

# **Arlington Church of Christ**

**Wednesday Night**

**Bible Study**

# Following the Scriptural Trail



# Follow the Scriptural Trail

## Original Sin

**The idea of ‘original sin’ is the teaching that all humans have inherited either the guilt of or a tendency to sin from Adam as a consequence of the Fall in the garden of Eden.**

Those who adhere to this belief today point to three main scripture sources – **Gen 3 (the expulsion of man from the garden), Ps 51:5 of David, and Romans 5:12-21.**

This was not a Jewish concept. **Early Christianity had no specific doctrine of original sin before the fourth century.** It seems to have developed in the writings of 'leaders' in the centuries after the New Testament was completed. While writers in the late first and early second century all stated that children were born without sin, it was Clement of Alexandria in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century who first came up with the idea.

Tertullian (early 200's AD) promoted 'original sin' as a way to explain the origin of the soul. The teaching was that each individual's soul was derived from the souls of their parents, and since everyone is ultimately a descendent of Adam and because Adam sinned, everyone's soul is sinful.

Cyprian (230 AD) believed that individuals were born guilty of sin because they 'inherited' Adam's sin and therefore he promoted the idea of infant baptism. It must also be noted that this belief in 'original sin' and inherited guilt was promoted only in Western Catholic Christianity, not in the Eastern churches.

**The doctrine of original sin became an official part of Western Roman Catholic Church doctrine in 411 AD at the Council of Carthage.**

It stated these three points:

- One man has transmitted to the whole human race not only the death of the body, which is the punishment for sin, but even sin itself which is the death of the soul. **(We inherit the guilt of the sin of Adam)**
- Baptism erases original sin, but the inclination to sin remains.
- The absence of sanctifying grace in the new-born child is an effect of the first sin. For Adam, having received holiness and justice from God, lost it not only for himself but for all humanity. Baptism confers the original sanctifying grace, lost through Adam's sin, thus eliminating original sin and personal sin. **(So babies must be baptized to remove the guilt of the inherited sin of Adam)**

**So what does the Bible actually say? Are we 'born sinners' because we inherited the guilt of the sin of Adam? Do babies have sin that must be removed by baptism?**

**Let's look at the three scriptures cited as 'proof' of this teaching and see what the Bible says in relation to them.**

## Genesis 3:1-13

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”<sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,<sup>3</sup> but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

<sup>4</sup> “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup> “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

<sup>6</sup> **When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.**

<sup>8</sup> Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.



But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

<sup>10</sup> He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” <sup>11</sup> And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” <sup>12</sup> **The man said, “The woman you put here with me— she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”**

<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, **“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”**

Genesis 3:17-19

To Adam he said, **“Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’** “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> **By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”**

Genesis 2:17

but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”



Literally – dying, you will begin to die

Two ‘dyings’ – **spiritual death – separation from God**

-Physical death – began at that time, aging began, creation itself begins to run down

(Rom 8:20-21)

## Genesis 3:21-24

The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. <sup>22</sup> And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live (physically) forever.” <sup>23</sup> **So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.** <sup>24</sup> **After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.**

**(separation from the presence of God)**

Peter speaking of Paul says:

## **2 Peter 3:16-17**

**He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.**

**<sup>17</sup> Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position.**

Romans 5:12-21

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and **(spiritual)** death through sin, and in this way death **(spiritual)** came to all people, because all sinned—

<sup>13</sup> To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law.

Sin is what separates us from God. Adam's sin separated him from God, **but it is our own sins that separate us from God.**

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Romans 5:14-15

**14 Nevertheless, death (physical) reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.**

**15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died (physically) by the trespass of the one man,** how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

**When Adam sinned , he began to age and die physically. We being his descendants 'inherited' his mortality and so we also age and die as a result of simply being human (the descendants of Adam).**

<sup>16</sup> Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. <sup>17</sup> For if, by the trespass of the one man, death **(physical)** reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life **(spiritual life)** through the one man, Jesus Christ!

<sup>18</sup> Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation **(physical death and decay)** for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and **(spiritual)** life for all people. <sup>19</sup> For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners **(one man brought sin into the world )** , so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. **(one man, Jesus , brought spiritual life)**

<sup>20</sup> The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, <sup>21</sup> so that, just as sin reigned in **(physical)** death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life **(spiritual)** through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When Adam sinned, he died spiritually (was separated from God) and also began to die physically. What we inherit from Adam is the fact that we, as his descendants, die physically.

**It is our own sin that causes us to be lost spiritually – not Adam's sin.** We cannot blame him for our failures – we bear that responsibility ourselves.

**And while we must deal with physical death because of Adam's sin – we can escape the second death (spiritual death) because of the sacrifice of Jesus to take away our sins.**



Ezekiel 18:4

For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. **The one who sins is the one who will die.** (spiritually)

**2 Corinthians 5:10**

**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.** (amount of eternal rewards or punishments)

Ezek 18: 10 “Suppose a man has a violent son, who sheds blood or does any of these other things <sup>11</sup> (though the father has done none of them):  
.....Will such a man live? He will not! Because he has done all these detestable things, he is to be put to death; his blood will be on his own head.

<sup>14</sup> “But suppose this son has a son who sees all the sins his father commits, and though he sees them, he does not do such things:.....  
He will not die for his father’s sin; he will surely live. <sup>18</sup> But his father will die for his own sin, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother and did what was wrong among his people.

<sup>19</sup> “Yet you ask, ‘Why does the son not share the guilt of his father?’  
Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live. <sup>20</sup> The one who sins is the one who will die. **The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child.** (We do not share the ‘guilt’ of Adam’s sin)

## **Psalm 51:5**

**Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.**

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**Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.**

Psalm 51:1-6 When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

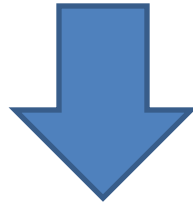
**<sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. <sup>4</sup> Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. <sup>5</sup> Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. <sup>6</sup> Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.**

**These are the words of a man plagued with guilt - not a theological argument for 'original inherited sin.'**

Matthew 18:10 “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

Matthew 18:3 And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 19:14 Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”



Revelation 21:27 Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

**Therefore little children cannot be sinful or ‘impure’.**

Romans 5:13

To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, **but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law.**

When a person does not know right from wrong – as a baby or a young child – God considers them sinless and clean. When we reach the age where we realize that we have sinned and violated God's law – then sin is imputed to us.

Romans 5:13

To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given, **but sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law.**

Jonah 4:11

And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which **there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left**—and also many animals?”

**When a person does not know right from wrong – as a baby or a young child – God considers them sinless and clean. When we reach the age where we realize that we have sinned and violated God's law – then sin is imputed to us.**

Mark 16:16

**Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**

**Baptism comes after belief – not before**

Acts 2:38

**Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

**Baptism comes after repentance – not before**

**Babies cannot believe in Jesus, nor can they repent – so they do not fit the requirements for Biblical baptism. There is also no mention of anything like ‘confirmation of baptism’ in the scriptures.**