or a disease, it is indeed the utmost evil, that we are not only to suffer the eternal wrath of God and eternal death, but that we do not even understand what we suffer. (Commentary on Psalm 90, LW 13:127–128)



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Introduction: There were false teachers in the history of the church that asserted “man is sin.” This is wrong and dangerous, but every false teaching is an opportunity for us to consider the truth and comfort of the Scriptures.

God cannot create sin. Our last study considered this important teaching. But neither does God redeem sin, sanctify sin, or resurrect sin. These three arguments are put forth below for our consideration.

The art of theology is the art of making careful distinctions. We have a tendency to treat the Scriptures and our theology much more loosely than our fathers in the faith. It is really wonderful to be led by these ancient teachers of the church into the careful and comforting distinctions about original sin.

Opening: Psalm 31:1–5

¹In you, O LORD, do I take refuge;
let me never be | put to shame;*
in your righteousness de- | liver me!

²**Incline your ear to me;
rescue me | speedily!***

Be a rock of refuge for me,
a strong fortress to | save me!

³For you are my rock and my | fortress;*
and for your name’s sake you lead me and |
guide me;

⁴**you take me out of the net they have hidden |
for me,*
for you are my | refuge.**

⁵Into your hand I commit my | spirit;*
you have redeemed me, O LORD, | faithful God.

**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.**

Sin and the Incarnation of Jesus

In the article of Redemption the Scriptures testify forcibly that God’s Son assumed our human nature without sin, so that He was in all things, sin excepted, made like unto us, His brethren.

Read Hebrews 2:14. “Flesh and blood” is a common way the Scriptures speak of our human nature. How does this verse teach that Jesus was made like us?

(Since we are in the neighborhood, consider Hebrews 2:10 and 2:17 to reinforce the teaching that Jesus is made like us.)

All the old orthodox teachers have maintained that Christ, according to His assumed humanity, is of one essence with us, His brethren; for He has as-

sumed His human nature, which in all respects (sin alone excepted) is like our human nature in its essence and all essential attributes; and they have condemned the contrary doctrine as manifest heresy.

Here it is in the Latin, if you like that sort of thing: *Unde veteres dixerunt: Christum nobis, fratribus suis, consubstantialem esse secundum assumptam naturam, quia naturam, quae, excepto peccato, eiusdem generis, speciei et substantiae cum nostra est, assumpsit; et contrariam sententiam manifeste haereseos damnarunt.*

Regarding the sinlessness of Jesus, consider a few of these texts: Hebrews 4:15, 7:26, 9:14, 1 Peter 2:22, 1 John 3:5, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and John 8:46.

Now, if there were no distinction between the nature or essence of corrupt man and original sin, it must follow that Christ either did not assume our nature, because He did not assume sin, or that, because He assumed our nature, He also assumed sin; both of which ideas are contrary to the Scriptures. But inasmuch as the Son of God assumed **our nature**, and **not original sin**, it is clear from this fact that human nature, even since the Fall, and original sin, are not one and the same thing, but must be distinguished.

Sin and Sanctification

In the article of Sanctification Scripture testifies that God cleanses, washes, and sanctifies man from sin.

Read 1 John 1:7. Notice, for our study, the word “from”. With what does God us to cleanse us from our sins?

Read Matthew 1:21. What does the name "Jesus" mean? What does this tell us about who Jesus is? What does it tell us about the work that He came to do? Notice again the word "from" in this verse.

Sin, therefore, cannot be man himself. God receives man into grace for Christ's sake, but to sin He remains hostile to eternity.

Sin and the Resurrection

In the article of the Resurrection Scripture testifies that precisely the substance of this our flesh, but without sin, will rise again, and that in eternal life we shall have and retain precisely this soul, but without sin.

Read Job 19:23-27. According to verse 26, when will Job behold his Redeemer? According to verse 27, whose eyes will he use to see Him? How does this teach us the continuity of the body that dies and the body that is raised?

Consider also the empty tomb. If the Lord gave us a new body in the resurrection, then wouldn't Jesus' old body have remained in the tomb?

Read Philippians 3:20-21. How does our body go from "lowly" to "glorious"? Who does this? How does the word "transform" help us understand the continuity of our bodies now and our bodies in the resurrection?

1 Corinthians 15 is the definitive treatment of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. If you have time, consider reading it. Also visit www.whatdoesthismean.org/Bible-Studies for a 5-part study on this chapter.

Now, if there were no difference whatever between our corrupt body and soul and original sin, it would follow, contrary to this article of the Christian faith, either that this our flesh will not rise again at the last day, and that in eternal life we shall not have the present essence of our body and soul, but another substance (or another soul), because then we shall be without sin; or that at the last day sin also will rise again, and will be and remain in the elect in eternal life.

Conclusion, Theological and Practical

Hence it is clear that this doctrine (with all that depends upon it and follows from it) must be rejected, when it is asserted and taught that original sin is the nature, substance, essence, body, or soul itself of corrupt man, so that between our corrupt nature, substance, and essence and original sin there is no distinction whatever.

For the chief articles of our Christian faith forcibly and emphatically testify why a distinction should and must be maintained between

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man's nature or substance, which is corrupted by sin, and the sin, with which and by which man is corrupted.

In this study we've seen both what the old theologians argued (that there is a distinction between human nature and sin), but we've also seen how they argued. How did these theologians use the basic doctrines of the incarnation, sanctification, and the resurrection to fight against a false teaching in the church? How does this teach us to be better theologians?

How is the distinction between our human nature and sin help us to under the work that Jesus has done for us on the cross? (See Colossians 1:13-14)



Closing Hymn: Salvation unto Us Has Come (st. 4-6)

4. From sin our flesh could not abstain,
Sin held its sway unceasing;
The task was useless and in vain,
Our guilt was e'er increasing.
None can remove sin's poisoned dart
Or purify our guileful heart,
So deep is our corruption.

5. Yet as the Law must be fulfilled
Or we must die despairing,
Christ came and hath God's anger stilled,
Our human nature sharing.
He hath for us the Law obeyed
And thus the Father's vengeance stayed
Which over us impended.

6. Since Christ hath full atonement made
And brought to us salvation,
Each Christian therefore may be glad
And build on this foundation.
Thy grace alone, dear Lord, I plead,
Thy death is now my life indeed,
For Thou hast paid my ransom.

**The non-italicized portions of this study are excerpted (with slight amendments) from the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration I: 43-49. (Triglotta: The Lutheran Confessions, which is in the public domain. See www.bookofconcord.com for more.)*

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