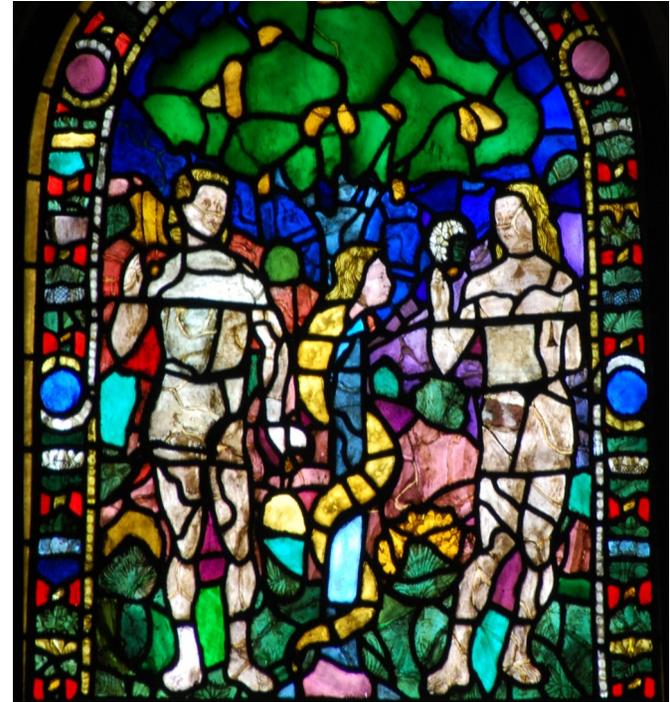


# This We Believe

## “Man and Sin”



### Statement 5

Statement of faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America

**“We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is, therefore lost, and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.”**



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Booklet 5 of 12 in the series, “This We Believe” on the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America and His Place Church in Post Falls, Idaho.

Parts of this publication are taken from the sermon entitled, “Man and Sin” by Senior Pastor Doug Wieber of His Place Church July 20, 2003 at His Place Church in Post Falls, Idaho.

Tapes and/or CD’s of the sermon, “Man and Sin” are available at His Place Church by calling 208-777-9654 or toll free at 800-574-1855.

Unless otherwise noted all scripture quotes are from the New International Version of the Holy Bible.

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As we continue in our study of the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Free Church of America, we have come to what is a favorite subject for many of us! Statement 5 reads,

*"We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is, therefore lost, and only through regeneration' by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained."*

As we begin our study of "*Man and Sin*" it is important to realize the significance of this topic. Clearly understanding who we are is absolutely necessary for understanding how we are to relate to God.

R.C. Sproul stated it this way, "*The crisis for modern humanity is found in the rupture between anthropology and theology, between the study of human beings and the study of God. When our story is told in isolation or divorced from the story of God, then it becomes as philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre declared, 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.'*"<sup>1</sup> If this is true, as we talk about who we actually are, the very meaning of life is at stake.

If we are the result of some cosmic accident, then our origins are totally insignificant. If our origin is insignificant then our destiny is equally insignificant. It has been reported that philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre said, "*If we emerge from slime by accident and finally disintegrate into a void of nothingness, then we live our lives between two poles of absolute meaninglessness. We are peeled zeroes, stripped naked of dignity and worth. To assign dignity to a human being temporarily, that is between two poles of a meaningless origin and a meaningless destiny, is to indulge ourselves in pure unvarnished sentiment. We tease ourselves with self-delusion.*" Simply put, if the beginning and end of our lives is meaningless, then what is in the middle is also meaningless. This is why it is important to realize that our origin and destiny are both tied to God.

As we look at who we are in view of God and the Bi-

ble, we will look at two very important facets of our nature. The first is that we are created in the image of God, and the second is that mankind has fallen from the state God originally created us in. As a result we all are separated from God because of our sin nature and are therefore under the just condemnation of God.

## CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

### CREATED

**Genesis 1:26-27** makes it very clear that mankind was created by God in His own image. Though there may be some disagreements about specifics, there are really three basic belief systems in regards to the origins of man.

#### 1. Organic Evolution

Evolutionists believe that time and chance are adequate to explain the development of life as we know it. The earliest life forms were single cells which then by the process of natural selection and mutation evolved into ever increasing life forms until we find the current apex of evolution--mankind.

