

Foundations I, Part 2: Mankind and Jesus Christ

How did God create man?

God created man, male and female, in his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with rule over the creatures.

Genesis 1:26–28

[26] Then 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 birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

[27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. [28] And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

God used a pattern when he created man, and that pattern was himself, his own image! Man was made to be like God on the creaturely level. Man as created knew God, thought and acted righteously, and was pure in heart and full of love for his Maker. Man is the special creation of God. Man is made as a race – a creature reproducing itself through successive generations. It is our descent from Adam and Eve that gives us kinship by blood with all other human beings on earth ([Acts 17:26](#)).

Did our first parents continue in the state in which they were created?

Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state in which they were created by sinning against God.

Genesis 3:1–8

[1] Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” [2] And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, [3] but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” [4] But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. [5] For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” [6] So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. [7] Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

[8] And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

How could man fail, since he was made righteous and in God’s image?

Though he was created righteous, yet his will was mutable; and he therefore sinned by abusing that liberty.

What is sin?

Sin is any failure to measure up to what God requires, or any disobedience to his commands.^[a]

Romans 3:23

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

There are things we omit to do and things we do that we should not. But all must be measured by God’s standard not by our feelings. Sin is not just a matter of actions but extends to our thoughts and desires as well.

Definition of sin: sin is anything that does not conform to the glory of God, what God intended us to be. Romans 3:23 shows us that Jesus Christ is the standard by which we are measured and we all fall short. Sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and death came as the penalty. And the proof that all men are sinners by nature is the fact that all people died during the thousands of years before the Law was given to Israel, and they didn't have a code to tell them what was right and wrong. When the Law was given, those with the Law disobeyed it and those without the law also sinned. The fact that they died proved it.

What impact did that first sin have?

1. Death (spiritual separation from God and eventual physical death)

Genesis 2:16–17, “*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, [17] but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*”

Genesis 3:22–24, “*Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—” [23] therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. [24] He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”*”

2. Spiritual death for all Adam’s descendants

Did all mankind fall in Adam’s first disobedience?

Since the covenant of life was made with Adam^[a] for his descendants as well as for himself, all mankind descending from him in the ordinary manner, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.^[b] Romans 5:12, “*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned*”

Adam was the natural head and parent of the race, and it was fitting that in the test God set he should act as a representative person, and not as a mere individual. He was like a mountain climber to whom we’re roped so as best to reach the top. But when he fell we fell too. The words sinned in him, and fell with him do not mean that we personally committed Adam’s sin, but rather that his sin is reckoned to us according to the representative principle, so that we are justly charged with its penalty and are involved in its consequences. Jesus, as true man, is descended from Adam as we are, but not in the ordinary manner (see [Q. 22](#)).

3. Now every descendent is born with a sin nature.

Psalms 51:5, “*Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*”

Sinfulness consists of two parts – the sin of our natures and the sins of our lives. When we do wrong there is something wrong behind it. Our nature is wrong, and so we think, say, and do wrong things. A bad tree bears bad fruit.

I sin because I am a sinner!

4. Now every descendent lives in a broken world.

Genesis 3:16–19, “*To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.” [17] And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; [18] thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the*

field. [19] By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Did God leave all mankind in this sinful state?

God, solely out of his love and mercy, from all eternity elected some to everlasting life, and entered into a covenant of grace to deliver them out of the state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.

Genesis 3:15

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

Verse 15 is known as the proto-evangelium — the first Gospel. It proclaims that God’s people will finally triumph over the serpent (see [1 John 3:12](#)). The “seed of the woman” is a collective noun, indicating corporate victory. However, if left to ourselves, we cannot win this war. No, it took Jesus, Eve’s seed par excellence, to deliver the crushing blow ([Col. 2:15](#)), and if we are in Him, we share in and extend His victory ([Matt. 28:19](#); [Rev. 20:4](#)).

Ephesians 1:3–6

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, [6] to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.”

Here we see the origin and foundation of the remedy God has provided for human sin and need. God has chosen some, indeed, a great number, to be saved. He has his reasons for his choice, but these reasons are in him not in us. We are not chosen because of anything in us or because we have some claim on God. It is solely of his love and mercy, and we do not deserve, nor can we earn, his favour. God’s choice was made in his own mind before creation, and a covenant made with Christ on behalf of elect sinners. Christ undertook the part of a Redeemer, that is, he agreed to place himself in the position of those the Father had given him, and to meet their obligations. In this way he would redeem them, that is, buy them back from bondage.

