

# Redemption 304: *The Sinful Nature*



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## Regarding a Sinful Nature

### 1. Opening Questions:

- a. Does the bible teach that from birth/conception men are programmed to sin (inherited from Adam and Eve)?
  - i. Are all men born with a sinful nature which they inherit from Adam?
- b. Does the bible teach that through sin men lose the capacity to choose faith, repentance, and obedience?

### 2. Our Position: No.

### 3. Opposing Position:

- a. Calvinism says yes = Total Depravity, Original Sin

<http://www.bible-researcher.com/sproul1.html>

*The Pelagian Captivity of the Church*

by R.C. Sproul

**“Original sin is not the first sin. It’s the result of the first sin;** it refers to our inherent corruption, by which we are born in sin, and in sin did our mothers conceive us. We are not born in a neutral state of innocence, but we are born in a sinful, fallen condition... This is precisely what was at issue in the battle between Augustine and Pelagius in the fifth century. **Pelagius said there is no such thing as original sin.** Adam’s sin affected Adam and only Adam. **There is no transmission or transfer of guilt or fallenness or corruption to the progeny of Adam and Eve. Everyone is born in the same state of innocence** in which Adam was created.”

*Saint Andrew’s Chapel, R.C. Sproul*

<http://www.saintandrewschapel.org/doctrine/about.php>

Briefly, total depravity declares that all **men are corrupted by the Fall** to the extent that sin penetrates the whole person, leaving them in a state by which they are now by nature **spiritually dead** and at enmity with God. This results in **the bondage of the will to sin** by which **the sinner is morally unable to incline himself to God, or to convert himself, or to exercise faith without first being spiritually reborn by the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit.**

[http://www.pcanet.org/general/cof\\_contents.htm](http://www.pcanet.org/general/cof_contents.htm)

THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH

*CHAP. VI. - Of the Fall of Man, of Sin, and of the Punishment thereof.*

1. **Our first parents**, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin, God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.
2. By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion, with God, **and so became dead in sin**, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.
3. **They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed; and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.**
4. **From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil**, do proceed all actual transgressions.
5. This corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be, through Christ, pardoned, and mortified; yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.
6. **Every sin, both original and actual**, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereunto, doth in its own nature, **bring guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal, and eternal.**

*CHAP. IX. - Of Free-Will.*

1. God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good, or evil.
2. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom, and power to will and to do that which was good and well pleasing to God; but yet, mutably, so that he might fall from it.
3. **Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.**
4. **When God converts a sinner**, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin; and, by His grace alone, **enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good**; yet so, that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.
5. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to do good alone in the state of glory only.

**4. Sample Proof Passages** (*offered in support of the Opposing View that men are born with a sinful nature*)

- a. Genesis 3 & 5 – Seth had Adam's Image after Sin, Not God's Image

**Genesis 3:17** And unto Adam he said, **Because thou hast** hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast **eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee,**

saying, **Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed** is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

**Genesis 5:1** This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, **in the likeness of God made he him; 2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them,** and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created. **3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image;** and called his name Seth.

- b. Counterpoint (why this passage doesn't teach a sinful nature):
  - i. The passage does not say that Adam bore a different image than the image he received from God.
  - ii. The statement about Seth is intended to convey continuity, not discontinuity.
    - 1. In Genesis 1, the statement that God made man in His image and commanding mankind to reproduce is juxtaposed to similar statements concerning other creatures.
    - 2. Just as each creature reproduced its own kind, when mankind reproduced, the successive generation likewise bore the same image.

**Genesis 1:21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth,** which the waters brought forth abundantly, **after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind:** and God saw that it was good. **22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply,** and fill the waters in the seas, **and let fowl multiply** in the earth... **25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind,** and cattle **after their kind,** and every thing that creepeth upon the earth **after his kind:** and God saw that it was good. **26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:** and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. **27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him;** male and female created he them. **28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply,** and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

- iii. Mankind still retained God's image after the Flood, despite sin so great that God had to destroy the surface of the earth.

**Genesis 9:6** Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: **for in the image of God made he man.** **7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply;** bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

- iv. Conclusions
  - 1. Genesis upholds that even after sin (and after the Flood) men still bore God's image. Therefore, we

cannot take Genesis 5:3's reference to "Adam's image" to indicate that Adam's descendants have a sinful nature.

- c. Isaiah 48 – Does Isaiah indicate that men are sinful from conception? No.

