

THE FALL OF MANKIND

A Biblical Commentary On
1 Corinthians 15:21-22 & Romans 5:12-21



JESSE MORRELL

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& *Romans 5:12-21*

By Jesse Morrell

This booklet is dedicated to the legendary monk Pelagius (360-420); to the great revivalist and theologian Charles Finney (1792-1875); and to the brilliant scholar and teacher Gordon C. Olson (1907-1989). These men, who have gone to be with the Lord, have influenced and inspired me through their great writings to search out and study the sound doctrines of the bible and to be satisfied with nothing less than an entirely biblical theology!

“... give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

1 Tim. 4:13

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

2 Tim. 2:15

“But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.”

Titus 2:1

PHYSICAL DEATH & PHYSICAL LIFE

Physical death in Adam and physical life through Christ

1 Cor. 15:21-22 “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Adam brought physical death upon all of his posterity when he was removed from the Garden of Eden where the tree of life was. Man needed to eat from the tree of life to live, which is why the tree was in the garden in the first place. But without it, the body was subjected to death, and would inevitably die. So, when Adam was removed from the garden on account of his sin, all those who were seminally in his loins (so to speak) were removed as well.

“And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” (Gen. 3:22-24)

So, infant children, who are morally “innocent” (2 Kgs. 21:16; 24:4; Joel 3:19) and have not yet “done anything” morally “good or evil” (Rom. 9:11), are subjected to physical death as a consequence of Adam’s sin since they are born outside of the Garden of Eden. This physical depravity upon all men is a direct result of Adams sin. But since infant children have neither guilt (because they are innocent) nor any sin (they have committed none), infant children do not go to Hell but to Heaven if they die in infancy (2 Sam. 12:23; Matt. 19:14), since they have no sin to be punished for.

But now through Christ, we have a physical resurrection (Jn. 11:25, Acts 4:2, 1 Cor. 15:21), a glorified body (1 Cor. 15:42-45, 52-55), and access to the tree of life (Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14) and to the water of life (Rev. 22:17).

We inherit a body from Adam that is subjected to death (2 Cor. 1:9), but we will receive a body from Christ which is not, as it is a body capable of living forever. Adam brought physical death, and Christ has brought the physical resurrection. Because of Adam, the tree of life was removed from all men, and all men, in consequence, are destined to die. But through Christ comes the resurrection and

access to the tree of life, and, in consequence, the righteous will have eternal life. Christ restores what Adam lost.

“...our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” 2 Tim. 1:10

SPIRITUAL DEATH & SPIRITUAL LIFE

Spiritual death through Adam and spiritual life through Christ

ROMANS 5:12

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin . . .”

Adam brought sin into the world by his own free will, and spiritual death comes by sin. Adam became dead in sin (morally depraved and separated from God) just as God said he would, the very day that he ate from the tree. Though Adam physically died many years later, on account of being removed from the garden that had the tree of life, Adam morally and spiritually died the same day he sinned against God.

“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Since God cannot fellowship with or dwell with sin, Adam spiritually died, that is, he became spiritually separated from God the day he sinned. “And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died” (Gen. 5:5); that is, Adam eventually physically died since he was removed from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24).

“ . . . and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

It is clear that the type of death spoken of here comes upon men for their own personal sin, “for all have sinned”. And their sin is distinct and different from the sin of Adam (vs. 14). Some infant children physically die during pregnancy though they are “innocent” (2 Kgs. 21:16; 24:4; Joel 3:19) and haven’t ever sinned (Rom. 9:11). Physical death is because of Adam’s sin, not individual personal sin. So the type of death which comes upon all men for their own personal sin is not physical death but spiritual death, which type of death this verse is addressing.

Spiritual death comes by sin, so all who choose to sin become spiritually dead. A moral fall causes spiritual death. Because God cannot have fellowship with those who are in sin, those who are in sin must be separated from God, and thus they are spiritually dead in

their sins. A state of spiritual deadness is a state of *relational separation* from God because of personal *moral disobedience*.

