

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The study of origins (of man, of languages, of the church belonging to Christ, etc.) is both interesting, instructive, intriguing, and hopefully invaluable to us.
2. A study of the origin of sin is no exception. As to its origin, we are concerned with when, where, why, how, and with whom.
3. Our study of the origin of sin divides itself logically and scripturally into three parts:
 - a. The original or pre-edenic (before Eden) origin of sin.
 - b. The origin of sin on this earth.
 - c. The origin of sin within the individual.

II. DISCUSSION

A. THE ORIGINAL OR PRE-EDEMIC ORIGIN OF SIN

Though sin began on earth in the garden of Eden (Gen.3:1ff); it is obvious that this is not the original beginning of sin and evil; for the very presence of Satan in Eden is proof of this fact.

Thus, in dealing with the original genesis of sin, we must deal with the origin of Satan. To do that, we must consider the following:

1. Though angels are spiritual beings who do not have fleshly bodies as do human beings; they are nevertheless created beings, as are human beings, not eternal beings.
 - a. Proof they are spirit beings, Heb.1:7,14; Psa.104:4; Heb.2:14,16; Lk.24:39.
 - b. Proof they are created beings, Psa.148:1-5.
 - c. Consider also that originally all angels were holy. But eventually, as the Bible declares, some angels fell from their first estate, Jude 6; 2Pet.2:4.
2. Other than God, who is eternal, all other beings, both spirit beings and human beings, are created beings.
3. Therefore, since Satan is neither God nor man, a human being, but a spirit being, he had to have been among created spirit beings, though he was not created as the evil being, Satan. Cf. Gen.1:31.
4. By necessary implication Satan was originally one of the holy angels in heaven, but one who sinned, became totally depraved, the chief of all evil angels (Mt.25:41), the prince of the power of the air (Eph.2:2), the god of this world (2Cor.4:4).
5. His original sinning resulting in his being cast out of heaven is spoken of:
 - a. In 1Tim.3:6 as “being lifted up with pride and falling into condemnation.”
 - b. In 1Jno.3:8, “for the devil sinneth from the beginning,” evidently meaning:
 - (1) “From the first account we have of him,” or
 - (2) “From the first sin which resulted in his becoming the devil,” or “the great dragon” who “was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole

world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him,” rev.12:9. Cf. Mt.25:41.

- c. Of necessity he and his fallen angels had to be cast out of heaven because God dwells in absolute holiness, Psa.47:8; Isa.63:15; Rev.21:27.
6. For emphasis, pride seems to have been Satan’s sin, 1Tim.3:6: “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”
 - a. To see the truth taught in this verse about “pride” and “the devil”, note this:
 - (1) The expression “the devil” in the original text is genitive of object, not subject or agent.
 - (2) That is, exercising condemning power is not in the devil’s jurisprudence; he can’t legally condemn anyone for anything.
 - (3) Furthermore, because of pride, the devil would commend rather than condemn.
 - b. Therefore, this text is saying that a novice is not to be appointed as an elder in the local church, or ordained into the eldership of the local church, lest he become proud, as the devil did, and fall as did the devil because of his pride. Cf. Prov.16:18.
 - c. Also, note that while Isa.14:12-15 does not have primary reference to Satan but to the king of Babylon; it, however, may have a secondary application to Satan.
 - d. Robert Milligan, with reference to Satan, his sin and fall, very adequately expressed it thusly: “But in an evil hour his eye was turned from his creator to himself as the highest, to most gifted, and the most influential of all creatures of God. His heart swelled with pride; ambition took possession of his soul; and, rebellion was then seen in heaven.”
7. What, then, is the eternal destiny of the devil and his angels? See Mt.25:41; Rev.19:20; 20:10; 2Pet.2:4; Jude6.
 - a. They are lost beyond redemption.
 - b. For Satan and those of like stripe (his angels) there is no scheme of redemption – no offer of salvation! They are totally depraved!