**Isaiah 48:1 Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah,** which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, *but* not in truth, nor in righteousness. 2 For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts *is* his name. 3 I have declared the former things from the beginning; and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did *them* suddenly, and they came to pass. 4 Because I knew that thou *art* obstinate, and thy neck *is* an iron sinew, and thy brow brass; 5 I have even from the beginning declared *it* to thee; before it came to pass I shewed *it* thee: lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them. 6 Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare *it*? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them. 7 They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day when thou heardest them not; lest thou shouldest say, Behold, I knew them. 8 Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not; yea, from that time *that* thine ear was not opened: **for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.**

- i. Clearly Isaiah is referring to the formation of national Israel, not the formation of the individual patriarch named Jacob or Israel
- ii. Therefore, Isaiah 48 cannot be taken to attest to whether individual humans are born with a sinful nature inherited from Adam

**Isaiah 44:2** Thus saith the LORD that made thee, **and formed thee from the womb,** *which* will help thee; **Fear not, O Jacob, my servant;** and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.

**Isaiah 46:3 Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne *by me* from the belly, which are carried from the womb:**

- d. Psalm 58 – Does Isaiah indicate that men are sinful from conception? No.

**Psalm 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.** 4 Their poison *is* like the poison of a serpent: *they are* like the deaf adder *that* stoppeth her ear; 5 **Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely...** 10 **The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.**

- i. If taken literally, would place the starting point at birth, not conception. (Why wouldn't this apply from conception if inherited from parents and prior to each individual's own sinning?)
- ii. There is clear hyperbole involved as can be seen by the fact that babies do not speak at when they are born, yet alone tell lies. (The point is to emphasize that wicked men have a long history of disobedience, not to literally state that they are sinners from before they were old enough to commit sin.)
- iii. Verses 4-5 attribute their sinfulness to their own behavior of stopping up their ears and refusing to conform to godly instruction, not to an inherited nature or the actions of Adam and Eve.
- iv. As can be seen in verse 10, the author distinguishes between wicked persons and righteous persons and only applies these statements to the wicked.
- v. Therefore, Psalm 58 cannot be taken to support the idea that all men are conceived with a sinful nature.
- e. Isaiah 64 – “Our Very Best Is Still Sinful” – Does this mean that all men are inherently born/conceived in sin? No.

**Isaiah 64:5** Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, *those that remember thee in thy ways*: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved. **6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (0899)**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. **7 And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee**: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities.

- i. Notice that Isaiah is speaking on behalf of his people generally, not necessarily himself as an individual.
- ii. Notice from verse 5 that Isaiah is contrasting the sinful nation to men that work righteousness, which means that verse 6 is not talking about men's righteous efforts but about men who follow perverted ways but think they are still righteous.

**Isaiah 29:13** Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as **this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men**: **14** Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid. **15** Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? **16 Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay**: for shall the work

say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

**Ezekiel 20:2 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 3 "Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Have you come to inquire of me? As surely as I live, I will not let you inquire of me, declares the Sovereign LORD.' 4 "Will you judge them? Will you judge them, son of man? Then confront them with the detestable practices of their fathers... 11 I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. 12 Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy. 13 " 'Yet the people of Israel rebelled against me in the desert. They did not follow my decrees but rejected my laws—although the man who obeys them will live by them—and they utterly desecrated my Sabbaths.**

**Mark 7:5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? 6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. 9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: 11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free.* 12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; 13 **Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.****

- iii. This historical context of Isaiah 64 is one in which God repeatedly rebukes the Israelites for turning his instructions upside down and replacing his commands with their own inventions, just as Jesus' says.
- iv. This is the same context as Isaiah 55.
  1. The wicked are contrasted with those who repent.
  2. This passage does not describe men's best efforts to do righteousness, but rather perverse men who reject true teachings but think they are doing right at a time when Israel in general as a nation had turned to sin.

**Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8 For my thoughts *are not* your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For *as the***

**heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

(NIV) **Deuteronomy 30:11** Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. **12 It is not up in heaven**, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" **13** Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" **14 No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.**

- f. Exodus 20 and 34 – punishing the children for their fathers' sins – Does this passage indicate that Adam's descendants inherit his guilt and sin from conception/birth? No.

**Exodus 20:5** Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;** **6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me,** and keep my commandments.

**Exodus 34:6** And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, **The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,** **7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,** and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; **visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.**

- i. Contextually, this is a statement about how in his mercy God delays punishing a nation for several generations in order to give that nation time to repent.
- ii. God does not visit a nation in wrath at the time of the first generation of sinners. He gives the nation at least until the time of the grandchildren or great grandchildren to turn from sin.

**Genesis 15:14** And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. **15** And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. **16 But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.**

**Jonah 3:10** And God saw their works, that **they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them;** and he did *it* not. **4:1** But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. **2** And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, *was* not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for **I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.**

- iii. Elsewhere, God specifically refutes the Calvinist interpretation of Exodus 20 and 34. (Notice how this touches on Exodus' remarks about the descendants of both the wicked and the righteous.)

