

Doctrine of Humanity & Doctrine of Sin

By Rev. Bruce Ware

DOCTRINE OF HUMANITY

I. Humanity's Origin: God the Creator of Human Beings

While it is true that the Bible is clear that God created all that is. The Bible begins with this in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Of course, that is comprehensive and by implication that includes human beings and yet it's very clear that in Genesis 1 and 2 the special priority is given to the creation of human beings.

A. Special Place for the Formation of Humanity

There is a special place for the formation of humanity as can be seen by a number of factors as you look through chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis. Just the terminology used of the formation and creation of humanity is interesting. The word *bara* that is used in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," is again used of the creation of humanity, of male and female, in the image of God in verse 27. This term is a term that is always used in the Old Testament with God as its subject. God is the one who, *bara*, creates. It is used here of this to indicate the distinctive work of God in doing this.

Notice, too, the shift in the language used of the formation of man in Genesis 2:7, "God formed the man from the dust of the ground." The term used here is a term that communicates the notion of shaping or molding in a particular way, whereas in Genesis 2:22, "The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken." The word there could be translated as "built." It carries the notion of a very organized and designed project that is constructed.

These terms that are used of the formation of the man and the woman indicate design, purpose, and intent in it. Notice also besides the use of terms that are used, that the language changes in Genesis 1 as we have read earlier where in the other days, the other parts of creation that were made, "God said," and "God said," and "God said," and then various parts of creation would come into being.

When we come to verse 26, then it is "God said let us make man in our image

according to our likeness.” There is this sense of deliberation that is communicated in the formation of man. Notice, of course, the obvious inclusion in the creation of man and woman that they are created in God’s image. We will talk more about that in a moment, but that is stressed in both verse 26 and 27 that man and woman are created in the image of God.

One last item just to indicate the special place that the creation of humanity has in this account is that it is the creation of humanity in chapter 1 that is given full play or, as it were, the movie version in chapter 2 where that gets expanded for us so we can understand the creation of first the man and his obligations to the garden and then the creation of the woman to be the helper to him. Clearly God isolates out, separates out the creation of man as the most significant part of creation, the last created act in the sixth day, so the very end of the created purpose of God after which then he says, “He looked at all that he had made, and behold, it was very good,” (Gen. 1:31). Clearly, there is a special place for the formation of humanity.

B. Brief Theology of Humanity’s Creation by God

1. God is ultimate, while all of humanity is dependent upon God. It is hard to overestimate how important this is. We need to realize that we owe everything to God who was our Creator and our very design to live as the human beings he created us to be is owing to God’s design. We are not the byproduct of chance processes and just happened to end up the way we are. No, we were shaped and formed and made by God and our dependence upon Him is absolute. God is ultimate; He is the one who receives all the glory for all of His creation including the creation of humanity and we need to acknowledge our wholehearted dependence upon him.

2. Humanity owes God obedience, loyalty, and worship. Now why is that? It is simply because He owns us. To create is to own and to own is to have the right to rule. So, God as Creator and Owner of us then requires our obedience to Him. This is not an option that is given to humanity. No, it is an obligation from the very first instant of humanity’s existence to give to God their obedience, loyalty, and worship. We truly are made to bring glory to God and to acknowledge Him as our source and provider; the one to whom we owe everything.

3. Humanity, as created by God, was entirely (body and soul) good. In the western tradition in theology there has been a tendency to diminish the importance of the body and exalt the importance of the soul. In biblical theology this just is not accurate. God intentionally made both body and soul. He told the man and the woman before sin occurred that their mandate was to reproduce, in other words, sexual relations were designed by God and are part of the created order. Certainly they are marred because of sin, no question about that. The point is, our sexuality, our bodies, as well as our souls are created by God and are good and are meant to be used for the purposes that God intended in

creating us.

4. Humanity is invested with moral freedom and responsibility. To none of the rest of creation does God give a moral commandment as He does to the man in the garden when He says to him, "Of all the trees you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you may not eat of it, for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die," (Gen. 2:15-17). It sets up right at the very beginning the moral imperative that humanity must realize that they are required by God to obey, but they are given a kind of freedom in which they may obey or not, and so they must use this gift of moral freedom in a way that would bring God glory and themselves blessing rather than to bring harm and destruction to themselves. The whole history of the human race shows how these two tracks are followed, either of obedience or disobedience as our moral freedom is expressed.