B. THE ORIGIN OF SIN ON THIS EARTH.

The word “genesis” means “the act or process of producing or originating; beginning.” The first book in the Bible is called Genesis for it reveals unto us beginnings (the beginning of the heavens, the earth, vegetation, animals, birds, fish, man [male and female], marriage, language and a whole list of other things.

1. In Gen.3 it reveals unto us the beginning of sin on this earth through Satan’s diabolical, deceptive tactics, Gen.3:1-6,13; Cf. 2Cor.11:1-3; Jno.8:44; 1Tim.2:14. See 2Cor.2:11; Eph.6:10,11,,16; 1Pet.5:8; Rev.12:9.
 - a. His phenomenal success rate in tempting people to sin, with so few failures, is due to the nature, skills, and progressiveness of his attack and the very deceptiveness of sin. (Heb.3:13).
 - b. First, notice his timely approach as in the case of Eve, where he seems to have approached her when she was alone and unsupported by his husband, as indicated by Vv.1-6.

- (1) Though he failed in his attempts, his approach in his temptation of Jesus was perfectly timed, Mt.4:1-11.
- c. Secondly, notice his deceptive, insinuating question asked of Eve in tempting her to sin, V.1: “And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”
 - (1) Observe, that, being as subtle as he was, he did not say, “There is no God!”
 - (2) Obviously, his approach was to generate doubt in the heart of Eve to get her to question whether or not God really meant what he said – to question what God had said to her.
 - (3) Satan knew then, as he knows not, that man’s genuine faith and trust in God’s word has to be undermined for him to have his way with man. Cf. Lk.8:11,12.
 - (4) He knows that faith in God’s word is a strong barrier to sin. Cf. Psa.119:11; Lk.8:15; 1Jno.3:6-9.
 - (5) He succeeded in getting Peter to doubt and Peter began to sink. See Mt.14:29-31.
- d. Thirdly, the devil blatantly and presumptuously lied to her, Gen.3:4: “...ye shall not surely die.” Cf. Jno.8:44; Ac.5:3; Jno.13:2,27; Lk.22:47,48.
 - (1) Notice that this lie obtained as the result of such a very slight change in what God had said in Gen.2:17: “thou shalt surely die” – the change was made by adding only one little three letter word – the one little word “**NOT**”.
 - (2) But this changed it from the truth to a lie; from a positive command to a negative – to that which would condemn!
 - (3) He had the audacity to deny the truth of what God had said, and finally succeeded in deceiving Eve to believe him!
 - (4) Satan’s ministers have from that day to this been using the same deceitful tactics with reference to other plan declarations of the Lord – simply adding or subtracting one word just as Satan did. Cf. Jas.2:24; 1Pet.3:21; See 2Cor.11:13-15.
- e. Then, Satan reflected on the very basic nature and character of God by suggesting to Eve that God is not telling you the whole truth; he is hiding something from you; there is something he doesn’t want you to know; and with that knowledge, you will be better off than you are now, 3:5: “For God doth know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”
 - (1) As usual, his lie consisted of a partial truth.
 - (2) Her eyes would be open; she would come to know something she did not previously know.
 - (3) But it would not be what Satan led her to believe it would be.
2. In Satan’s final push in tempting and seducing Eve to sin in violation of God’s command to eat, he used a three-way approach, V.6.
 - a. The lust of the flesh – “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food”
 - b. The lust of the eyes – “And that it was pleasant (marg. “a desire”) to the eyes”
 - c. The pride of life – “And a tree to be desired to make one wise”
 - d. He succeeded with Eve by this method: “When she saw that...she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat” – being deceived she ate; she sinned (1Tim.2:14).
 - e. After she ate and sinned, she “gave also unto her husband (Adam) with her; and he did eat.”
 - (1) Though Adam was not deceived (1Tim.2:14), he ate and sinned.
 - (2) He was led to sin by his wife; he forfeited his headship responsibility in the family as the man. See Rom.5:12; 1Cor.15:21,22.

- (3) Thus sin entered further into the earth.
- f. Note what John declares about the love of the world and these same three things that are of the world, 1Jno.2:15,16.