**Ezekiel 18:1** The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, **2** What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? **3** As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have *occasion* any more to use this proverb in Israel. **4** Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. **5** But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right...**9**...Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; **he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.** **10** If he beget a son *that is* a robber, a shedder of blood, and *that doeth the like to any one of these things*...**13**...shall he then live? **he shall not live:** he hath done all these abominations; **he shall surely die;** his blood shall be upon him. **14** Now, lo, *if* he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like...hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; **he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live...****19** Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, *and* hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, **he shall surely live.** **20** The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. **21** But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, **he shall not die...****32** For **I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth,** saith the Lord GOD: **wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.**

- g. Psalm 51 – “Conceived in sin” – Does this passage teach that men are conceived/born in sin?

**Psalms 51:1** Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out **my transgressions.** **2** Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. **3** **For I acknowledge my transgressions:** and my sin *is* ever before me. **4** Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest. **5** **Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.** **6** Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden *part* thou shalt make me to know wisdom. **7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. **8** Make me to hear joy and gladness; *that* the bones *which* thou hast broken may rejoice. **9** Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. **10** Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. **11** **Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit**

**from me.** 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me *with thy* free spirit.

- i. Consider that the alternative to Calvinism teaches that men sin not only by what they imagine but even the process of imagining starts with what they observe in examples. So, does this passage indicate that David is referring to the constant sinful examples he has been subjected to since birth or to his inheriting sin or a sinful nature from Adam?
  1. Consider another Psalm by David in which David admits the temptation to be envious of sinners.

**Psalm 37:**1 Fret not thyself because of evildoers, **neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.** 2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. 3 **Trust in the LORD, and do good;** so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. 4 **Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.** 5 Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring *it* to pass. 6 And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. 7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: **fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.** 8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: **fret not thyself in any wise to do evil...** 34 **Wait on the LORD, and keep his way,** and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see *it*. 35 **I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree.** 36 **Yet he passed away,** and, lo, he *was* not: yea, I sought him, but he could not be found. 37 **Mark the perfect *man*, and behold the upright: for the end of *that man is* peace.** 38 **But the transgressors shall be destroyed together:** the end of the wicked shall be cut off.

2. Like similar language in Psalm 37, David is using hyperbole in Psalm 51 to make his point, using the fact that even in the womb he was surrounded by a sinner, his own mother who would have undoubtedly sinned prior to that point in her life.
3. Therefore, there is nothing in Psalm 51 that requires anything other than the idea of David petitioning God for mercy on the grounds that David had been surrounded by sinners his whole life.

<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=9057375>

**“Original sin** – The doctrine has its basis in the Bible. **Although the human condition (suffering, death, and a universal tendency toward sin) is accounted for by the story of the Fall of Adam in the early chapters of the book of Genesis, the Old Testament says nothing about the transmission of hereditary sin to the entire human race. In the Gospels also there are no more than allusions to the notion of the Fall of Man and universal sin. The main scriptural affirmation of the doctrine is found in the writings of St. Paul**

**and particularly in Romans 5:12–19**, a difficult passage in which Paul establishes a parallelism between Adam and Christ, stating that whereas sin and death entered the world through Adam, grace and eternal life have come in greater abundance through Christ.” – Britannica.com

- h. Romans 5 – “By one man” – Does this passage teach that all men are conceived/born sinners or with a sinful nature? No.

**Romans 5:10** For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. **11** And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. **12** Wherefore, **as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and (2532) so (3779) death passed upon all men, for (1909) that (3739) all have sinned:** **13** (For until the law sin was in the world: but **sin is not imputed when there is no law.** **14** Nevertheless **death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression**, who is the figure of him that was to come. **15** But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For **if through the offence of one many be dead**, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. **16** And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: **for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.** **17** For **if by one man’s offence death reigned by one;** much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) **18** **Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.** **19** For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. **20** Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: **21** **That as sin hath reigned unto death**, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

i. Verses 13-14

1. What is the meaning of the phrase “sin is not imputed when there is no law?”
  - a. Is Paul saying that since God did not count men’s sins prior to the Law, the only explanation for why men died is if they inherit Adam’s guilt? Perhaps this is what Calvinism might want this to mean. But this is not what this passage means.
    - i. Consider that the phrase “sin is not imputed” would mean that God did not count men guilty before the Law, so how could they have inherited Adam’s guilt if they are counted not guilty?

2. Verses 13-14 have to be understood in terms of Paul's opening arguments from chapter 1-2 in which he argues that prior to the Law of Moses, the knowledge of sin and even knowledge that those who sin deserve death came by means of the order of visible creation. This is why these men could be counted guilty before the Law of Moses even though they didn't violate a commandment they had been given by God as Adam had done.