5. There is clearly an equality between the sexes and yet a differentiation in the creation of the man and the woman. It is very clear in Genesis 1 that God created both male and female in the image of God. Both share together a common, equal humanity, equal personhood, equal dignity, equal respect for one another. Yet, man is man, not woman. Woman is woman, not man. God intended for there to be created differences between man as man and woman as woman, even though both are equally human.

Those differences include, among other things, an establishment in the very Garden of Eden itself, an authority or a male headship that was given to the man and the woman created to be the helper, the helpmeet, for the man. We will perhaps be able to talk a bit more about this later but this understanding is called a complementarian view. The woman complements the man as she comes into being and she comes to help fulfill what God has given the man to do and yet they are equal in their personhood and human essence and yet different in the roles that each is designed and commanded to carry out with male headship being a part of the very created order.

II. Humanity's Constitution

Here is just a brief sketch of some of these issues that are involved in the question of how are we made up as human beings. What is the parts list of a human being? Are we made up of one thing or two things or three things? We see that theologians have differed on this.

A. Theories on the Structure of Human Nature.

There are really three main views that have been proposed and still are being advocated by various groups of people.

1. Monism. The monist view is simply the view that we are one thing, a body/soul unity. When we read in the Bible of our heart, or our body, or our soul, or various parts of us, these are all indicating parts of the whole. The monist would argue that there really is no legitimacy to distinguishing separable parts of the human being. One advocate of this view, G. C. Berkouwer, a Dutch theologian, has argued that if we divide the human being into body and soul it can result in either a depreciation of one or the other. In fact, we ought to keep the two together.

My own view is I do believe that there is an interrelation of body and soul that is undeniable and must be recognized and, in fact, has very many practical implications. On the other hand, I think that the question of whether the body and soul are separable from one another requires other data from Scripture and, as I'll mention in a moment, especially the doctrine of the intermediate state, which is the point at which a person dies, what happens right then? It seems to me that this is where the monist view breaks down in explaining what Scripture seems to be very clear about and that is that our bodies go to a grave but our inner persons, who we are, continue to live as we either go to the presence of the Lord or go to a place of judgment or torment awaiting the final judgment.

2. Dichotomy. This view has a long tradition; it goes back to Tertullian. The first major defense of this view is Tertullian's Treatise on the Soul. It really is the predominant view through the history of the church. It is the view I favor. I believe Scripture weighs in for this view and expounds this view in ways that the others I find problematic. Essentially, the dichotomist view just argues that we are made up of two things, two parts as it were, material and immaterial. You could call them body and soul if you wish. It does seem as though Scripture does support the notion that the intermediate state is true.

For example, when Jesus says to the thief on the cross in Luke 23:43, "Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise." Certainly, this means, among other things, that the body of that thief on the cross, while it will go to a grave; the soul, the thief himself, as it were, the inner person, the thief on the cross will go to be with Christ in paradise. So, it is difficult to see how a monist view could be true. Or, for example, in both Philippians 1:21-24 where Paul wishes "to depart and be with Christ for that would be better, yet to remain on in the flesh," in other words, my bodily existence "is necessary for your sake." Obviously, Paul considers this to be a very important step in life, as it were, when you die, you go to be with Christ.

Or the way he puts it in 2 Corinthians 5:8, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." The argument for the intermediate state I think is very strong and compelling and indicates, at least a dichotomist view. Why not the next one, we will talk about in a moment, trichotomy, three parts? It looks as though the language of the Bible speaks of soul and spirit as basically interchangeable. It's hard to see that there is any significant consistent difference between the two.