The purpose of this study is not to discuss the merits or demerits of the arguments, but know that the proponents of the evolutionary theory for the origins of life are becoming less and less prevalent in the scientific realm, and the evolutionary model has serious difficulties answering a number of significant questions.

Observable nature and archeological evidence do support the concept of natural selection, but there simply is no support for the concept of one genus or species developing into another. Microbiology actually argues strongly against accident or chance as an adequate explanation of the origin of life because of the incredible complexity and interdependence of various systems in the human body. In

## QUESTIONS

1. What difference does it make in our lives if we were created in the image of God?
2. What areas of our lives are affected by our sin natures? Do you see that in your life and the lives of those around you?
3. What workable solutions have you found for actually removing the consequences and the tendency towards sin?

The Bible leaves us in a very precarious position. This is the story of the Bible, but not the whole story. Clearly understanding who we are, leads us to a place of desperateness, which is exactly where we need to be, and where God wants us. Apart from God's intervention we are godless, helpless, and hopeless. But there is good news, which leads us to the next subject that we will be covering in the following booklet (Salvation).

addition evolutionists struggle to answer the ultimate question of first cause.

## 2. Theistic Evolution

Theistic evolution is the belief that God was involved in creation, but He used the tool of evolution or some form of the evolutionary process to complete his creation

God can do anything He wants and therefore could use any process He wanted for creation. In some ways this theory seems like an attempt to integrate what the Bible says with what people have been taught about evolution.

There is a third model to explain creation and the origin of man which seems to me to best answer to the scientific and philosophic questions.

## 3. Biblical Creation

Genesis 1:1-2:5; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16;  
Hebrews 11 :3

Creation is the belief that a greater being (God) created from nothing. What we mean is that God did not use pre-existing elements or matter to put life into motion, He created life from nothing. There are a number of differences among creationists about how God created or how long creation took, most of which center around the term "day" in the Genesis account.

Since this term (day) can be, and is used in a number of ways in the Old Testament, there are those that believe the days described in the Genesis account are longer periods of time than literal 24 hour periods. This is known as the "*day-age theory*". There are also those who believe there may be time gaps between some of the verses or acts of creation in Genesis 1. This is known as the "*gap theory*". And finally there are those who believe in a literal 24 hour period of time. These people usually fall into the category of a relatively new earth belief. Meaning that the earth is only somewhere between 6 to 10 thousand years old.

My personal belief (not necessarily the belief of everyone in the Evangelical Free Church) is that the best interpretation is a literal 24 hour day in the Genesis account of creation. There are several things you may want to consider. One, God's power doesn't require time in order to create. Two, when God created the world, He would have had to create it in working order, meaning that it would have apparent age (which answers the question of the relative young age of the earth). And three, the Genesis flood explains most of the fossil records.

There are a number of terms used to describe what God did in the creation of the universe and life, but the bottom line is that He created all that is. The Bible also states that the creation of mankind (humans) is quite unique. The Bible states that God created man in *"His own image"*. (Genesis 1:26,27)

## MAN'S CREATION

### 1. Unique

Among all of God's creations, man is unique. Everything else is said to be created after its kind, but mankind is said to be created after the image of God Himself. Again, there has been much discussion about what that means, but there are a number of aspects that are unique to man. Mankind has intellect, will, and the ability to assess right from wrong.

Man is also created with a spirit and soul. The Bible says that God breathed into Adam (mankind) the breath of life. This is unique among his creation, and it is this immortal life imparted by God that separates mankind from the rest of the animal kingdom. In addition, God created mankind with the capacity and need for intimacy, both with Him and with others. (Genesis 2:18 and 3:8)

### 2. Supreme

Mankind is the pinnacle of God's creation (Genesis 1:26-30). Psalm 8 is about God's majestic creation and in

to what we were intended for. This leads to constant discontentment and frustration because as a result of sin we also became condemned.

## CONDEMED

Genesis 2:17. 3:21-24; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1

God promised Adam and Eve that sin results in death. It is as universal a truth as gravity is. The Bible talks about death in two separate ways. The first is physical death, and the second is spiritual death.

### 1. Physical death

Our bodies were not created to endure sickness and death. But, when Adam and Eve chose to sin, they traded one forbidden fruit for another. God prevented them from eating from the tree of life and the process of physical death began. Sickness and death are the result of sin! Not necessarily individual's sin, but the long term result of the curse. The Bible also speaks of another kind of death...