**Romans 1:19** Because **that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.** **20** For **the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,** even his eternal power and Godhead; **so that they are without excuse...** **29** Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, **30** Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, **31** Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: **32** **Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death,** not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them... **Romans 2:12** For **as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law:** and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; **13** (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. **14** For **when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law,** these, **having not the law, are a law unto themselves...**

- a. Paul is not saying that men died even though God was not counting their sins.
  - b. Rather, Paul is offering the fact that men died before the Law as corroboration of his earlier point that prior to the Law men were condemned according to what was made known in the visible created order.
  - c. Their deaths prove that natural order was sufficient for them to be guilty and die even without a spoken command like Adam received.
  - d. Therefore, Romans 5 doesn't teach that all men are counted guilty of sin simply as a result of being descendants of Adam.
- ii. Additionally, the Greek word "houto/houtos" indicates a pattern.

### **3779 houto or houtos**

from 3778; ; adv

AV-so 164, thus 17, even so 9, on this wise 6, likewise 4, after this manner 3, misc 10; 213

1) **in this manner**, thus, so

**Matthew 5:12** Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: **for so (3779) persecuted they the prophets which were before you.**

**Matthew 6:9** **After this manner (3779) therefore pray ye:** Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

**Acts 1:11** Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, **which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so 3779 come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.**

**1 Corinthians 7:17** But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. **And so 3779 ordain I in all churches.**

**2 Timothy 3:8** Now as **Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so 3779 do these also resist the truth:** men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

### 1909 epi

a root; ; prep

AV-on 196, in 120, upon 159, unto 41, to 41, misc 339; 896

1) upon, on, at, by, before

2) of position, on, at, by, over, against

3) to, over, on, at, across, against

1. The point is that each man followed Adam's pattern of sinning and then receiving the death sentence when or "upon" their sinning.
  - a. Therefore, guilt is not inherited from ancestry. It is earned when each man himself follows in the pattern of Adam by committing sin himself and is then counted guilty.
2. James confirms that each man is drawn into sin by following his own desires and only then received death after his desires have gone beyond mere desires to the real act of sinning.

**James 1:14** **But every (1538) man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**

- iii. In Romans 5:14, the phrase, "even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression" simply refers to the fact that from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, most sins were not in violation of a declared commandment from God.
  1. (Even Noah's covenant only contained 2 declared commandments regarding sin.)

- a. The difference is not that one had sinned and the other had not, but rather that they had committed different sins under different conditions, yet the same punishment was applied to all, not because all were descended from Adam, but because each had sinned.
2. Furthermore, God didn't have to pronounce the punishment more than once. The punishment for sin was made known from the first sin and applied to all who afterward followed Adam's example/pattern of sinning.
- iv. Ultimately, in Romans 5:12 if Adam's sin and death cause "all" men to sin and die then Christ's obedience and resurrection cause "all" men to obey and become resurrected. (All mankind would be saved. No one would be condemned.) Since all men do not become obedient "in Christ" then we cannot conclude that Romans 5 teaches that all men become "disobedient" merely by being descended from Adam.
  1. The two individuals (Christ and Adam) merely introduce these patterns to the world of men. Once they introduce these patterns they are available for all other men to follow as men choose whether disobedience and death (as Adam) or obedience and eternal life with God (as Christ).
5. Romans 6 – "Slaves to Sin" – Does this passage teach that all men are born as slaves to sin? No.

**Romans 6:6** Knowing this, that our **old man** is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, **that henceforth we should not serve sin.** 7 For **he that is dead is freed from sin.** 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that **Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.** 10 For **in that he died, he died unto sin once:** but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 **Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin,** but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 **Let not sin therefore reign** in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 **Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God,** as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For **sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law,** but under grace. 15 What then? **shall we sin, because we are not under the law,** but under grace? God forbid. 16 Know ye not, that **to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?** 17 But God be thanked, that **ye were the servants of sin,** but ye have obeyed from the heart **that form of doctrine which was delivered you.** 18 **Being then made free from sin,** ye became the **servants of righteousness.** 19 I speak after the manner

of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for **as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity** unto iniquity; **even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.** 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- i. Verses 14-15 state that the reason for sin's dominion is the Law of Moses, not inheriting anything from Adam.
  - ii. Every word that Paul uses for servitude he always applies to both sin and righteousness.
  - iii. Notice the repeated use of the word "yield."
  - iv. The entire passage is Paul encouraging his audience to choose not to sin but to choose to obey God.
  - v. **Ultimately, if we are capable of choosing sin instead now that we are made servants of God , then saying we were servants of sin does not mean we were incapable of choosing God instead.**
  - vi. Furthermore, there is good reason to conclude that "sin" here is meant as a title for a personal being (the devil). If this is the case, then we cannot interpret this passage in support of a "sinful nature" that is within us. Rather, "sin" is being discussed as external and distinct from men in the same way that God is external and distinct from men. Men can either serve sin or God. Neither sin nor God can be equated with a "nature" that is internal to men. (For more on this subject and Romans 5-6 please see our "Priesthood and the Kinsman Redeemer" study.)
6. Romans 7 – Paul Indicates “We sin whether we want to or not” – Does this teach that all men are born with a sinful nature or programming? No.