“For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died [morally and spiritually, since Paul was still physically alive]” Rom. 7:9

“But your iniquities [not Adam’s] have separated between you and your God [brought spiritual death], and your sins [not Adam’s] have hid His face from you [separation]” Isa. 59:2

“For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me [morally and spiritually killed me]” Rom. 7:11

“But sin... working [moral and spiritual] death in me...” Rom. 7:13

“For to be carnally minded is [moral and spiritual] death...” Rom. 8:6

“Christ...died for all, then all were dead [morally and spiritually].” 2 Cor. 5:14

“And you who were dead [morally and spiritually] in trespasses and sins.” Eph. 2:1, Eph. 2:5

“... alienated and enemies [relationally]... by wicked works” Col. 1:21

“And you, being dead [morally and spiritually, since they were still physically alive] in your sins [not Adam’s sin] . . .” Col. 2:13

“But she that lives in pleasure is dead [morally and spiritually] while she [physically] lives.” 1 Tim. 5:6

“...and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death [moral and spiritual]. Jas. 1:14-15

“...thou hast a name that thou liveth, and art dead [morally and spiritually].” Rev. 3:1

ROMANS 5:13

“(For until the law sin was in the world . . .”

The Law of Moses did not originate right and wrong. Rather, it declared right and wrong, since sin existed before the law was given. The law reveals what sin is, to point it out.

“Was then that which is good [the law] made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working [spiritual] death in

me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.” Rom. 7:13

“I had not known sin, but by the law . . .” Rom. 7:7

“ . . . but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”

Just as faith is imputed [accounted as] righteousness (Rom. 4:11), disobedience to the law is imputed [accounted as] sin. The Bible says, “to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin.” (Jas. 4:17)

And sinning against known law brings spiritual death. “For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died [spiritual and moral death].” (Rom. 7:9)

ROMANS 5:14

“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses . . .”

Sin is disobedience to light. Sin is rebellion against known law (Jas. 4:17, 1 Jn. 3:4). In between Adam and Moses was the time when the law was not yet written on stone tablets. Only the law of nature existed. Nevertheless, men were spiritually and morally dead in their sins because they violated the law of their own conscience; they did what they knew to be wrong.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has shown it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; . . . they glorified him not as God.” Rom. 1:18-21

“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.” Rom. 2:12-15

So, before the Law of Moses was given, spiritual death still

reigned, since the law of nature, the law of their conscience, was being violated.

“. . . even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.”

Spiritual death reigned from Adam to Moses unto all men who chose to sin, even if their sin was not in the likeness of Adam’s transgression. For Adam transgressed a commandment; but those in between Adam and Moses acted contrary to the law of nature.

God must be separated from all sin (Heb. 7:26; 1 Jn. 1:5; 3:5). Therefore, all sin must lead to spiritual death. “Greater sin” (Jn. 19:11), committed by those who have greater knowledge, or lesser sin, committed by those with lesser knowledge, must still separate a man from God. So those with “greater sin” or lesser sin are still dead in their sins. (*The relation of knowledge to the measure of guilt is discussed further on.*)

Those who transgress a commandment, like Adam did (“Adam’s transgression”), become dead in sin. And those who violate the law of nature, like the Gentiles did, become dead in sin. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, upon those who did not have the Ten Commandments, because they violated the law of nature.

“And God looked upon the earth and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.” Gen. 6:12

ROMANS 5:15

“But not as the offense, so also is the free gift.”

They are not similar in nature, value, design, or result. The former was from disobedience; the latter was from obedience. The former resulted in death; the latter resulted in life. Adam is contrasted with Christ, and their effects are polar opposites. One brought life and justification, while the other brought death and condemnation. The one was only a leading, influence, and example; the other brought a leading, influence, and example, but it also brought the power to forgive past sin, so it is “much more.”

“For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more through the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”

Adam’s disobedience brought sin into the world. Spiritual and moral death comes to those who choose to join in Adam’s

rebellion. So, many who are dead in their sins (“be dead”) are dead as a result of Adam’s leading into sin, example of sin, and lasting influence to sin. But now the gift of eternal spiritual life [knowing God (Jn. 17:3)] is offered through Christ to all those who are spiritually dead in their sins. But the offer of a gift must still be voluntarily received and accepted by the one to whom the gift is offered.

Those who choose or decide, by free will, to follow Adam are spiritually dead in their sins; that is, they are separated from God relationally (Isa. 59:2; Rom. 7:9, 13; Col. 2:13), without any righteousness (Rom. 6:20), and they will receive eternal death – the punishment of hellfire (2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 21:8). But those who choose or decide, by free will, to follow Christ will be spiritually alive; that is, they will be reconciled unto God relationally (Jn. 17:3; Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:21), without sin (Rom. 6:7, 11, 13; 8:10), and they will receive eternal life in the world to come (Mk. 10:30). Those who become spiritually and morally dead in their trespasses and sins (relationally dead to God) need to choose to be “born again” (Jn. 3:3) and therefore become morally, spiritually, or relationally “alive again” (Lk. 15:24).

