



Wretched Man I Am

Introducing the struggle of the nature of man and sin.
by Don Hooton

Lesson 2 | Sin and the Fall | March 15, 2023

The subject of sin is seamlessly connected to the subject of the Bible story of redemption. And in this lesson we will look at the Bible's testimony at the introduction on sin into human history and its implicit ramifications that unfold the story of redemption.

Scripture and experience both teach us that sin is universal, and according to the Bible the explanation for this universality lies in the fact that we are all sons of Adam. These two points, the universality of sin, and the connection of Adam's sin with that of mankind in general, will call for consideration and clarification in future lessons. While most generally agree to the universality of sin, there have been different approaches to this connection between the sin of Adam and that of his descendants.

And one famous quote suggesting why we should continue in this study is:

- In the second article of the Augsburg Confession, Lutherans confess, *"It is also taught among us that since the fall of Adam all men who are born according to the course of nature are conceived and born in sin. That is, all men are full of evil lust and inclinations from their mothers' wombs and are unable by nature to have true fear of God and true faith in God. Moreover, this inborn sickness and hereditary sin is truly sin and condemns to the eternal wrath of God all those who are not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit"* (lutheranreformation.org).

Man has a sin problem. Our sins separate us from God (Isaiah 59:2) and we are told that our sins have caused the separation (Romans 3:23). There is not an accountable person living or who has ever lived (except our Lord), who can say that he has never sinned (1John 1:8). There are direct statements of Scripture that point to the universal sinfulness of man (1Kings 8:46; Psalm 143:2; Proverbs 20:9; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:1-12,19,20,23; Galatians 3:22; James 3:2; 1John 1:8,10). But is our sin inherited? Is it our heritage? Passages like Psalm 51:5, Job 14:4, and even John 3:6 seem to say that in human nature there is a *sinfulness*. In Ephesians 2:3, Paul says of the Ephesians that they "were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."

Scripture also teaches that all men are under condemnation and therefore need the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. In Romans 6:23 we read, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord". Death is a separation. When we die physically, our body is placed into the grave, but our spirit is separated from our dead body and goes back to God, who gave it (c.f. Ecclesiastes 12:7). In physical death, there is a separation between our body and our soul. In Romans 6:23, we saw that, "For the wages of sin is death". This is a spiritual death, which is a separation from God in eternity for those who are lost. Let's begin by considering these ideas from the Creation account where sin comes to Adam and Eve.

The story of this chapter is perhaps as sad a story (all things considered) as any we have in all the Bible. In the first chapters, God has created heaven and earth, and created its inhabitants and its head. But in the scene of the Garden, sin and misery begin with our first parents through the sin they commit and the resultant wrath and curses from God against them. And as Paul will reference in Romans 5:12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."



Wretched Man I Am

Introducing the struggle of the nature of man and sin.
by Don Hooton

Sin Entered the World. Let's review what happened in the chapter.

1. **The tempter was the devil**, in the shape and likeness of a serpent. The devil and Satan is the old serpent (Rev 12:9), a malignant spirit, by creation an angel of light and an immediate attendant upon God's throne, but by sin left his first state in rebellion against God's crown and dignity. Multitudes of the angels fell; but this that attacked our first parents was surely the prince of the devils, the ring-leader in the rebellion. The game therefore which Satan had to play was to draw our first parents to sin, and so to separate between them and their God. Thus the devil was, from the beginning, a murderer, and the great mischief-maker. The whole race of mankind had here, as it were, but one neck, and at that Satan struck. The adversary and enemy is that wicked one.
2. **The first person tempted was the woman** at a distance from her husband, but near the forbidden tree. It was the devil's subtlety, he took advantage by finding her near the forbidden tree, and probably gazing upon the fruit of it, only to satisfy her curiosity. Satan tempted Eve, that he might tempt Adam through her. But Paul will say sin entered the world through Adam (Rom 5:12).
 - a. Could it be that Moses, by these two words, 'with her,' is informing us that Adam **was present throughout the entire event**, but never opened his mouth? If he were there, listening to every word and assenting by his silence, then it is little wonder that he simply took the fruit and ate it when it was offered by Eve.
 - b. If Adam was not present throughout the entire interaction between the serpent and his wife, *one can still conceive of how it may have happened*. Eve independently could have eaten the fruit and then hastened to tell her husband of her experience. But present or not, Adam's guilt is greatest because he agreed to do what he had been told personally by God he should not.
3. **The temptation itself.** Paul warns about Satan's devices, or subtleties (2Cor 2:11), his secrets (Rev 2:24), or his schemes (Eph 6:11). When he tempted the first Adam, he succeeded; When he tempted the second, he failed. Observe,
 - a. **It was her weakness to enter into discourse with the serpent.** See Prov. 14:7; 19:27.
 - b. **It was her wisdom to know what God had granted them** (3:2-3). This would have been instruction she would have learned from her husband (2:15-16).
 - c. **It shows her resolve:** God has said "do not" (3:3).
 - d. It shows the devil's method:
 - i. **He denies that there was any danger in it**, insisting, so the word is, in direct contradiction to what God had said.
 - ii. **He denies the certainty of believing it.** (3:4). Satan teaches men first to doubt and then to deny; he makes them sceptics first, and so by degrees makes them atheists.
 - iii. **He promises them advantage by it** (3:5). He insinuates great improvements they would make by eating of this fruit. These were the baits with which he covered his hook.
 1. "Your eyes shall be opened..."
 2. "You shall be as gods..."
 3. "You shall know good and evil..."
 - iv. **He insinuates God had no good planned for them.**

The steps of the transgression.