**Romans 7:7** What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, **I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.** 8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead. 9 For **I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.**10 **And the commandment**, which *was ordained* to life, **I found to be unto death.** 11 **For sin, taking occasion by the commandment**, deceived me, and by it slew *me*. 12 Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 **For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.** 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me

(that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: **for to will (2309) is present (3873) with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.** 19 For the good that I would (2309) I do not: but the evil which I would (2309) not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would (2309) not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when **I would (2309) do good**, evil is present (3873) with me. 22 For **I delight in the law of God after the inward man:** 23 But I see **another law in my members**, warring **against the law of my mind**, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 **I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.** So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

- i. Notice that Paul's contrast is between the fact that the body wants sin vs. and the capacity of the mind or inner man to choose good.
  1. Paul never depicts the mind of men as incapable of choosing good. He only identifies the desires of the body as an obstacle to the correct exercise of the choice to obey God.
  2. This is comparable to Jesus' statements in Matthew 26:41.

**Matthew 26:41** Watch and pray, **that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**

3. Neither Jesus nor Paul indicates that men's minds and spirits are inherently conditioned to choose sin by some sinful nature or programming. Rather both Jesus and Paul teach that men's minds and spirits can desire and will to do right. They must simply overcome desires of the flesh which do not care about God's commandments.
- ii. How Paul explains his difficulty in doing what was right.
  1. In verse 7, notice that Paul starts by talking about the information content found in the Law of Moses.
    - a. Paul gives the example that his knowledge of lust came from the Law's command, "thou shalt not covet."
    - b. So, Paul starts by saying that in the Law he finds a description of sinful behaviors.
  2. In verse 18, what reason does Paul give for why he didn't do what was in the Law of Moses?
    - a. Paul does not say this is due to a sinful tendency received from Adam.
    - b. Rather, Paul says this happened because in the Law of Moses Paul did not find instruction on how to do good and avoid evil, only the command not to sin.



1. Rather, these phrases refer to the repeated New Testament idea that sinners were condemned to physically die, particularly as dictated by the Law of Moses.

**Ephesians 2:1** And you hath he quickened, **who were dead in trespasses and sins;**

**Ephesians 2:5** Even when **we were dead in sins**, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

**Colossians 2:13** And you, being **dead in your sins** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses

2. These phrases refer to repeated New Testament idea that sinners were condemned to physically die, particularly as dictated by the Law of Moses.
  - ii. In addition, Christians still can and do at times choose to sin yet Paul says we are “dead to sin.” Since being “dead to sin” and “dead with Christ” does not make us unable to choose sin, there is no reason to suggest that the contrasting phrase being “dead in sin” means that we are unable to choose God, faith, or obedience.

**Romans 6:1** What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin**, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall **we, that are dead to sin**, live any longer therein?...7 For **he that is dead is freed from sin**. 8 Now if we be **dead with Christ**, we believe that we shall also live with him.

**Colossians 2:20** Wherefore **if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world**, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?

- c. Romans 9 – “It is not of him that willeth” – Does this mean that men are unable to choose to do right? No.

**Romans 9:16** So then **it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth**, but of God that sheweth mercy.

- i. There is no denial of human ability to choose here.
- ii. This passage actually teaches that willing and enduring is of men and men both will and endure.
- iii. The dependence upon God is not in causing men to will or to endure, but in God’s choice to show mercy to the disobedient by forgiving their sins through the sacrifice of His own Son.
- d. 1 Corinthians 15 – “In Adam all die” – Does this mean that all men are sinful because they are descended from Adam? No.

**1 Corinthians 15:21** For since **by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.** 22 For as **in Adam all die**, even so **in Christ shall all be made alive.**

- i. The phrase “in Adam” is here juxtaposed to the directly parallel phrase “in Christ.”
- ii. Although not necessarily every occurrence, throughout the New Testament (including the Corinthian epistles) the phrase “in Christ” has to do with following Christ’s teaching and following his example.
  1. Here are some examples of this New Testament use of being “in Christ.”