Let me give you just a couple of examples. In Luke 1:46-47 notice the parallelism where Mary says, "My soul exalts the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." There it looks very clear that spirit and soul are being used virtually synonymously in this parallelism, this sort of Hebrew parallelism that we find in this passage. The same kind of thing is echoed in an Old Testament passage, Isaiah 26:9, "My soul longs for thee, my spirit seeks thee earnestly." Again, the parallelism indicates a very close similarity in soul and spirit, so they are really basically used interchangeably or synonymously. I don't think a strong case can be made for separating soul and spirit but trichotomists think there is. That brings us to point number three.

3. Trichotomy. The trichotomy view holds that there are three substances, body, soul, and spirit. Of course, they agree with the dichotomists that the intermediate state requires something more than a monist view. They differ though with the dichotomists in arguing that what is really required is, in fact, a trichotomist view, that there are three parts.

Their main texts for arguing this are 1 Thessalonians 5:23 which says, "May your spirit, soul, and body be preserved complete at the revelation of Jesus Christ." There they say, "Well, it looks as though Paul is indicating three parts of us. May all of you be preserved complete, namely your spirit, soul, and body." The other verse that they site is Hebrews 4:12 where the Word of God is spoken of as "piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, joints and marrow," and so on. Here to divide soul and spirit would seem to indicate that these are separable then.

Let me give a quick response to both of these. First, the 1 Thessalonians 5 passage, when Paul says, "May your spirit, soul, and body be preserved complete," surely he is saying all of who you are, may all of who you are be preserved complete at the revelation of Jesus Christ. But, there are other places in Scripture, most notably the Great Commandment where all of who you are does not include the spirit. I find this just remarkable. For example, in Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27, these are the Great Commandment passages; "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength," no mention of spirit. I think we should conclude then that in neither passage, the Great Commandment passage nor 1 Thessalonians 5:23, do we have a parts list. I think both are meant to be representative and do not then give us clear indication of there being separate soul and spirit.

Hebrews 4:12, I find it interesting that, yes, it says that, "The Word of God pierces as far as the division of soul and spirit," the very next phrase is, "and of joints and marrow." Who is going to say that joints and marrow are separable substances? Rather, joints and marrow are two aspects of one thing, two aspects of a body, of a physical entity. I think the same thing could be said of soul and spirit, two aspects of one entity. Therefore, I don't think the main biblical arguments for trichotomy are compelling.

My own view, then, is I believe the dichotomy view is in all likelihood the one that Scripture commends most. Although, both the dichotomy and trichotomy view are held by a number of very prominent evangelical Christians and both are viable views. The monist view, I think, is the one that is the most troubling because of its difficulty in handling passages that deal with the intermediate state.

B. Transmission of the Soul

There are two main views that have been argued for the question of how is it we become human beings with souls, with an immaterial part. Surely, the material part of us has come about because of the process of biological reproduction that God established at the very beginning. A man and a woman have sexual relations and they conceive a child and biologically that child has its body as a result of the reproductive process; how is it, though, that this little one who we call a human being has a soul? How does this happen? There are two main views on this.

1. Creationism. Don't confuse this with creationism as it relates to the broader question of how God created the heavens and the earth and the timing for that and so on. This is not creation versus evolution. This is a particular view of how we come to have souls as human beings.

The creationist view held in Reformed and Roman Catholic traditions, in particular, argues that God creates each soul separately and puts it into, joins it with, a human body some point between conception and birth. Different creationists will vary on when this happens. Some hold that it happens at birth, so before that point you have a human body but not a human soul. In fact, some, you may be aware, even President Clinton back when he was in office when he was first installed, he supported his view of abortion by appeal to this doctrine that because ensoulment does not take place, as it is called, until the baby takes its own breath, until birth, that is when the soul comes into it. It is not a human being before that. Most in the Reformed tradition have argued that ensoulment takes place at conception.

Certainly if you hold this view you must agree that it is an enormous risk to take, to abort one who may, in fact, be a human being with a soul, with an eternal soul, and therefore committing murder upon a human being. This is not the view I hold but if you do hold this creationist view I would encourage you, knowing that we cannot be dogmatic on when ensoulment takes place to err on the side of caution. Just as when you are hunting, if you see a bush move, you don't shoot. It may be a hunter; it may be a human being. Likewise, the fetus may be a human being at the very point of conception and certainly we should treat the fetus as a human being with respect to its right to life and treat it as such.

