

The Damage

Sin, sorrow, and death unmistakably point to the human need for redemption. How did our sinful plight come about in the first place? And, what are the consequences of humanity's fall from our original state? Ironically, though Satan seems to have foiled God's purpose to have humanity devoted to and rejoicing in His presence; God mysteriously works an all encompassing plan that uses Satan's foul, murderous scheme to bring about God's marvelous, eternal redemption.

But, our task in this module is to rightly assess the cause and extent of damage due to sin.

Origin of Sin: Where did it all begin?

1. First of all, God cannot be the author of human sin.

Why does God allow evil? The origin of evil has eluded theologians of all ages. One thing is certain: the God of Scripture, in His most holy nature, does not take part in evil nor can He be attributed to be its source. Still, the All-knowing All-powerful only Wise God would have known of evil's reality and its potential influence. God may _____ His beloved children at times (Gen: 22:1), but He does not _____ them to sin. We are the ones responsible for our sin.

"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone." (James 1:13)

2. Evil was present in the angelic realm.

Evil was already active at the time when God enjoyed intimate fellowship with Adam and Eve in the Garden setting. At that time, its devious influence manifested through the agency of a cunning serpent. ***"Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made."*** (Gen. 3:1) We are only left to imagine how a portion of the angelic realm could choose to disobey the holy dictates of God. Scripture informs us that evil manifests in a personified being called _____, the _____, the _____, also named the _____ of _____. We read of him in the final book of the Bible, as one thrown down to earth together with his horde of angels and for a time permitted to persecute God's people (Rev. 12:7-13). **Couldn't we then blame Satan for our fall from right relationship to God?**

3. Transgression of Adam and Eve in the Garden

We read in Genesis that the serpent was used to effect Satan's temptation of God's supreme creation in Adam. Again we are only left in mystery of how a perfectly moral human creature could choose to disobey the holy dictates of God. With just one twisted proposal, the evil one broke a relationship that was meant to be eternally full of bliss. With one simple lie he tempted man to defy the revealed will of God. With one foolish act to taste and see, humanity in Adam and Eve was plunged into sin, once and for all damaged; and human history was forever changed.

The Character & Transmission of Sin: How greatly is the human race affected by sin?

1. All are polluted in Adam – the "Representative Head"

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12) ***through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men"*** (Romans 5:18a). Not all evil is sin, for sin is a specific kind of moral evil having to do with the ethical sphere of life.

Natural human righteousness was lost in the fall. Adam's _____ was in a very real sense since our _____. Appointed as representative of humanity, our 'federal head', he gave up our privileged position to right relationship, choosing to distrust and disobey God's command. Now through _____, all humanity inherits both the _____ and _____ of Adam's sin. Because of being 'in Adam', we therefore partake fully in Adam and Eve's act of defiant rebellion.

2. Sin's pollution touched every aspect of human life – what theologians call "Total Depravity"

Sin, by definition, flows from our rebellion, defiance and disobedience to God's will. But how sinful is our sin? Total depravity does not mean that humans are as sinful as sin can be. Rather, it testifies to the fact that all the faculties of

humankind have been tainted by sin's influence. Our sin nature spreads out from the core of our soul to the _____, the _____ and the _____. Even the best of human acts or human goodness that may be done are corrupted by sin. ***"In the intellect it revealed itself as unbelief and pride, in the will as the desire to be like God, and in the affections, as an unholy satisfaction in eating of the forbidden fruit."*** (L. Berkhof)

3. Sin brought mankind into spiritual slavery, making us bond servants of sin – "Total Inability"

Sin now dictates the course of who we are. That is why Jesus claimed, ***"... Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin."*** (John 8:34). Adam (and by imputation all of us in Adam) lost the moral ability to obey God – the power of self-determination in the path of holiness. Because of Adam's self-imposed, disobedient choice; now, out of a sinful nature, flow only sinful behaviors. Whether we _____ seek to do earthly good or evil to our fellow human beings, we are still _____ in sin. We have lost the moral ability to turn back to God or follow His law with a righteous heart. ***"As it is written, there is none righteous not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one. ... There is no fear of God in their eyes."*** (Romans 3:10-12, 18). The blunt reality remains that though humanity desperately needs redemption, we are totally unable to secure it for ourselves. The Old Testament describes this condition radically prior to the flood: ***"The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*** But even post flood, humanity reverted back to our natural condition again and again. (ie. Isaiah 5)

Sin's Punishment: What consequences come from our sinful condition?

1. Sin offends the very character of God

Our sin does _____ to the very nature of who God is. We have _____ an eternal, righteous, holy God. In the same measure, our offense becomes an eternal offense that demands a just punishment from a Holy God. God punishes sin both in this life as well as eternally in the life to come. ***"... it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,"*** (Heb. 9:27)

2. Humanity lives under the wrath of God

God's initial punishment took away the privilege of life in the Garden. The consequence was most severe, in that humanity was cast out from God's presence. Scripture teaches us that once dead in sin we walked according to the course of this world, each and every one of us under the _____ of God's _____. ***"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."*** (Ephesians 2:1-3). ***"... even we were dead in our transgressions ..."*** (Ephesians 2:5a).

Our task, to rightly assess the cause and extent of damage due to sin, has been brief. The damage is most severe, and the consequences too! Humanity urgently needs to be delivered from sin's bondage, but we are unable to secure it for ourselves. At our very human best, we still continue to live lives that deserve God's eternal punishment. That is why we desperately need a Savior, and why we are putting so much emphasis upon God's redeeming work.

3. The Father's purpose to punish sin in His Son on the cross

We will focus much more upon God's solution to our sin problem in weeks to come. Suffice it for now to say, that His solution comes to us as a gift, freely given by grace, through faith in the unique death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. God promised to secure our salvation so that we may be delivered from the bondage of sin. That is why Jesus Christ was offered as the perfect _____ and _____ for us. ***"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*** (2 Cor. 5:21) God's gracious redeeming work alone purchases us for eternity, ***"You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."*** (1 Cor. 6:20)

Study questions:

- How damaged (sinful) are human beings from birth?
Discuss together the significance of 'Total Depravity' and 'Total Inability'. Do you agree?
- Scripture proclaims salvation solely through Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. After today's study, are you once again persuaded that humanity needs redemption?