“...He that...believeth...is passed from [moral and spiritual] death unto life [relationship].” Jn. 5:24

“...for this my son was dead [morally and spiritually] and is alive [relationship] again.” Lk. 15:24, Lk. 15:32

“Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead [moral and spiritual], and Christ shall give thee light.” Eph. 5:14

“...yield yourselves unto God, as those that are [relationally] alive from the dead [moral and spiritual].” Rom. 6:13

“And you, being [morally and spiritually] dead in your sins... hath he made [relationally] alive together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” Col. 2:13

“We know that we have passed from [moral and spiritual] death unto life [relationship].” 1 Jn. 3:14

ROMANS 5:16

“And not as it was by the one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of

many offences unto justification.”

Adam and Christ are once again contrasted; the effects of their works are different. The influence of Adam’s sin resulted in judgment unto condemnation, while the effect of Christ’s obedience resulted in a free gift unto justification.

Notice it does not say that the sin of one condemned them all, but that the sin of one led to the condemnation of them all. Because both condemnation and justification are conditional, neither is unconditionally universal. Condemnation is conditional upon a personal transgression, while justification is conditional upon a personal decision to accept the gift by repenting and believing. Men are condemned for their own personal sins (1 Cor. 6:9; Rev. 21:8), and reconciliation requires a personal choice (2 Cor. 5:20).

ROMANS 5:17

“For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”

Through the influence of one man’s disobedience, spiritual death reigned. How much more would grace and righteousness reign through Christ to those who would choose and decide to receive it.

ROMANS 5:18

“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation . . .”

The influence and effects of Adam’s sin led unto the condemnation of all men, upon all those who choose to sin by their own free will. The relation between Adam’s sin and men’s condemnation is that Adam’s sin provided the circumstances of men’s temptation and the occasion for men’s sins. The result of the influence of Adam’s offense brought judgment and condemnation to all men, since the result of his influence is that all have chosen to sin.

Consider just one of the effects of Adam’s sin. Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17), and all of his descendants inherit this knowledge called the conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). All men are accountable to the knowledge that they have, and all are judged according to that knowledge (Matt. 11:21-22; Jn. 9:41; 15:22; Jas. 4:17). So, judgment is according to knowledge, which leads to condemnation, when each man gives an account for

his own personal deeds.

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.” (Deut. 24:16)

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin.” (2 Kng. 14:6)

“The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.” (2 Chron. 25:4)

“What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge? As I live, says the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sins, it shall die.” (Eze. 18:2-4)

“Yet say ye, Why? does not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sins, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” (Eze. 18:19-20)

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his [not Adam’s] works.” (Matt. 16:27)

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he [not Adam] hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

“ . . . whose end shall be according to their [not Adam’s] works” (2 Cor. 11:15).

“ . . . The Father who . . . judges according to every man’s [personal] work.” (1 Pet. 1:17)

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his [not Adam’s] work shall be” (Rev. 22:12).

“ . . . even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon

all men unto justification of life.”

Through Christ’s obedience of shedding His blood (Php 2:8) as an alternative, replacement, or substitute for our punishment of “eternal destruction” (2 Thess. 1:9) or the “second death” (Rev. 21:8) which is the wages of sin (Rom. 6:23), the free gift of reconciliation can now be offered unto all men unto justification of life. Because Christ has shed His blood, our punishment of hellfire can be remitted or set aside (Heb. 9:22), our debt can be pardoned instead of paid (Matt. 6:12; 18:27; Lk. 7:42), and we can have an eternal relationship with God. When blood shed substitutes our penalty of hell, our sins can be forgiven instead of punished (Acts 5:31, Eph. 1:7, Col. 1:14), God’s wrath can pass over instead of being poured out (Ex. 12:13, 1 Cor. 5:7). Forgiveness of sin is when the penalty of sin is dispensed with (2 Chron. 32:26, Num. 16:46-48, Ps. 78:38, Micah. 7:18-19, Jonah 3:9-10). The blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins, so that our penalty can be let go or set aside (Matt. 26:28, Mk. 1:14, Lk. 1:77, Lk. 3:3, Lk. 24:47, Acts 2:38, Acts 10:43, Rom. 3:25). Because of Christ, God can remand our punishment instead of demand our punishment. Through Christ, men can be justified (that is, reckoned righteous and not have their past sins accounted against them (Rom. 4:6-9)), which is the same thing as saying they can be forgiven or pardoned, so they can enter into the spiritual life of knowing God (Jn. 17:3). When men, from their heart, turn from their sin and trust in Christ, God will set aside their punishment “for Christ’s sake” (Eph. 4:32).