2. Traducianism. The traducian view comes from a Latin word *traduco*, which

simply means, “to carry over.” Traducianism holds the view that the soul as well as the body are carried over or brought forward from the human parents. In other words, this view holds that as God developed the reproductive process to work, He intended for human parents through sexual reproduction to conceive not just human bodies but whole human persons.

Really, if this view is true, and it is the view I favor, I believe there is some compelling reason for holding it; it really does make sexual intercourse for the purpose of procreation a sacred event. It is remarkable when you think of what happens as a husband and a wife engage in sexual relations and conceive a child, that what has happened is that they become, as it were, co-creators with God. They are the ones to whom God has given the privilege from this point on to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with their kind.

In fact, one of the arguments for this view is that in the book of Genesis you know that the various species are said to reproduce after their kind. Bears produce bears, not just biologically but everything that they are, and elephants produce elephants, and fish produce fish. Well, human beings produce human beings, that is, the whole human is reproduced in the reproductive process that God has designed. It may be one of the reasons that God has made the sexual act of human beings to be the extraordinary experience that it is in that God wishes to convey by this the joy and the exaltation he has in the formation of human beings who are his image that he grants then to human beings the privilege of sharing in that creative process.

What is presented in argument for this view? One thing that is noted is the fact that in Genesis 1 as both man and woman are created in the image of God, then when they have a child, that child is created in the image of the man. If you look in Genesis 5:3 we read, “Adam lived 130 years and he became the father of a son in his own likeness,” this is referring to Seth, “and according to his image, and he named him Seth.” Isn’t that interesting that man and woman are created in the image of God but here Seth is created or is born, as it were, in the image of Adam, who was the image of God? So, it looks as though your and my image of God status has come down a long line of parents, grandparents, great grandparents; you would back it all the way up to the original pair, Adam and Eve, and you realize image of God is passed on through this.

Another reason for holding this view is that in the Old and New Testaments you find descendants as being spoken of as “in the loins of their ancestors.” You can see this in Genesis 46:26 and Hebrews 7:9-10. Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek we are told in Hebrews. How did that happen? Levi was born many, many years later. He did that as Abraham, he was in the loins of his father Abraham. So you see this idea that Levi’s very existence comes out of Abraham and it seems that indicates more than simply physical bodies.

Just one more point on this and then we must move ahead. The traducian view

does account better, it seems to me, for not only biological similarities between parents and children but also emotional, psychological, dispositional similarities between parents and children. This is even in cases where children are separated from their parents at birth, say through adoption or some other means, and yet studies have shown that those biological children often times share in characteristics of their parents that aren't accounted for well by their environment. Of course, this then indicates a continuity of the whole person between parents and children.

III. The Image of God

I'll just acknowledge at the very beginning of this, this is a very interesting and complicated area and we have only a very short time to develop a few of the main ideas here but hope it will be helpful in understanding the significance and the value that God has invested in human beings as His image. Everybody agrees that image of God in Genesis 1:26-27 is significant.

The text changes all together when you come to that point. "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image according to our likeness. Let them rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, over the cattle in all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Clearly, image of God is meant by the author of Genesis to indicate something significant, but, here is the problem, in the history of this doctrine it is just not clear what the significance is and there has been disagreement. Three main views have been proposed.

A. Major Understandings of "Image of God"

1. Structural Understanding. This has been the most prominent one. This is simply the view that something about our makeup or our constitution or our structure is what accounts for our being in the Image of God. Irenaeus, for example, who lived in the second century, argued that the image of God is our reason and volition but the likeness of God was something different, that is our holiness. As a result, the likeness of God is lost in the fall and regained in redemption but we all have the image of God because of our capacity of reason and volition. Augustine understood the image of God as the reflection of the Triune persons of God mirrored in the distinct yet unified intellectual capacities of memory, intellect, and will.

Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century locates the image of God in man's reason by which we have the capacity to know and love God. There have been these various proposals that something structurally accounts for our being the image of God. It makes us different from the animals. It makes us more like God because of that structural feature or features.