Who is the Redeemer?

The only Redeemer of God’s elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two distinct natures and one person forever.

1 Timothy 2:5–6

“For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, [6] who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.”

John 1:1–3, 14

[1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. [14] And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 14:6 *“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

We cannot get salvation on our own terms but on God's terms. Christ is the only Redeemer. The Son of God voluntarily came into this world and without ceasing to be what he always was (the second person of the Trinity) he became also what he was not (a true man). We call this the incarnation, Jesus is not someone halfway between God and man, but he is both God and man. And in our nature, Christ is now in heaven as our ever-living Savior.

How did Christ, the Son of God, become man?

Christ, the Son of God, became man by taking to himself a body and a soul like ours, being conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Matthew 1:18–23

“[18] Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. [19] And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. [20] But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. [21] She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” [22] All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: [23] “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).”

The Divine person took to himself a true human nature. Jesus' humanity was a true humanity because he was born of a true, human mother. It was a perfect humanity, not because Mary was different from other women, but because it was made for him by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was a real man. He was born a helpless baby, and grew up like other children. The only difference was that he never did wrong.

Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer, was a prophet, priest and king.

The name Christ is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Messiah, meaning Anointed One. Old Testament prophets, priests and kings were anointed with oil when they entered on their work. This points to the way Jesus was specially helped by the Holy Spirit from the beginning of his public ministry.

Jesus as a prophet:

Christ fills the office of a prophet in revealing to us by his Word and Spirit the will of God for our complete salvation.

Luke 4:18–21

“[18] “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, [19] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” [20] And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. [21] And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.””

A prophet is a person who speaks for God, not only about the future but about the present too. He makes plain what God requires. We need a prophet because we are ignorant of God's way. Though Christ is now in heaven, he teaches us by his written word (the Bible), and has promised the Holy Spirit to remove the darkness of our minds.

Jesus as a priest:

Christ fills the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself to God as a sacrifice, to satisfy divine justice^[a] and reconcile us to God;^[b] and in making constant intercession for us.^[c]

Hebrews 4:14–16

“Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. [15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

A priest is a person appointed by God from among men to represent them before God. He offers sacrifice and speaks to God (intercedes) for them. We need a priest because we are guilty. Christ gave himself for us. His was a perfect sacrifice, and fully adequate to satisfy God’s wrath, so it occurred once only and cannot be repeated. Now, in the virtue of his sacrifice, he appears in heaven for us. It is not necessary to suppose an audible pleading – his presence is enough.

Jesus as a king:

Christ fills the office of a king in making us his willing subjects, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Matthew 28:18–20

“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

A king is the chief authority over a people and a country, and in earlier times was no mere figurehead. We need a king because we are in bondage to sin. To truly receive Christ, we take him not only as our Teacher and our Saviour, but as our King as well. We accept his word, and we keep his commandments out of gratitude and love. Jesus has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. He is able to win us to himself, care for us in our weakness, and bring us at last, by his grace, into our eternal home.

Jesus’s Ministry: Humiliation

Christ’s humiliation consisted in being born, and that in a poor circumstance; in being subject to God’s law; in undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God and the curse of death on the cross; in being buried; and in continuing under the power of death for a time.

2 Corinthians 8:9

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”

Galatians 4:4–5

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, [5] to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

Humiliation means being brought low down. As God’s Son, Christ came to this earth from heaven, and by taking our nature he made himself nothing. ‘He accepted a dramatic reduction in status, undergoing a demotion and degradation so complete that at last his identity was totally obscured and all that could be seen was a man disgraced and damned, his death throes intensified by his terrible sense of alienation from God.’ (Prof Donald Macleod). Notice [in the answer] the past tense – consisted.

Jesus's Ministry: Exaltation

Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day; in ascending into heaven; in sitting at the right hand of God the Father; and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

Acts 2:32–34

“This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. [33] Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. [34] For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand,”

Exaltation means being raised up from a low position to a high one, and this Christ received as a reward for his obedience in our place. It is the state in which our Saviour is now hence the present tense, consists. The ascension meant the end of Christ's personal presence until he returns at the last day. The right hand of the Father means the position or authority. This has been given to Christ by the Father.

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