**John 15:3** Now ye are clean **through the word which I have spoken unto you.** 4 **Abide in me, and I in you.** As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye **abide in me.** 5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: **He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.** 6 **If a man abide not in me,** he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, **and cast them into the fire,** and they are burned. 7 **If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,** ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. 9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 **If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.**

**1 Corinthians 3:1** And **I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but** as unto carnal, **even as unto babes in Christ.** 2 **I have fed you with milk, and not with meat:** for hitherto ye were **not able** to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

**1 Corinthians 4:15** For though ye have ten thousand **instructors in Christ,** yet have ye not many fathers: for **in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.** 16 Wherefore I beseech you, **be ye followers of me.** 17 For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, **who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.**

**2 Corinthians 2:17** For we are not as many, which corrupt **the word of God:** but as of sincerity, but as of God, **in the sight of God speak we in Christ.**

**2 Corinthians 11:3** But I fear, lest by any means, **as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty,** so your minds should be corrupted from **the simplicity that is in Christ.** 4 For if he that cometh **preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached,** or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, **or another gospel,** which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him...10 As

**the truth of Christ is in me**, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

**2 Corinthians 12:19** Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? **we speak before God in Christ:** but we do all things, dearly beloved, **for your edifying.**

**Colossians 1:28** **Whom we preach**, warning every man, **and teaching every man in all wisdom;** that we may present every man perfect **in Christ Jesus:**

**2 John 1:9** Whosoever transgresseth, and **abideth not in the doctrine of Christ**, hath not God. He that **abideth in the doctrine of Christ**, he hath both the Father and the Son.

2. The parallel phrase “in Adam” conveys those who follow in Adam’s example/example (just as in Romans 5:12, Paul uses the Greek word “houtos” to say that all men follow Adam’s example or pattern of sinning and then incurring the penalty of death).
3. The phrase “in Adam” does not convey that we inherit Adam’s guilty or punishment by virtue of being his offspring.
- iii. Moreover, in this passage, the parallel phrases “in Christ” and “in Adam” only pertain to death and resurrection, NOT behavior.
  1. This is made plain by the fact that “**all** men die” and “**all** men are made alive.”

**Daniel 12:2** **And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.**

**John 5:28** Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which **all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.**

(Revelation 20:4-13)

2. If this phrase is applied to all mankind as inheriting behavior, it would necessarily also imply that all mankind will automatically inherit behavior from Christ and be obedient to God.
3. Therefore, 1 Corinthians 15 is not teaching that all men inherit a sinful nature from Adam at birth that causes them to sin.
- e. What does the New Testament mean by the “flesh”? Is it referring to an innate, inherited programming which prevents men from choosing to do good or which causes them to sin? Or is it a

reference to desires that seek fulfillment without regard for compliance with God's commands?

**Romans 6:19** I speak after the manner of men **because of the infirmity of your flesh (4561)**: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

**Romans 7:5** **For when we were in the flesh (4561)**, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

**2 Peter 2:10** But chiefly **them that walk after the flesh (4561)** in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous *are they*, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities...18 For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through **the lusts of the flesh (4561)**, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

**1 John 2:16** For all that *is* in the world, **the lust of the flesh (4561)**, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

- i. This Greek word for "flesh" simply refers to the body.

#### **4561 sarx**

probably from the base of 4563; TDNT-7:98,1000; n f

AV-flesh 147, carnal 2, carnally minded + 5427 1, fleshly 1; 151

1) flesh (the soft substance of the living body, which covers the bones and is permeated with blood) of both man and beasts

2) the body

**Matthew 19:5** And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and **they twain shall be one flesh (4561)**?

**Luke 24:39** Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for **a spirit hath not flesh (4561) and bones**, as ye see me have.

**Acts 2:17** And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, **I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh (4561)**: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

**Romans 1:3** Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, **which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh (4561)**;

- ii. The basic concept:
  1. The body has desires and cravings due in part to the weakness of its mortal nature.
  2. The body is itself not evil or sinful.

3. The things the body wants are not necessarily sinful (food, drink, rest, even affectionate contact).
  4. But the body does not care about how we get these things or the circumstances under which they are appropriate or not.
  5. And many circumstances and means are sinful.
  6. Thus, the desires of the body lead us into sin and if we want to avoid sin, we must struggle to subdue the desires of the flesh to God's commands.
  7. There is no need to suppose the existence of a sinful mental programming or to deny the ability of man to choose faith and obedience at any point in time.
- iii. James 1 and Romans 6-8 express that man can choose to avoid sin by responsibly not indulging in desires of our bodies which are (or in ways that are) contrary to God's commands.
1. Notice that the passages which speak of these things always speak of them in terms of the desires of the body.
  2. Notice that these passages always affirm the mind's capacity to choose to overcome or submit to the body's desires.

