

Original Sin

Perhaps you have encountered a doctrine known as "original sin", and understand it as the premise that all of us come into the world as sinners, estranged from God, and destined for Hell, based on the first sin as committed by Adam and Eve. Well, I don't know of any place in Scripture where the term "original sin" is explicated. But the premise is essentially true. Seems unfair to you, does it, that you should be damned before you were conceived, let alone born?

Well, there is an issue of heredity involved which casts the matter into rather a different light. Let me attempt to explain. Suppose for a moment that you have blue eyes, for your parents each also have blue eyes. Suppose further that you wish you had brown eyes. Brown eyes are very common, but you invincibly would be born with blue eyes because your parents had no brown-eye gene(s) to bequeath to you.

Or suppose, alternatively, that your dad owned a large estate and a huge bank account, and was debt-free. The mansion on the estate is plated with gold, every kind of crop is easily farmed there, and the proceeds of the diamond mine in the back yard easily cover the salaries of all the hired help. He marries your mom, and quite shortly thereafter, she agrees to trade the whole ball of wax to a snake-oil salesman for a small, rank, scrabbly island off the coast of Maine, battered by storms and barely capable of providing subsistence with the hardest of labor - and your dad signs off on the deal!

What are you going to inherit? The fine estate with all the trimmings, or the mean, rocky island? Well, your parents can't bequeath to you that which they no longer have. Sorry.

In the same way, Adam and Eve lost the ability to bequeath to their posterity a sinless state. If you like, you can argue that they would have eventually stumbled anyway, and the same result would have ensued. (I think such arguments require caution, because you know as little as I about what actually might have happened.)

The point to note is that you can't claim before God that you have inherited any kind of a right to Heaven, to His company and society, from your parents. They didn't have that kind of title to bequeath.

At this point, it's important to note that none of this took God by surprise, and that He had a plan of redemption in place before there ever was a first man. That plan was fulfilled in Christ, who died to pay for the sins of each and all, rendering Adam's sin (and all their own) of no effect upon those who believe into Christ. And the Bible in a number of places confirms that those who die as infants, or otherwise too young or too impaired to be able to believe, are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ.

What of the rest of us? What about our evil inheritance from Adam and Eve? Well, the Bible affirms there is no one righteous, no, not one. All our righteousness, before God, is as filthy rags. Did you honestly ever consider your life, from the first time you were accused by your own conscience, as to what you have to recommend you to God? Well, you may say, hey, I was born that way - what chance did I have? So, imagine you had been in Adam's place (not his shoes, no shoes recorded). Do you suppose you would have done any better? I think that each and every one of us would somehow have found a way to do something similar. The test was so simple, and even almost easy - just FAIL to do ONE thing you were told not to do. Takes no effort, right? Of course, the snake was going to keep talking until or unless God forcibly made it shut up. So let's set aside what we inherited from Adam, which is no virtue at all. Now, what have we DONE since birth? Have we always thought, to the limit of our abilities, whether something is right? No, we have all been two years old, showing clearly a nature that is all about me, me, me, and lacks a good deal of loveliness. We may grow a more handsome veneer, but that's the best we'll do. And the sweetest of you are the more aware of the fact of our own imperfection. We have NOTHING with which to court God's approval. We are sinners by birth, and if we don't like that, we still must acknowledge that we breed true from our parents in that we are sinners by choice.

Depressing, isn't it? Yet, there was mercy in the whole business. God planned from the beginning to send His Son to pay for our sin, and our sins, in total. He KNEW it was beyond us. And the sin in Eden, in the parents of all, established that mankind is 100% in need of a Saviour. In Adam all died (positionally), but in Christ all are made alive, save those who will not have Him. Let's be clear: your birth does not recommend you to God, and your behavior doesn't either. Without Someone to stand in your place and take the penalty of your failures before God, you are destined to Hell because you can't be destined to Heaven. But when you choose to believe in Him, the Son can vouch for you as one of His redeemed, and your sin is removed from you an infinite distance for all eternity; you can positionally enter Heaven on the spot, and in good time, in actual experience.