2. Relational Understanding. The relational view is one that developed more recently. The two main advocates of this view in the 20th century, anyway, theology were Karl Barth and Emil Brunner. The relational view argues that the text itself in Genesis 1:26-27 indicates that it is male and female who is the image of God. Verse 27 again says, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." That language is very important indicating for these theologians that it is the male-female relationship or in more general terms, it is relationality that constitutes the image of God.

3. Functional Understanding. This again is a more recent understanding. I think it is clear to say that the structural understanding, or some form of it, has been the most consistent one through church history and yet today the functional one is receiving a great deal of attention and appreciation. In fact, my own view that I will mention in a moment tends to give favor to the functional understanding. What this view essentially says is that image of God has to do primarily, not with our structure or relationship, but as our structure and our relationship are put to work, as it were, that is, as we are called to do what God has commanded us to do.

Advocates of this view, Leonard Verduin and D. J. A. Clines have argued that the double-reference in Genesis 1:26, 28 of man ruling over the fish of the sea (notice that is mentioned twice in this image of God passage in Genesis 1) ruling over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and so on cannot be accidental. What God intends by this is for His image of God people to represent Him in ruling the earth that He has made.

In other words, they become, as it were, vice-regents for God. Yes, He is King, but notice in Genesis 2 God takes Adam who is image of God and tells Adam, "You cultivate the garden Adam. Now it is my garden, I made it," God says, "but you are responsible to take care of it. You become caretaker of My creation." Notice the animals. How significant this is that He says, "Adam, you name them." Granted, they are God's animals, God has the right to name them. To name something is to indicate your authority over, your ownership of, even. So, God in giving the right of naming the animals to Adam is indicating you have rulership over these creatures that I have made. Yes, I made them but you act as vice-regent and rule over the animals.

B. The Image of God, the Fall, and its Renewal

1. Ancient Near Eastern Background. One very helpful thing, I think, in trying to make sense of the image of God and what happens to it in the Fall and what happens to it in our restoration in Christ is the ancient near eastern background that D. J. A. Clines has made us aware of. Clines, a number of years ago, asked this very simple question. Why is it that the writer of Genesis, Moses, did not

define for us what “image of God” is?

Obviously, it is important; everybody agrees with that. But why didn't he tell us what he meant by it. Clines suspected the reason that he didn't is because it was already understood; it was a commonly understood term or phrase. He went to work and looked in the ancient near eastern background to this and discovered that, sure enough, “image of God” is there and used prominently in the ancient near eastern context. What it refers to most prominently as it refers to human beings, because image can also refer to inanimate objects as well, but when it refers to a human being it is of a king who has rulership responsibilities that he carries out on behalf of one of the gods. It looks as though this does give preference to the functional notion of image of God.

2. Image of God: Structural, Relational, and Functional. My own understanding of image of God really attempts then to bring together the structural, relational, and functional aspects of this. Let me read my own definition of image of God. It is contained in an article, if any of you wishes to get it, “Male and Female Complementarity in the Image of God” in *The Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 7/1 Spring 2002 issue. The definition reads as follows: “The image of God in man as functional holism means that God made human beings, both male and female, to be created and finite representations (images of God) of God's own nature, that in relationship with him and each other, they might be his representatives (imaging God) in carrying out the responsibilities he has given to them. In this sense, we are images of God in order to image God and his purposes in the ordering of our lives and carrying out of our God-given responsibilities.”

I think this notion of functional holism that conveys the notion that we are made a certain way to do a certain thing. Yes, the structure is important; the relationship is important; but all of that is there to serve the purpose of the function that God has given to us. Another book you might want to look at on this that is very helpful is Anthony Hoekema's *Created in God's Image*. He has a very helpful discussion and basically argues along the same lines as I am presenting here.

3. Effects of the Fall and our Restoration into the Image of Christ. It is so interesting; if image of God is fundamentally functioning in a way that carries out God's purposes you can see where the Fall just really distorted that. Even though we still retain reason, will, a spiritual nature in the rest, all of that is oriented now against God.