C. THE ORIGIN OF SIN WITHIN THE INDIVIDUAL.

1. There were steps in the process of temptation by which Eve was led to sin.
 - a. She heard the lie of the devil – she listened to his lie.
 - b. She believed the lie of the devil.
 - c. She obeyed the lie of the devil – she acted upon it.
2. Even though she lived in a sinless world, even though she had never encountered sin or experienced the presence of sin in any form in her world of paradise, even though she was deceived by one so subtle, she sinned and was held responsible for her actions and suffered the consequences of her sin; so, also, did Adam. Cf. Rom.5:12.
3. Sin did not originate in either Eve or Adam, nor in their offspring, their progeny, their descendants, or man in general through hereditary total depravity.
 - a. Sin is of such a nature that it cannot be inherited; sin is an acquired characteristic, not an inherited one.
 - b. Sin is an act constituting a violation of the word of God, 1Jno.3:4 – with Adam and Eve; equally true with you and me – and with all sinners!
 - c. Ezek.18:20 teaches that the child does not bear the iniquity or guilt of the father's sins.
 - (1) One may suffer consequences as a result of another's sin, but not the guilt of another's sins.
 - (2) Cf. Rom.5:12; 1Cor.15:21,22.
 - (3) The decree of physical death as a consequence of Adam's sin has been passed upon all men (Heb.9:27), but not spiritual death.
 - (4) Adam's sins are not imputed to his descendants; all men did **NOT** fall in Adam – Adamic sin or original sin is not taught in the Scriptures!
 - d. Jesus in Mt.18:1-4 denies that little children are born in sin.
 - e. Psa.58:3 declares that people “go astray,” or go into sin, after they are born, “speaking lies,” not that they are born speaking lies, or born guilty of sin. See Ac.2:8; Job 31:16-18 (i.e., from my youth).
4. The origin of sin in the individual as illustrated by the sin of Achan in Josh.7:20,21.
 - a. He saw.
 - b. He coveted.
 - c. He took.
 - d. He sinned.
 - e. He died.
5. The same thing happened in the case of Eve in the Garden of Eden in Gen.3:6.
 - a. She saw.
 - b. She desired.
 - c. She took.
 - d. She sinned.
 - e. She died. Cf. Gen.2:17.

6. Take note of the origin of sin in the individual as taught in Jas.1:12-15 where James places the blame or the responsibility for the guilt of sin on each individual sinner, not on Adam's sin imputed to the individual.
 - a. Note that V.12 teaches that man can endure temptation without sinning, without yielding to temptation and committing sin;
 - (1) that all desire within a man's heart by which he may be tempted is not sinful desire;
 - (2) if it were, then he would be a sinner before he even yielded to temptation.
 - (3) for to be tempted is not to sin; sin is committed only when one yields to the temptation.
 - (4) Furthermore, if first there were no desire there could be no temptation to sin, further proving that to be tempted is not to sin; that sin is committed only when one yields to the temptation to sin.
 - (5) See 1Cor.10:13; 15:34; 1Jno.2:1; Jno.8:11.
 - b. V.13 says man is not tempted to sin by God; that God does not tempt any man to sin.
 - c. V.14 says that man is tempted and enticed to sin "when he is drawn away by his own lust." – i.e., when ye yields to the enticement through inordinate desire; when his desire doesn't remain holy!
 - (1) The word "lust" here is a neutral word referring merely to desire, not to evil desire; just because a man has desire does not mean it is evil desire.
 - (2) The word translated lust in our English translation is used in two different senses, though translated from the same original Gr. term, with the meaning being determined by the context.
 - (a) Sometimes it means inordinate, improper, unholy, wicked, unholy desire, and usually with a qualifying adjective to identify it as such.
 - (b) Sometime, simply desire – desire of a proper nature, holy desire – nothing sinful about it.
 - d. In the latter sense is its use:
 - (1) In Lk.22:15 with reference to Jesus: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer."
 - (2) In Lk.15:16 with reference to the prodigal son who "lusted", longed for, or "**would have filled** his belly with the husks that the swine did eat"
 - (3) In Mt.13:17 where Jesus said, "For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them..."
 - (4) In Lk.16:21 where Jesus speaking of the beggar named Lazarus "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table..."
 - (5) In Phil.1:22 where Paul said, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ..."
 - (6) In 1Th.2:17 where Paul said says he was "endeavoring the more abundantly to see your face with great desire."
 - (7) 1Tim.3:1 where Paul said, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he **desireth** a good work."
 - (8) In Heb.6:11, "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end."
 - (9) And in Jas.1:14, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust (desire), and enticed."