ROMANS 5:19

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners . . .”

Through Adam’s leading, influence, and example, men have voluntary chosen to become sinners of their own free will. Adam has provided the circumstances of temptation and the occasions to sin through his leading, influence, and example, though each man is the cause of his own sin, and is therefore accountable for his sin, and for his sin only. Adam provided the occasion of sin while each man is the cause of his own sin.

One man can wrongly influence another man, who wrongly influences another man, who wrongly influences another man, who wrongly influences another man, and on and on it goes. But if we were to trace all of these influences back as far as we can go, we would terminate upon Adam, who started this chain reaction, in the

garden. So Adam has made many to sin by his leading, influence, and example.

It can also be argued that because of Adam's fall, all of his descendants inherit physical depravity which inclines them, influences them, and tempts them to sin, and in this way does Adam contribute to our choice to become sinners, though we ourselves voluntarily choose to obey those inclinations, influences, and temptations by our own free will.

Many Old Testament Kings "made Israel to sin" (1 Kng. 14:16; 15:26, 30, 34; 16:13, 26; 21:22; 22:52; 2 Kng. 3:3; 10:29, 31; 13:2; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28; 21:11, 16; 23:15); that is, through their leading, influence, and example they made Israel to sin. Foreign women caused King Solomon to sin (Neh. 13:26); that is, through their leading, influence, and example, Solomon decided to sin. By setting up high places of Baal, men caused Judah to sin (Jer. 32:35); that is, they sinned because of this leading, influence, and example. "My people have been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have gone astray" (Jer. 50:6) by their leading, influence, and example. Again, Israel had leaders who would "lead [them]" and "caused [them] to err" (Isa. 3:12) by their leading, influence, and example. Through a person's leading, influence, and example, a little child can be caused to sin (Matt. 18:6; Mk. 9:42; Lk. 17:2). The leading, influence, and example of a Christian can even cause a weaker brother to stumble (1 Cor. 8:9). And the bible says men could "fall" because of someone's "example of disobedience" (Heb. 4:11).

These are all cases in which someone can be "made" or "caused" to sin, or how man can "fall" into sin, through someone else's leading, influence, and example. Likewise, because of Adam's disobedience, "many were made sinners;" that is, through his leading, influence, and example, men voluntarily choose of their own free will to sin and to *become* sinners, and thus *become* spiritually dead (*relationally dead to God*) and rightly deserve eternal condemnation.

Men must take full responsibility for being sinners, "all have sinned..." (Rom. 3:23). Becoming a sinner, becoming spiritually dead, and receiving eternal condemnation, is all conditional upon our own free will choice to rebel, disobey, or sin; just as becoming a saint, becoming born again, receiving eternal life at last is conditional upon our own free will choice to repent of sin, believe the gospel, and ultimately to persevere in obedient faith to the end. Men are made sinful because of Adam when they choose to rebel and men are made

righteous because of Christ when they choose to convert. Condemnation and salvation are both conditional upon free will choices; neither condemnation nor salvation is universally automatic or unconditional.

“And God looked upon the earth and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had *corrupted his way* upon the earth.” Gen. 6:12

“...they have *corrupted themselves*” Exo. 32:7, Deut. 9:12, Deut. 32:5, Jdg. 2:19, Hos. 9:9

“The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are *all* gone aside, they are all together *become filthy*: there is none that doeth good, no not one.” Ps. 14:2-3

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned *everyone to his own way*...” Isa. 53:6

“God hath *made man upright*: but *they* have sought out many inventions.” Ecc. 7:29

“ . . . so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

Christ makes men righteous in their standing and in their doing. Those who are converted are accounted righteous by faith in His blood, and those who are converted are actually righteous by following His example. Christ brings pardon of previous sins and purification of present sins, forgiveness to the past and freedom to the present.

Being made righteous is conditional upon our choice to repent and believe, just as being made sinners is conditional upon our choice to rebel. Through Christ’s obedience in shedding His blood on the cross (Php. 2:8) we are given the possibility of being accounted righteous (forgiven) through faith. We can be forgiven (accounted righteous) upon condition of faith in His blood.

God considers faith as righteousness, “...his faith is counted [imputed] for righteousness” (Rom. 4:5) “And therefore it [faith] was imputed [counted] to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed [counted] to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed [accounted], if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for [on behalf of] our offenses, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:22-25).

“Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted [imputed] to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed” (Gal. 3:6-8).