So we are not acting as God's vice-regents, rather, we are in rebellion against Him and guilty of treason against the King. So what has to happen in Christ is we have to be restored in a place where we once again live the way Christ lived. How did Christ live? Over it again we read, “I came to do the will of the Father who sent me. I don't speak on my own initiative; I speak as the Father taught me.” We need to be images of God the way Christ was the Image of God par

excellence who lived his life to carry out the will of the Father and the restoration of us involves the restoration of our substance, surely our structure, as our minds and wills are reshaped to be Christ-like, but then that has the function or the outcome of enabling us to do what we were called to do. In that sense we become like Christ and so are remade the image of God as we are remade the image of Christ.

DOCTRINE OF SIN

I. Nature of Sin

A. The Essence of Sin

1. Urge for Independence from God. Sin at its very essence, it seems to me if you look at the account in Genesis 3, is an urge for independence from God. It seems as though this urge for independence is evident when the woman in the garden is urged by the serpent, who is there, to look at the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil differently than she had ever seen it before. The serpent tells her in verses 4 and 5, "Surely you will not die," denying, of course, what God had told to Adam, "For God knows that in the day that you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Now the woman for the first time is thinking about God, not as the source of her good, the one who wishes her best, who wants to provide and care for her, but now the tempter is causing the woman to think rather of God as a withholder, stingy, resentful, not wishing for her to experience all that can be experienced in life. She looks at the tree in verse 6 and she sees that it was "good for food, it was a delight to the eyes and desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."

2. Three Kinds of Urges for Independence (Gen. 3:6)

a. The Hedonist Urge. She saw that the tree was "good for food." In other words, she said I will have my appetite satisfied my way, I don't care that God has said that you shall not eat from the fruit of this tree, I like the looks of it, I'll eat it. This is the hedonist urge.

b. The Covetous Urge. She saw that the tree was a "delight to the eyes." Obviously there was no prohibition against looking at the tree so this must mean that she wanted to take it. A delight to the eyes meant she liked what she saw and she wanted it to be hers even though God had said she could not have it. Nonetheless, she coveted what God said she could not have and she took it.

c. The Prideful Urge. Then she saw that the tree was "desirable to make one

wise.” Here she wanted to have her own wisdom; she did want to be dependent upon God. The prideful urge brought her to this place of rebellion. Three kinds of urges for independence, in each case, the hedonist urge, the covetous urge, the prideful urge all move us away from God, establishing our own autonomy, and bringing to us our destruction. This is so instructive because obviously the path to wholeness and righteousness and happiness is just the opposite of these; the hedonist urge, the opposite, finding our satisfaction in God; covetous urge, the opposite, being content with what God gives us; the prideful urge, to give glory to God rather than wanting glory to come to ourselves; in this we find true life.

B. Total Depravity

It is a very important doctrine that both Arminian and Calvinist traditions have affirmed in the history of the church. It really grows out of a view that Augustine proposed way back in the early church and was lost for a fair part of the middle ages through much of Roman Catholicism but revived in the Reformation period.

1. Definition. The doctrine of total depravity affirms, first of all, the definition is that every part of us is affected by sin. Every part of us, our mind, our emotions, our will, our body, every part of us is affected by sin. Sin’s effect is pervasive is another way to think of it. You should understand “total” here in an extensive sense indicating every part is affected, not an intensive sense, that is, it does not mean we are as bad as we could be.

We should give God praise for this. Our minds, for example, though corrupted are not as corrupted as they could be. They still can think true thoughts even though they can’t think truly enough. Our wills are corrupted but they are not as bad as they could be; it is not that every single action we perform is of the same kind of evil. Jesus said, “If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children.” So even evil people, unregenerate people, can do good things. Total depravity refers to the extent of sin that effects all of us.

2. Support. Some passages that I would encourage you to look at: Romans 1:21ff, you could see there the progression of sin and the effect on mind, emotion, will, body; every aspect of us including turning from our natural sexual drives to unnatural ones are results of sin in us. Consider also Romans 8:5-8, Ephesians 4:17-18, and Galatians 5:16-17, 24.

C. Total Inability

It is a doctrine that flows out of total depravity.

1. Definition. Because every part of us is affected by sin we are totally unable to live lives or to make choices or to carry out actions that are pleasing to God.