**James 1:13** Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But **every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.** 15 **Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**

**Romans 6:1** What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness of his* resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that **our old (3820) man (444) is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.** 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 **Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.** 12 **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.** 13 **Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin:** but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over

you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. 15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. 16 **Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?**

3. Verse 6 – Notice that the term “old man” (3820/palaios = old, 444/anthropos = man) is simply a figure of speech for the lifestyle and conduct we used to follow (Eph. 4) and every passage mentioning it always describes that whether we continue to live in sinful indulgence disregarding God’s commands or repent and submit to God is a matter of choice.

**2 Corinthians 5:16** Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. 17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

**Ephesians 4:21** If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation (391) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye **put on the new man**, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

### **391 anastrophe**

from 390; TDNT-7:715,1093; n f

AV-conversation 13; 13

1) manner of life, conduct, behaviour, deportment

**Colossians 3:5** Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 7 **In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.** 8 **But now ye also put off all these;** anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; 10 **And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.**

**Romans 6:17** But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart (2588) that form of doctrine which was delivered you. 18 **Being then made free from sin,** ye became the servants of righteousness.

**2588 kardia**

prolonged from a primary kar (Latin, cor, "heart"); TDNT-3:605,415; n f AV-heart 159, broken hearted + 4937 1; 160

1) the heart

1a) that organ in the animal body which is the centre of the circulation of the blood, and hence was regarded as the seat of physical life

...

2b1) the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavours

2b2) of the understanding, the faculty and seat of the intelligence

2b3) of the will and character

2b4) of the soul so far as it is affected and stirred in a bad way or good, or of the soul as the seat of the sensibilities, affections, emotions, desires, appetites, passions

4. What delivers us from sin? (The choice to obey sound doctrine.)
5. Notice (below) that Paul is about to "speak after the manner of men."
  - a. (Romans 7:1-4 also uses a metaphorical comparison.)
  - b. These passages attest that it is within our power of choice (Romans 6:19) to either continue to indulge in desires contrary to God's will or to obey God's teaching.

**Romans 6:19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.** 20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. 21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things *is* death. 22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. **7:1 Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?** 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. 3 So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. **4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.** 5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions (3804) of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to **bring forth fruit unto death.**

### 3804 pathema

from a presumed derivative of 3806; TDNT-5:930,798; n n

AV-suffering 11, affliction 3, affection 1, motion 1; 16

- 1) that which one suffers or has suffered
- 2) an enduring, undergoing, suffering

- c. Below Paul explains that though he desires in his mind to do good and obey God, the Law of Moses did not explain how to avoid sin. It simply told us not to sin. Here again, he upholds that men can have a will to do what is right and need to be shown (as Christ did) how to carry out our good intentions with correct action.

**Romans 6:6** But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that **we should serve** in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter. 7 What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, **I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.** 8 **But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.** For without the law sin *was* dead. 9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death. 11 **For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.** 12 Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but **I am carnal**, sold under sin. 15 For **that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.** 16 **If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.** 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh [4561],) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

6. By “I find not,” Paul is speaking of what he finds in the Law in contrast particularly to verses 7-8 and 11, where the knowledge of sin comes from the Law. In verse 17, Paul explains that the Law didn’t inform him of how to avoid and subdue sinful desires.

**Romans 6:19** For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 **But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.** 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body

**(4983) of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.**

**4983 soma**

from 4982; TDNT-7:1024,1140; n n

AV-body 144, bodily 1, slave 1; 146

1) the body both of men or animals

2) the bodies of planets and of stars (heavenly bodies)

7. Notice (below) that Romans 8 stops speaking with figures of speech and plainly defines the “carnal mind” as being mindful or attentive to the desires of the body rather than the desires of God. Here, the “carnal mind” is simply a mind which is focused on fulfilling desires of the body without regard for violating God’s commandments. Once again, Paul indicates that within a man is the power to choose either to serve God or pursue bodily desires contrary to God’s commands (verses 1, 5, 13).

**Romans 8:1** *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, **who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.** 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh:** 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, **who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.** 5 **For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.** 6 **For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.** 7 **Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.** 8 **So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.** 9 **But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,** if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 **For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.** 14 **For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.**

8. Concerning verse 14, who we are led by is about who we choose to follow just as in chapter 6:11-18 (particularly 16), Paul says that a man is a servant to whoever he yields himself to. Once again, men have within them the power to choose to do good or act sinfully. There is no mention of an overriding sinful

nature or programming which causes us to choose sin or prevents us from choosing to do what is right.

**Romans 8:15** For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then **heirs; heirs** of God, and **joint-heirs with Christ**; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For **the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth** for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 **For the creature was made subject to vanity (3153), not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,** 21 Because the creature itself also shall be **delivered from the bondage of corruption (5356)** into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 **For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth** in pain together until now. 23 And not only *they*, but **ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit**, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.**

9. Subject to vanity and corruption (verse 20) does not refer to a sinful programming, but to the fact that God created the earth and mankind mortal and corruptible, so that when we sinned, he might redeem us by means of sacrificial death, hope, and resurrection (verse 21-23).