And through Christ’s obedient life we are given an example to live righteous by following Him. Christ will “lead” us “in the way of righteousness” (Prov. 8:20). “For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (Jn. 13:15). “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). “For the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11-12). We are to follow the example of brethren who are followers of Christ’s example (1 Cor. 11:1; Php. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:9). We are to be “followers of God” (Eph. 5:1).

Being righteous is not only a standing but is also a moral character in relation to deeds: “Obedience unto righteousness” (Rom. 6:16). “Yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness” (Rom. 6:19). “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him” (1 Jn. 2:29). “Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous” (1 Jn. 3:7). “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God” (1 Jn. 3:10). This type of righteousness has to do with deeds just as unrighteousness has to do with deeds (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

The purpose of the atonement was to cleanse sinners from all their sin, to pardon their past and to purify their present (Titus 2:14; 1 Col. 1:22, Pet. 2:24). Both imputed righteousness (forgiveness) and imparted righteousness (repentance unto obedience) are by faith in Christ, and not by outward works (Acts 26:18; Rom. 3:28; 1 Jn. 3:3).

ROMANS 5:20

“Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.”

Again, the law does not originate right and wrong. Rather the law declares right and wrong. The purpose of the law was not to forgive sin, since present obedience cannot atone for past disobedience, but the purpose was to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, to plainly

and publicly declare what sin is, to point sin out.

“Was then that which is good [the law] made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.” (Rom. 7:13)

“I had not known sin, but by the law . . .” (Rom. 7:7)

“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

The greater amount of sin there is, the greater amount of forgiveness is needed for reconciliation. How great was God’s grace when He, “who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us” (Eph. 2:4), sent Jesus Christ, when “the whole world lies in wickedness” (1 Jn. 5:19).

It was God’s loving grace that sent Jesus Christ to die so that all men could have the opportunity of being saved (Jn. 3:16). It is God’s goodness that gives us the chance to repent (Rom. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:3-9; Rev. 2:21). But the grace of forgiveness is only given to those who repent of their sins (Lk. 13:3), who repent out of love for Jesus because of what He has done for us (1 Jn. 4:19). So grace is *offered* in Christ to those who are yet in their trespasses and sins (Romans 5:8), but God’s grace in Christ is only *granted* to those who turn from their trespasses and sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22), to those who forsake their sins by faith (Heb. 11:27).

The greatness of sin was shown by the law, so that the greatness of love on account of grace would be given. For how great is the love of the one who has been forgiven great trespasses, since the one forgiven much will love much (Lk. 7:41-43), and as Jesus said of one woman, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much” (Lk. 7:47).

ROMANS 5:21

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Sin was the channel through which moral and spiritual death came; now righteousness is the channel through which grace comes. The result of sin was evil, but the result of righteousness is good. Death came through sin, and now grace comes through righteousness, which is unto an eternal life (eternal relationship with God) by Jesus Christ.

IN SUMMARY

1. Children do not inherit the guilt or sin of the parent: Deut. 24:16, 2 Kng. 14:6, 2 Chron. 25:4, Eze. 18:2-4, Eze. 18:19-20
2. Sinners are separated from God for their own sin: Rom. 7:9, Col. 2:13, Isa. 59:2
3. Responsibility is limited to or exactly proportionate to ability: Deut. 6:5, Deut. 10:12, Deut. 30:6, Matt. 22:37, Mk. 12:30, Lk. 10:27, 1 Cor. 10:13
4. Accountability is limited to or exactly proportionate to knowledge: Matt. 11:21-22, Lk. 12:47-48, Lk. 23:34, Jn. 9:41, Jn. 15:22, Rom. 4:15, Rom. 5:13, Jas. 4:17, Jn. 19:11, Matt. 23:14, Mk.12:40, Lk. 20:47, Jas. 3:1, Matt. 10:15, Matt. 11:24, Mk. 6:11, Lk. 10:12, Lk. 10:14, Heb. 10:26, 2 Pet. 2:21
5. Through Adams leading, influence, and example men choose to become sinners: Rom. 5:12, Rom. 5:19
6. Someone's leading, influence, or example can cause others to choose to sin: 1 Kng. 14:16; 15:26, 30, 34; 16:13, 26; 21:22; 22:52; 2 Kng. 3:3; 10:29, 31; 13:2; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28; 21:11, 16; 23:15, Neh. 13:26, Jer. 32:35, Isa. 3:12, Matt. 18:6; Mk. 9:42; Lk. 17:2, 1 Cor. 8:9, Heb. 4:11
7. Sinners are accountable for their own sin alone: Deut. 24:16, 2 Kng. 14:6, 2 Chron. 25:4, Eze. 18:2-4, Eze. 18:19-20, Matt. 16:27, 2 Cor. 5:10, 2 Cor. 11:15, 1 Pet. 1:17, Rev. 22:12
8. Men are not *born* dead in sins, they *become* dead in sins [^{*}dead in sin^{*} means *morally* depraved and *relationally* separated from God] when they voluntarily choose to sin: Isa. 59:2, Rom. 5:12, Rom. 5:14, Rom. 7:9, Rom. 7:11, Col. 2:13. All men have voluntarily chosen to *become* sinners: Gen. 6:12, Ex. 32:7, Deut. 9:12, Deut. 32:5, Jdg. 2:19, Hos. 9:9, Ps. 14:2-3, Isa. 53:6, Ecc. 7:29 Rom. 3:23