2. Support. Consider, for example, John 15:5 where Jesus says, “Apart from me

you can do nothing.” This “nothing” certainly does not mean that you’re frozen, you cannot act, you cannot do anything. What does he mean? He means you cannot do anything that bears fruit. You cannot do anything that is of eternal value. You are unable to do anything that God would look at and say, “that is good, that is honorable, that is glorifying to me.”

Or, consider Hebrews 11:6 where we read, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” So that means that all people who are not Christians, all people who are not believers, who do not have faith in God through Christ Jesus are not able to please God. That does not mean that everything they do is equally evil, but it does mean nothing that they do is pleasing to God; nothing that they do gives glory to God; nothing that they do God would say is good even though they are not doing necessarily overtly evil actions at every point.

Another passage that I think is very important to bear in mind here especially as it relates to the question of whether unbelievers apart from grace can believe in Christ or come to him, consider Romans 8:5ff. Paul says in Romans 8:5, “Those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh and those who are according to the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” He has in mind here two categories of people; those who are “according to the flesh” are unbelievers and those who are “according to the Spirit” are believers, the Spirit has come within them.

What does he say about these two? Verse 6, “The mindset of the flesh is death, the mindset of the Spirit is life and peace. Because the mindset of the flesh is hostile toward God for it does not subject itself to the law of God and it is not even able to do so and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” It is very clear that in the flesh, of our own, apart from God’s work of grace within us, we cannot do anything to please God including believe in Christ. We will talk more about this in another lecture later but in the Arminian tradition, Jacob Arminius was insistent that grace is needed to overcome the affects of total depravity and total inability so that we could believe in Christ. All of us are saved by grace and apart from ourselves we would never come.

D. Acts of Personal Sin

Let me just mention to you here these four categories and give you a few passages for each one.

1. Commission and Omission. Acts of personal sin can come in the form of sin as commission, that is, sins that we carry out and do, commit, and sins of omission, that is, sins that we fail to do that we ought to do. Sins of commission are easy enough to understand. Think of the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:13-17. “You shall not murder, steal, commit adultery, covet,” so on. These are clearly actions that we ought not do, that we commit that are wrong. There are also omissions that are sinful. For example, in James 4:17 James says, “The one who knows

what is right to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.” Or consider Matthew 25:41-46 where Jesus says, because you did not give me a cup of water, you did not visit me in jail, the things that you did not do you will be guilty then at judgment.

2. Outward Actions and Inward Attitudes. Obviously some sins are outward in nature; either sins that you commit or you fail to do that are outward; murder, stealing, or failing to help when you should, those are all outward sins. There are also sins of attitude that are in some ways more fundamental; they give rise to outward actions of sin. I think this was what Jesus was getting at in Matthew 5 where he spoke, for example, of one who has not murdered yet; but he said if you have a murderer’s heart, if you are angry toward your brother you are guilty of murder; or if you lust after women you are guilty of adultery. That does not mean to say that the attitude is the same as the action, but it is to say that the attitude is itself sinful, is a sinful action as well. Look at some point at Deuteronomy 28:47-48 and you will see in the Old Testament that this distinction was made as well. They were to obey the law but they were to do so with a glad heart as well. Outward action and inward attitude both mattered.

3. Conscious Rebellion and Ignorance. Some sins are voluntary, consciously done and others are done out of ignorance; the person does not know that he has sinned but he has sinned nonetheless. Look, for example, at Numbers 15:27-31, particularly of the sins of ignorance consider 1 Timothy 1:12-14.

4. Greater and Lesser Sins. It does seem as though that some sins carry greater punishment and others lesser punishment. Consider these passages: Matthew 12:31-32, Matthew 23:23, and 1 Corinthians 6:17-18.

E. Systemic or Social Manifestations of Sin

It is clear that sin is not only an attitude and action of individual human beings but also sin can be manifest in social structures. These come in two different forms.

1. Good Structures used for Evil. One is when social structures are created for good purposes but then used for evil. Look, for example, at Amos 5:10-15 where the gate of the city which is the place where justice is meant to be meted out, the gate of the city is used to benefit the oppressor and hurt the poor. Here you have a good structure, a judicial system, that is used for evil.

