

# CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL

## INTRODUCTION

We continue our study of Chapter 6 of *Biblical Doctrine* which covers both *Man and Sin*.

We have been looking at **THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL**. Last time we covered the *personal consequences* of sin which include shame, guilt, and blame. We also addressed the impact sin has on relationships such as with God, with all human relationships, and our relationship to creation.

Tonight, we want to focus on three other *results or consequences* of sin:

1. Personal Consequences
2. The Fall's Impact on Relationships
- 3. Three Forms of Death**
- 4. Transmission of Adam's Sin**
- 5. Old Self and New Self**
6. Total Depravity

## CONTENT

### CONSEQUENCES OF THE FALL

What we are seeing is the *condition* of man immediately after Adam's fall.

#### THREE FORMS OF DEATH

The widespread and devastating results of sin can be summarized in one word—death.<sup>1</sup> You might recall the words from God to Adam in **Gen. 2:7** –

**17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat from it; for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”**

Death is the consequence for sin. Man is faced with this reality. The result of the fall was that now it was not possible for man not to die. Now he must die. *But in what way?*

#### SPIRITUAL DEATH

Though Adam and Eve did not die *immediately* after having sinned (Adam lived to be 930 years of age according to Gen. 5:5), they did *instantly* die spiritually.

Spiritual death refers to the state of spiritual alienation from God. This happened at once. Man immediately came under condemnation and was punished by God. Before, man had only known blessing. Never had he known cursing.

Spiritually, man immediately fell from his original righteousness. There was not a second's delay. The moment he sinned, he lost that uprightness. He was at that moment separated from God.

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 460.

Paul explains this in **Eph. 2:1** –

<sup>1</sup> And you were dead in your transgressions and [your] sins,  
Καὶ ὑμεῖς ὄντας νεκροὺς τοῖς παραπτώμασιν  
καὶ ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ὑμῶν<sup>2</sup>

“And *you*” – plural, though it is very emphatic and very personal

“were dead” – “being dead” is the better translation which shows the state or condition before God took action. The present participle of the verb “to be” (“you were”) shows mans ongoing condition as dead before the main verbs found in **vv. 5-6** –

<sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, **made us alive**  
together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—  
<sup>6</sup> **and raised us** up with Him, **and seated us** with Him in the  
heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

“dead” – this describes their spiritual and physical condition. You might recall that the prodigal son was considered dead or lost from home, but when he returned home he was reckoned as alive and found (Luke 15:24, 32).

Being spiritually dead, they cannot communicate with the eternal living God, and thus are separeated from God. They are lost and need to be found. They are dead and need to be made alive.

The only one who can make them *alive*, make them *found* is God.

Notice **vv. 4-5** –

<sup>4</sup> **But God**, being rich in mercy because of His great love with  
which He loved us,  
<sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive  
together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

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<sup>2</sup> Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition (with Morphology)*  
(Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993; 2006), Eph 2:1.

Adam and Eve both *immediately* experienced this separation from God. This was well before the words in **Gen. 3:23-24** –

<sup>23</sup> therefore **Yahweh God sent him out** from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.

<sup>24</sup> So **He drove the man out**; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

They were banished from His presence, but that separation had already occurred on the inside.

Catch this: all their descendants were to experience this same spiritual death. Only God could regenerate the spiritual dead.

## PHYSICAL DEATH

The process of physical death started when Adam and Eve sinned.

You may recall what God told Adam in **Gen. 3:19** –

<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, **Till you return to the ground**, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And **to dust you shall return.**”

They were driven out from the garden. There was no way for them to access the tree of life and thereby eat and live forever.

What I want you to realize is that physical death followed *slowly*. Man did not die at once. He did not cease to be man. He did not lose any of his essential qualities or attributes. He still had his intellect, his understanding, his will.

There was a decline and degradation that followed. The first human death occurred at the hand of Cain who rose up and killed his brother.

Then in Genesis 5 we read that Adam lived 930 years, “and he died.”

- Seth lived 912 years, “and he died.”
- Enosh lived 905 years, “and he died.”
- Kenan lived 910 years, “and he died.”
- Mahalalel lived 895 years, “and he died.”
- Jared lived 962 years, “and he died.”
- Enoch lived 365 years, “and he was not, for God took him” (v. 24).

It is the writer of Hebrews who declares in **Heb. 9:27** –

<sup>27</sup> And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once  
and after this *comes* judgment,

You don’t have nine lives, you have one. Then comes judgment. Believers in “*judgement seat of Christ*” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:10) and “*the great white throne judgment*” (cf. Rev. 20:11-15).