REMARKS

1. It has been proposed by certain theologians of the Augustinian tradition that the freedom of the will to choose between good and evil was somehow lost when Adam sinned, and that men are born after the fall with only the “freedom” (so called) to sin. They argue that the freedom of the will is lost, but man’s moral obligation to choose good still remains, so man is a sinner for choosing to sin but is at the same time incapable of choosing otherwise.

This would make sin a defect of the constitution rather than an abuse of the power of choice; it would make sinners mere cripples rather than criminals. The Gnostics taught that sin was a necessity of nature, while the Early Church taught that sin was an abuse of freewill.

It should be noted, however, that the loss of free will was nowhere mentioned in the list of consequences and punishments for Adam’s sin (Gen. 3:14-19). In fact, God addressed Cain after the fall as one who had the power of choice (Gen. 4:6-7), and Cain inherited the same nature as his righteous brother Abel.

Many times after the fall God appeals to men to choose good over evil, and explicitly address them as those who have the power or freedom to do so (Josh. 24:15; Isa. 1:16-20; 55:6-7; Hos. 10:12; Eze. 18:30-32; Jer. 18:11; 26:13; Acts 2:40; 17:30; Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 7:1; 2 Tim. 2:21; Jas. 4:2, 8-10; 1 Pet. 1:22; Rev. 22:17). The freedom of the will, to choose disobedience or obedience, is a presupposition made throughout the entire Bible. So, no matter how strong the motive or temptation is, God never allows it to be above our ability, and He always makes a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13).

But even supposing that somehow Adam lost the freewill for all of mankind, if God still requires and desires obedience from man after the fall of Adam, if moral obligation still remains, if God is utterly against sin and absolutely wills nothing but goodness, why wouldn’t God give man the ability of freewill back? If God truly wants obedience from all men, wouldn’t God grant to man what is necessary for man to obey? If God does not grant man the genuine ability to obey, God must not genuinely want man to obey. But if God genuinely wants to be obeyed, then God grants man the ability to genuinely obey. If God wants man to voluntarily obey, God makes it possible for man to voluntarily obey.

2. Ps. 51:5 and Ps. 58:3 have been interpreted by the Augustinians to teach that infant children are sinful and are sinners, before they make any choices at all.

It should be noted that neither of those scriptures even mention Adam, Eve, the fall, or all of mankind at all. We should not read those points into the text when they aren't there. Connecting those scriptures to their doctrine of Adam's fall is entirely prejudicial inference. They are "connecting the dots" out of bias. Similarly they make the logical fallacy of "proving" a universal inheritance of original sin by pointing to universal sin, when that can be accounted for just as easily by universal temptation.

Ps. 51:5 (KJV) says that David's mother was in sin during the time of conception, and therefore he was conceived and born in sin, as opposed to sin being in him when he was conceived and born. This is a view certain orthodox Jews hold to. It also gives us more insight into why David might have been the embarrassment of the family when Samuel came around. (1Sam. 16:10-11)

Ps. 58:3 is a poetic psalm not to be taken in its literal sense, since it says that children start speaking lies from the womb. Obviously children cannot speak until some time after birth, so all this psalm is saying is that children learn to sin at an early age, and that the first sin that they commit is usually lying.

So, let it be remembered that infant children are morally innocent (2 Kng. 21:16; 24:4; Joel 3:19) and have not yet "done anything" morally "good or evil" (Rom. 9:11) until the age of accountability, which is the age of reason, when they know right from wrong (Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:15-16), and choose to do wrong (Jas. 4:17).