### **3153 mataiotes**

from 3152; TDNT-4:523,571; n f

AV-vanity 3; 3

- 1) what is devoid of truth and appropriateness
- 2) perverseness, depravity
- 3) **frailty, want of vigour**

### **5356 phthora**

from 5351; TDNT-9:93,1259; n f

AV-corruption 7, to perish + 1519 1, destroy 1; 9

1) **corruption, destruction, perishing**

1a) that which is subject to corruption, what is **perishable...**

- a. 1 Corinthians 15 also supports this conclusion. In both passages, Paul is saying that our bodies are mortal, not that our minds are incapable of choosing or doing right.

**1 Corinthians 15:38** But **God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body...**42 **So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption (5356); it is raised in incorruption...**49 And as we have borne

**the image of the earthy**, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; **neither doth corruption (5356) inherit incorruption.** 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; **We shall not all sleep**, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this **corruptible (5349) must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.** 54 So when this **corruptible (5349) shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality**, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, **Death is swallowed up in victory.**

#### **5349 phthartos**

from 5351; TDNT-9:93,1259; adj

AV-corruptible 6; 6

1) corruptible, perishing

7. Does scripture teach that men have a sinful “nature”?
  - a. The terms “sinful nature,” “sin nature,” or “carnal nature” are never used in the bible.

**Ephesians 2:3** Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; **and were by nature (5449) the children of wrath**, even as others.

- b. The New Testament uses the word “nature” to refer to what is revealed in the created order, not an inherent programming to sin that men receive from Adam.

**Romans 1:26** For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into **that which is against nature (5449)**:

**Romans 2:14** For when the **Gentiles**, which have not the law, **do by nature (5449) the things contained in the law**, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

- c. What happens to the meaning of “by nature the children of wrath” when the rest of Ephesians 2 is compared to Galatians 2:15? In the passages below we see that the terms “nature” and “flesh” refer simply to our natural bodies. They are not used to refer to some internal programming that prevents us from choosing good or forces us to choose sin.

**Galatians 2:15** We *who are* **Jews by nature (5449)**, and not sinners of the Gentiles...

**Romans 1:3** Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, **which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh (4561)**;

**Ephesians 2:11** Wherefore remember, that ye *being in time past Gentiles in the flesh (4561)*, who are called **Uncircumcision** by that which is called the **Circumcision** in the flesh made by hands; 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, **being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise**, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13 But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14 For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even the law of commandments contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. 18 For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. 19 **Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;** 20 And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner *stone*; 21 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

- i. The New Testament can also use the term “nature” to refer to whether a person had Jewish or Gentiles ancestry, not an inherent programming to sin that men receive from Adam. (Jewish ancestry meant that you were genetically a part of God’s people as defined by the covenant of Moses and as such you were designated for God’s favor. Gentile ancestry meant that you were genetically separated from God’s people as defined by the covenant of Moses as such you were designated for God’s wrath. It never referred to something inherited from Adam or created by Adam’s sin, only to something created by the precepts of the covenant that was established in the time of Moses, thousands of years after Adam.)

**Romans 2:27** And shall not **uncircumcision which is by nature (5449)**, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?

**Romans 11:21** For if God spared not **the natural (5449) branches**, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee...24 For if thou wert cut out of **the olive tree which is wild by nature (5449)**, and wert **grafted contrary to nature (5449)** into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, **which be the natural (5449) branches**, be grafted into their own olive tree?

- ii. The above passages show that “nature” is used to refer to:
  1. What can be known from creation
  2. What men can or have learned and adopted over the course of their lives and put into practice as habit.

- a. The Jewish people had received God's teachings through the law and put them into practice (as a nation and as individuals).
- 3. Jewish or Gentile Ancestry
  - iii. The New Testament does not use "nature" to refer to programming that causes men to choose sin or not to choose good.
  - d. Scripture does specifically state that God does not allow temptation that surpasses an individual's ability to resist. This again reinforces that God ensures men's ability to choose right when tempted to sin.
    - i. Moreover, Paul correlates this directly to all kinds of temptation as it is common to all mankind, which indicates that this is not just true for Christians but all men: **God does not permit men to be tempted beyond what they can resist.**

**1 Corinthians 10:13** There hath no temptation taken you **but such as is common to man**; but **God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able**; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

#### 8. Conclusions

- a. The New Testament does teach that the physical body desires physical enjoyments without regard for God's Law.
- b. But the desire **of the body** is always contrasted with affirmations of the capacity **of the mind and inner man** to choose repentance, obedience, and faith.
- c. The New Testament does not teach that men have sinful programming that causes us to sin or prevents us from freely choosing to obey, repent, or believe.