1. **She saw.** She should have turned away her eyes at the suggestion (Prov. 23:31; Mt. 5:28, c.f. 1John 2:16).



Wretched Man I Am

Introducing the struggle of the nature of man and sin.
by Don Hooton

2. **She took.** It was her own act and deed. The devil did not take it, and put it into her mouth. Satan may tempt, but he cannot force.
3. **She ate.** Perhaps she did not intend, when she looked, to take, nor, when she took, to eat; but this was the result.
4. **She also gave some to her husband.** She gave it to him, presumably persuading him with the same arguments that the serpent had used with her that he too should have known were false since God spoke the command directly to him; Yet,...
5. **He ate.** It is worthless to wonder what would have been the consequence if only Eve had sinned. That is not the way it went.

The consequences of the transgression.

1. **Shame that leads to fear.**
 - a. Shame seized them when their “eyes were opened.” Sin came in at them. The eyes of their consciences were opened. They saw the good they had fallen from, and the misery they had fallen into. the text tells us that they saw that they were naked, that is,
 - b. The nakedness which Adam and Eve shared without guilt was now a source of shame. Sweet innocence was lost forever. Remember, **there was in the garden only two of them. But they were ashamed to face each other without clothing. Not only could they not face each other as they had before, but they dreaded facing God.** When He came to have sweet fellowship with them, they hid themselves in fear..
 - c. That the excuses men make to cover their sins. Like the aprons of fig-leaves, they make the matter never the better, but the worse; the shame, thus hidden, becomes the more shameful, c.f. Job 31:33.
2. **Separation that leads to death.**
 - a. God had said that they would die in the day that they ate the forbidden fruit. Some have puzzled over this promise of judgment. While the process of physical death began on that fateful day, they did not die physically. Remember, spiritual death is separation from God:
 - b. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2Thessalonians 1:9).

And further consequences (3:14-ff)

1. **The Serpent** | The devil is first addressed and his punishment established.
 - a. First of all, a personal animosity between Eve and the serpent: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman” (15).
 - b. But this opposition will broaden: “And between your seed and her seed” (15). Here, I believe God refers to the battle of the millennia between people following God and people following the devil (cf. John 8:44ff).
 - c. But this opposition will end with the seed of Eve: “He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel” (15). In this confrontation Satan will be mortally wounded while the Messiah will receive a painful, but not fatal wound. (c.f. Rom 5:14-17; 16:20).
2. **The Woman** | It is a Divine Irony that since Satan attacked humanity through the woman that would be the mother of them all – would also be the means through which God would bring about humanity’s salvation and Satan’s destruction. This has already been revealed to Satan in verse 15. Every child born to woman must have troubled Satan.



Wretched Man I Am

Introducing the struggle of the nature of man and sin.
by Don Hooton

- a. While salvation would come through the birth of a child, **it would not be a painless process.** Woman's sentence comes at the center of her existence. It deals with the bearing of her children. But in the midst of her labor pains she could know that God's purpose for her was being realized, and that, perhaps, the Messiah would be born through her.
 - b. In addition to labor pains, the woman's relationship to her husband was prescribed. Adam should have led and Eve should have followed. But such was not the case. Therefore, from this time on women were to struggle against the leadership of men: "Yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (verse 16).
 - i. First of all, it is one which is for all women, not just Eve. Just as all women must share in the pains of childbirth, so they must be subject to the authority of their husbands. This does not in any way imply inferiority.
 - ii. For those who refuse to submit to the biblical teaching concerning the role of women in the church—that women must not lead or teach men, and not even speak publicly (1Cor 14:33b-36; 1Tim 2:9-15)—let me say this. The role of women in the church and in marriage is not restricted to Paul's teaching, nor is it to be viewed as only related to the immoral context of Corinth. It is a biblical doctrine, which has its origin in the third chapter of Genesis. That is why Paul wrote, "Let the women keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says" (I Corinthians 14:34).
 - iii. To those men and women who wish to disregard God's instruction I must say, that is precisely what Satan desires. For the men, I hasten to add that this verse (and the biblical teaching on the role of women) is no proof text for male superiority or for some kind of dictatorship in marriage. We are to lead by love. Our leadership is to be at our own personal sacrifice, seeking what is best for our wife (Eph 5:25ff). Biblical leadership is that patterned after our Lord (cf. Phil 2:1-8).
3. **The Man (17-20)**
- a. Just as Eve's punishment related to the center of her life, so is the case with Adam. He had been placed in the garden, now he will have to earn a living from the ground "by the sweat of his brow" (17-19).
 - b. You will notice that while the serpent is cursed, it is only the ground which is cursed here, and not Adam or Eve. *God cursed Satan because He does not intend to rehabilitate or redeem him. But already the purpose of God to save men has been revealed* (15).
 - c. Not only will Adam have to battle the ground to earn a living, he will eventually return to dust. Spiritual death has already occurred (cf. verses 7-8). Physical death has begun. Apart from the life which God gives, man will simply (though slowly) return to his original state—dust (cf. 2:7).

God had promised salvation (3:22-24) through the seed of Woman (i.e. the Messiah) who would destroy Satan. Adam and Eve had chosen knowledge over life. Now, it would seem that had Adam and Eve eaten of the tree of life they would have lived forever (22). This is the reason God sent them out of the garden (23). In verse 24 the 'sending out' of the two is more dramatically called 'driving out.' Stationed at the entrance of the garden are the cherubim and the flaming sword. God was merciful and gracious in putting Adam and Eve out of the garden. He kept them from eternal punishment. Their salvation would not come in a moment, but in time, not easily, but through pain—but it would come. They must trust Him to accomplish it.