Men are sinners by choice and not by birth, so sinners are to be blamed and not pitied. Inward sin or indwelling sin is completely voluntary, and has to do with the voluntary condition of their inward intention or heart (Job 11:14; Matt. 23:26; Rom. 6:12).

3. Some have suggested that Christ was born of a virgin to avoid the reception of "original sin." To them, sin is some abstract entity which lodges itself behind a person's will, so that the will is necessitated to commit what they call "actual sin." They reason that since Christ did not commit any actual sins, Christ must not have any original sin inside of Him, and that must be because He was born of a virgin.

However, scripture nowhere states that the reason of His virgin birth was to avoid inheriting original sin. This again is

prejudicial conjecture, a “connecting the dots” out of bias. Rather, the bible says Christ was born of a virgin as a sign (Isa. 7:14), and simply because God was His Father. It was not because some sort of sin stuff was hereditary, in the blood or in any other inherited part.

The lusts of the flesh that we inherit are temptations (James 1:14) but they are not sin themselves. Eve herself was tempted by her flesh (Gen. 3:6). But these passions are not a sin or are sinful. Rather, these lusts tempt us to sin and tempt us to become sinful. (James 1:15) All sin is of the heart or of the will (Matt. 15:19) but temptation is of the flesh or lusts (Rom. 7:13, Jas. 1:14).

Scripture says that Christ was made human, partook of the same flesh and blood that we have (Heb. 2:14), and was made in all points like we are (Heb. 2:15). The same lusts that we inherit that tempt us to sin Christ Himself received and so He was tempted to sin. (Matt. 4:1-11) Christ received the same type of body as those who use their bodies for sin, yet Christ condemned using the body for sin by not sinning (Rom. 8:3). There is nothing sinful in and of itself in the human body, it is simply an “instrument” that can be used by free will (yielded) as an “instrument of righteousness” or as an “instrument of unrighteousness” (Rom. 6:13).

APPENDIX

SUPPORTING QUOTES

Supporting quotes that physical death came to all men because Adam was removed from the tree of life, and spiritual death comes to men who choose to join Adams rebellion:

PHYSICAL DEATH

“By means of our first parents, we were all brought into bondage by being made subject to death.” Irenaeus (c.180, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 271, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

“Here it is to be remarked that, with the fathers [Early Church Fathers before Augustine], as Erasmus has suggested, the expression to die or to die in Adam, is synonymous with being driven out of Paradise, because they who were driven out of Paradise, were no more allowed to eat of the fruit of the tree of life. At least this is the common meaning. For us to have died in Adam, is nothing else than what Methodius, in a fragment in Epiphanius (Haer. 64), thus expresses, “We were driven out of Paradise in the first father.” Dr Wiggers (Historical Presentation of Augustinianism and Pelagianism, pg 399-400)

“The tree of life that was doubtless endowed with a mysterious ability to sustain perfect bodily health, without the slightest decay or deterioration” Gordon Olson (Essentials of Salvation, pg.82)

“It was certainly grievous for God to drive out man from the beautiful garden and from “the tree of life,” which must have sustained perfect health (3:24).” Gordon Olson (Essentials of Salvation, pg 94)

“The ‘tree of life’ in the midst of the most pleasant garden where man was invited to dwell must be suggestive of something. I suggest that it may have been the means of keeping man’s physical body and soul in vigor and to prevent decay and death. This is suggested also in Ge 3:24, where man is prevented from taking of the tree of life after the fall. In vs 22, the reason is stated, ‘lest he...eat and live forever.’ Not, presumably, that if he had eaten one time from it, he would have lived forever, but lest he keep on eating from it and thus keep on living forever.” Gordon Olson (The Foreknowledge of God, pg 25)

SPIRITUAL DEATH

“We die by our own fault. Our free will has destroyed us.” Titian (c.160, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 286, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

“If, on the other hand, he would turn to the things of death, disobeying God, he would himself be the cause of death to himself. For

God made man free, and with power of himself." Theophilus (c.180, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 286, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

"By one man sin entered into the world.' It appears that 'death' is to be interpreted as primarily spiritual, in the sense of separation from God, with physical death as a secondary consequence because of being shut out from 'the tree of life.... Death passed upon all men in as much as all have sinned.' ... It is most interesting to note that the same verb and tense appear in 3:23, where we read: 'For all have sinned, and come short (or are coming short) of the glory of God.' Also, in 3:12 we have the same tense: 'All did turn aside from (the right way).' It appears that these verses declare the tragic fact that all mankind, without exception, have followed Adam's example in rebelling against God, with the sad consequence of spiritual death or eternal separation from God. This is what Isaiah had declared so long ago in the words: 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way' (53:6)... Adam's sin strongly influenced every member of the human race to follow in his footsteps and choose for himself a life of sinful indulgence." Gordon Olson (The Kindness of God our Savior, pg 58-59)