- (a) This has to be its meaning in V.14 in view of what is said in V.15.
 - d. V.15a says that “when lust (or desire) hath conceived , it bringeth forth sin.”
 - (1) No sin is committed unto one’s desire conceives.
 - (2) The sin here is not in desire in and of itself that is always in the heart of man; the sin is not already in the heart before it yields to the temptation; it’s not unto the desire conceives.
 - (3) Thayer, 595: on “conceive”: “metaph of ‘lust’ (desire) whose impulses a man indulges, Jas.1:15. Thus it means: symbolically or metaph. sin results when desire becomes impregnated.”
 - e. Then, V.15b says that when sin “is finished”, it “bringeth forth death.”
 - f. Therefore, we know that the original lust or desire mentioned in V.14 could not be sinful desire or wicked desire; for that would mean death because of sin already existing in the heart!
 - 7. So we know that man did not and does not sin and/or become condemned in sin:
 - a. Because of being born totally depraved, or because of an inherited sinful nature.
 - b. He cannot keep God’s law that applies to him.
 - c. If that were true, then God would be:
 - (1) Responsible for man’s sin and condemnation.
 - (2) An unjust God.
- D. FINALLY, OFTENTIMES MEN QUESTION GOD’S WISDOM, MANIFEST THEIR UNBELIEF, AND COMPLAIN BY ASKING: WHY DIDN’T GOD MAKE MAN, WHOM HE CREATED IN HIS OWN IMAGE, INCAPABLE OF SINNING? --- The answer: --
1. If man had been created incapable of sinning, he would have been a mere machine and not a man created in the image of God, with the possibility of good being destroyed as well as the possibility of evil.
 2. There are such things inherent impossibilities. For example:
 - a. Just as it is an inherent impossibility for matter to exist without occupying space.
 - b. So it is that man could not have been created a free moral agent without the possibility of his going wrong, or without his having the personal right to choose either right or wrong.
 3. We might also ask, “Why did God constitute water so as it has the possibility of drowning man? Or fire of burning a man?
 - a. The answer: Water deprived of its essential qualities –by the mis-application of which drowning results – water would cease to be water, thusly rendering it incapable of its beneficial results. Same true of fire!
 - b. So it is true with respect to man!
 4. But, some will ask: “Why did not God interrupt when he saw that Adam and Eve were going to fall into sin and by which sin entered the world? Gen.3:6; Rom.5:12.
 - a. The fact that God did not interpose in the matter is the best possible evidence that such should not have occurred! For God is right and just and all-wise in all he does!
 - b. Furthermore, to have interposed in Eden would have required him to have thus interposed in all similar cases, resulting in setting aside the natural order of things, again, destroying the free moral agency of man.

5. How many of us want our children to become machines or robots with no mind or will of their own?6. Why, then, should men question God for making his children free moral agents – individuals with a mind of their own?

III. CONCLUSION

1. Even angels in heaven had and have a mind of their own which accounts for:
 - a. The Original or Pre-Edemic Origin Of Sin.
 - b. The Origin Of Son On This Earth.
2. Furthermore, since man has free-moral agency:
 - a. That accounts for the origin of sin within the individual.
 - b. That, also, accounts for men often questioning God's wisdom, justice, and integrity, thus manifesting their unbelief by asking foolish questions about God's actions!
3. All such people should remember now God challenged Job in Ch.38.
4. Then remember how Job responded to the Lord's challenge, Job 40:3-5; 42:1-6.