2. Formation of Evil Structures to do Evil. The Scripture also condemns even more severely the formation of evil structures, which are designed from the outset to do evil. Consider, for example, Psalm 94:20-23 or Isaiah 10:1-4 where the king enacts statutes that are intended from the very outset to do evil. I think, for example, of the Roe v. Wade decision of our Supreme Court as an example of a declaration as law of something that is by its very nature evil, that is, permitting the killing of innocent human life through abortion.

II. Original Sin

A. Definition

The term original sin might convey the notion that this is the doctrine about where sin originates, say in the Garden of Eden or perhaps before that with Lucifer who fell from heaven. Actually, the doctrine is not about that. Rather, it is about how the stain of sinfulness is passed on to or originates in each individual person. That is, how do you and I become sinful? How is sin passed on to us?

B. Theories of Original Sin

1. The Federal or Representative Theory. This is held by many if not most in the Reformed tradition. According to this view, Adam was the representative or the federal head of the human race and when he sinned he brought sin upon all of the human race. How was that? Simply, because as the federal head or the representative, the judgment that was given to him was a judgment that legally was required to be given to us as well. The judgment of death to Adam was a judgment on Adam and all whom he represented.

One of the compelling reasons for this view for those in the Reformed tradition is they see this theory of federal headship to apply not only to Adam but also to Christ. Just as in Christ His righteousness comes to us and we had nothing to do with the righteous act of Christ in His obedient life and His obedient death on the cross and yet we benefit from it as His righteousness is imputed to us, that is, we are credited with the righteousness of Christ though we had nothing to do with it. Federal theologians or covenant theologians, those in the Reformed tradition, understand that we had nothing to do with the sinfulness of Adam and yet his sinfulness is imputed to us or charged against our account. They understand these two aspects of federal headship, of Adam and Christ, respectively then to be parallel.

2. The Realist or Augustinian Theory. Augustine was the one who first proposed this notion that the sin of Adam and Eve, his wife, is passed down to us through this long chain, as it were, of reproduction. Most people who hold this view also hold the traducian view of the origin of the soul and hold that parents reproduce whole persons. They also pass on their sin to those whole persons. We actually become sinners because we were in Adam as he sinned.

An analogy that is sometimes used of this, if you think of an oak tree, at one time that mighty oak tree was all contained in this little seed called an acorn. In that acorn, whatever the oak tree would become was actually contained there in genetic form. If there was a disease in the oak tree that shows up later on that gave deformed branches or something like that, that same disease would be somehow apparent in the genetic structure of the acorn itself. So, likewise,

Adam, when he sinned, in a sense there was a malstructure that took place, that is, a sinfulness that took place to Adam so when he reproduced, he reproduced of his kind and therefore we stand in Adam as those who come out of him and share in his sinfulness.

It is sometimes called the realist view because there is a sense in which we were really in Adam when he sinned, according to this view. Augustine took this from Romans 5:12; this is the key text on this doctrine, we read, "Therefore, just as through one man," Adam, "sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." Augustine understood that to mean that we all sin not when we become volitional creatures and make our own choices but rather we sin because we were in Adam seminally, really there but in seminal form, we were in Adam when he sinned.

One thing to conclude with here is that whichever view you hold on this, the federal view or the realist view, both amount to the same answer to this question, that is, are we born into this world sinners or do we become sinners when we sin? Both views would answer the question: we are born into this world sinners. We actually carry out that sinfulness volitionally when we are able to think and make our own decisions and the like. But, nonetheless we are born into this world whether it is because the sin of Adam is imputed to us in the federal view or whether we inherit a sinful nature from Adam in the realist view. Nonetheless we are conceived and born in sin and come into this world with sinful natures. We are totally depraved, totally unable from the very outset and given time and development we will express that nature in rebellious actions. I have children myself and can remember points when I first saw the sin nature of my children expressed at a very, very young age with their sense of autonomy and rebellion and wanting their own will and yes we come into this world in need from the very instant of salvation from our sin.

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