"Adam's sin put all men in the place of choosing sin. He fell first, damaged us all and set us up to follow his lead. But Jesus did not sin. His victory over sin and death put all men in the place of choosing righteously if they will respond to Him! As Adam's sin is the occasion (not cause) of a race's ruin, so Christ's obedience is the occasion, not cause of its redemption." Winkie Pratney (Adam or Me, pg 11)

"Romans 5:12-19 does not establish the dogma of the literal imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity, but merely affirms in a parallelism that just as Adam's sin was the occasion, not cause, of the voluntary disobedience of all men, so Christ is the occasion, not cause, of the salvation offered to all men. "Cause" is the reason for an action, "occasion" the opportunity or circumstance for an action. The whole of mankind are referred to on both sides of the parallelism.... Verse 12 simply makes the statement that "death did pass through unto all men because (or for the reason that) all did sin." The climactic action Greek aorist tense is used in both verbs, simply stating the fact that all men have committed sin and thus began to experience spiritual death... These verses simply narrate the tragic fact that all men have followed Adam's example and have chosen to live supremely selfish lives and thus are under guilt for their own sin." Gordon Olson (Truth Shall Set You Free, pg 84-85)

"To be sure Adam fell into a state of total alienation from the law of God, and lapsed into a state of supreme selfishness. His posterity

has unanimously followed his example. He and they have become dead in trespasses and sins." Charles Finney (Lectures on Theology, pg 324)

"The human race... from Adam had fallen under the power of death... Each one had committed personal transgression." Justin Martyr (c.160, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 271, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

"We lie under Adam's sin because of similarity of sin." Clement of Alexandria (c.195, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 272, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

"Christ suffered so that we who had forsaken God by following Adam might be reconciled to God through Christ." Pelagius (Commentary on the Romans, pg 92)

"For just as through one person's disobedience many were made sinners... Just as by the example of Adam's disobedience many sinned". Pelagius (Commentary on the Romans, pg 95)

"Pelagius affirmed that "death" in Romans 5:12 was spiritual or moral ruin, and rendered the last part in the sense that moral corruption has come to all, because all have sinned after Adam's example. He totally denied all Adamic imputation, and asserted that sin was entirely a matter of freewill" Gordon Olson (The Kindness of God our Savior, pg 56)

"In the noted passage, Rom. 5:12, he [Pelagius] took death, not with Augustine for bodily death, but for spiritual, or the moral ruin which came into the world by the example and imitation of Adam's sin. Sin, and moral death with sin, came into the world by Adam, for Adam gave the first example or form, as Pelagius expressed himself, of sin, which did not there exist before him. So moral corruption came upon all... because all sinned after the example of Adam. The phrase, in whom all have sinned, he explained thus, 'In as much as all have sinned, they sin by Adam's example.' See his commentary on Rom. 5. The sense of the whole passage, therefore, according to Pelagius, was the following. As by one man sin has come into the world, and moral ruin with sin, so moral corruption has come to all, because all have sinned after Adam's example. By the Pelagian explanation, therefore, there was no proof at all for the Augustinian original sin, in this passage; but it means only thus much, that by Adam, sin and moral corruption came into the world, because he sinned first. "By imitation," not "by propagation," have sin and its consequences come upon the human race." Dr Wiggers (Historical Presentation of Augustinianism and Pelagianism, pg 354)

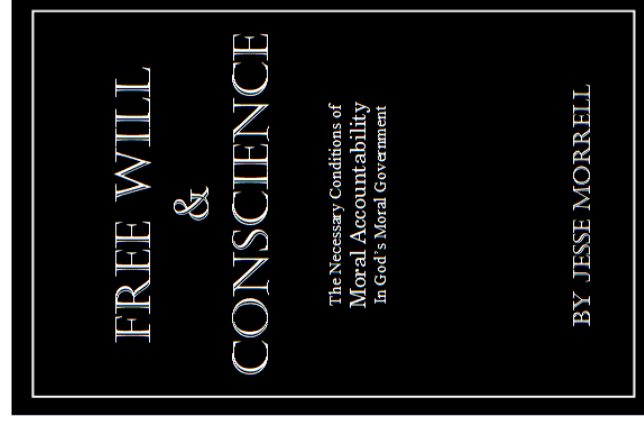
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