## ETERNAL DEATH

Eternal death awaits those who physically die while being spiritually dead. As just referenced, those who die in unbelief will face “*the lake of fire*” forever (cf. Rev. 20:11-15).

John refers to this as “the second death” (Rev. 20:6).

The reminder to us is that death is not a cessation of existence but a severance of life. The soul does not cease to exist.

Only God can deliver us from such a death.

The question then becomes:

*How does the first man’s sin affect all born after him?*

## TRANSMISSION OF ADAM'S SIN

Theologians call this discussion: original sin or in Latin, *peccatum originale*.

Strictly speaking, *original sin* is the state of alienation from God into which all humans are born.

Original righteousness (or original justice), in contrast, is the state of innocence in which Adam and Eve had before their fall into sin.

Thus, because they had not yet disobeyed God, the first humans were righteous (without sin) in God's sight.

Historically, original sin was connected to the discussion about the manner in which Adam's sin affects all humans.<sup>3</sup>

This explains why people are depraved and tainted with sin from conception. David addresses this in **Psalms 51:5** –

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
And in sin my mother conceived me.

Yet the most detailed passage that addresses this topic is in **Rom. 5:12-21**.

Turn there for a moment; I want to focus on **v. 12** –

<sup>12</sup> 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—

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<sup>3</sup> Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 87.

Here are four observations that help unpack this verse:

1. First, sin entered the world through “one man”—Adam.
2. Second, sin brought death.
3. Third, death spread to all people.
4. Fourth, the reason death spread to all people is “because all sinned.”

There is debate in that last observation: *What does Paul mean when he says that death spread to all people?*

Let me begin to answer that by looking at the text itself in **v. 12** –

because all **sinned**—

The verb at the very end of v. 12 is *an aorist tense*, translated “sinned.” It points to *a specific historical event*. *What historical event could this be pointing to?*

Look down at **Rom. 5:15** –

<sup>15</sup> But the gracious gift is not like the transgression. For if by **the transgression of the one the many died**, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

This points to Adam’s sin. **Notice vv. 18-19** –

<sup>18</sup> So then as through **one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men**, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

<sup>19</sup> For as through the **one man’s disobedience the many were appointed sinners**, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be appointed righteous.

What these verses show is that there is a connection between Adam’s sin and the sinfulness of Adam’s descendants.

Some have struggled to offer any explanation as to this connection. Hence the **unexplained solidarity** position.

Others explain the connection by simply explaining that when people sin, they follow Adam's bad example. Hence, the **bad example** position. People will come up the weirdest views to deny that man possesses a sin nature. This was ultimately viewed as heresy at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.

Others believe that man has received a corrupt and sinful nature from Adam, but refuse to believe that Adam's guilt is imputed or reckoned to his descendants. Hence, the **inherited sinful nature** position.

This view holds that no man is held responsible for what Adam did. Adam's guilt cannot be placed on others. Yet we just read, "*one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men*" (v. 18).

"Condemnation" (Gr. **κατάκριμα**) is a *legal* term. This is a "*judicial pronouncement upon a guilty person.*"<sup>4</sup> It is "*to judge someone as definitely guilty and thus subject to punishment.*"<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, all humans are constituted sinners by his action.

Another view says all people actually participated in Adam's sin. All humanity was physically present in Adam, in Adam's loins participating in his sin. So the connection is real. Hence, the **realism** position.

Yet there is a more acceptable position...

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<sup>4</sup> William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 518.

<sup>5</sup> Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 555.

## REPRESENTATIVE HEADSHIP

Adam's sin is imputed to all who were united to him as the representative of humanity; legal representative of humanity. Adam's guilt is our guilt.

The connection then is a *direct relationship to Adam as our head*.

Consider the following: If Adam had been obedient to God, his obedience would have meant blessing for all humans. But because Adam was disobedient, the curse extends to humankind.

Notice how Christ's obedience is imputed to others as their own righteousness in **Rom. 5:19** –

<sup>19</sup> For as through the one man's disobedience the many were appointed sinners, even so through **the obedience of the One the many will be appointed righteous.**

Justification and righteousness are imputed to the believer. In the same way the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to those he represented.

## C O N C L U S I O N

My beloved, Adam and Christ are both seen as representatives of humanity. The effects of their actions are placed on others.

They are the legal representatives for those who are reckoned to be in them.

Praise God if you are in Christ – every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places is yours in Christ (Eph. 2:3).

If you are in Adam and remain in your sin, judgment awaits.

Death has produced in me an awareness of the brevity and the uncertainty of life. But it also brings great opportunity for the Gospel.