### 2. Spiritual Death

Matthew 13:24-30, 25:1-13, 25:31-46; Romans 2:5-11, 3:9-20, 5:10-21, 6:23; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 2:1-10; 2 Thessalonians 1 :8-10; Hebrews 9:27,10:27; 2 Peter 3

This "Spiritual" death is separation from God. A Holy God cannot dwell with sin, including those infected with sin. We therefore have become objects of God's wrath which will be poured out on sin. God is loving. He is also just and must rightfully condemn sin. Because of sin, mankind is headed to judgment and the verdict has already been pronounced. We are condemned to eternal separation from God. The startling but obvious truth, if we were honest, is that we are all rightly condemned. In Romans 3:19 it states, *"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God."*

The inevitable result of sin is broken relationships, and loss of intimacy, both with God and each other. Because Adam and Eve moved away from their relationship with God, God had to remove them from the very place they were created to enjoy with Him and with each other. This leads us to another part of the curse against mankind, they became frustrated.

## 2. Frustrated

**Genesis 3:14-24; Romans 8:22-23**

In the last part of **Genesis chapter 3** we find the curse that resulted from the choice of Adam and Eve. The earth itself is cursed, and so is man. We are currently living in a frustrated state.

In **Romans 8:22-23**, Paul uses the words “**groaning or longing**” to describe this frustration. It is the struggle of not being what we were designed to be.

Adam was designed by God to manage what God had created. He was intended for a purpose and now that purpose is dogged with frustration—the battle against weeds. It is the constant struggle to survive and provide. When Adam and Eve decided to usurp God’s authority, they and we inherited the responsibility that was only meant for God to bear.

Eve was designed to be Adam’s partner and help-mate. Now there is the constant need for attention and equality, with the constant frustration of being responsible and accountable to her husband. In addition, one of the greatest gifts given to woman, the result of her union with man (childbirth), became very painful. The very relationship that God had intended for security and intimacy became painful, scary, and frustrating because women now feel the responsibility to gain for themselves what God had freely offered to give.

Becoming our own gods has indeed brought universal frustration since we are not qualified to be what God is. Sin has created a permanent block. The curse we endure is universal, and our constant struggle is to try and get back

**verse 5** we read about mankind, “*You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings, and crowned him with glory and honor.*” A very legitimate translation of that verse is “*You made him a little lower than God.*”

Mankind is not simply the best that evolution has mustered up. We are not just sophisticated animals who have tapped into some cognitive force. We are the unique and ultimate creation of God, imparted in a unique way with His image. This leads us to man's responsibility.

# FALLEN MAN

## 1. Responsible

**Genesis 1 :26-28 and 2:16-17**

Along with mankind's supremacy is responsibility. Mankind was responsible for the management of the rest of God's creation on earth. He was also responsible for the moral decision making capacity that God gave him. Interestingly enough, with that capacity and responsibility God gave mankind opportunity to exercise his free will. By giving a negative command in **Genesis 2:16-17** God gave mankind the opportunity to choose between God's sovereignty and man's.

Part of being created in the image of God means that man is a moral creature. By that, we are saying that man has a free will and the capacity to understand and choose between good and evil. God, Himself, gave this capacity to choose in His creation of man. In the **third chapter of Genesis** we find that Adam and Eve violated the one negative command that God gave them in **Genesis 2:17**.

When Adam and Eve chose to violate God's sovereign rule in their lives, they chose their independence from God. But, it is this independence that keeps us from the very thing we were designed for, fellowship with God. It is at this point, when man chose evil instead of good, that sin entered into the human existence.

Sin is simply any violation of God's standards which are based on His character. Many of you know that the word "sin" is a common archery term used to describe "missing the mark". When Adam and Eve chose rebellion (sin) they missed God's design (target) for their lives, and they became sinful.

## 1. Sinful

**Ezekiel 28; Genesis 3; 1 John 3:8**

Sin did not originate with Adam and Eve! Another of God's creations, Lucifer (Satan), had decided that he wanted to be like God. It is into this rebellion that Satan invited Adam and Eve.

It is very interesting that Satan's strategy has always been the same, to doubt God's Word, His Character, and His rightful authority. As it is with most lies, Satan told partial truths. Adam and Eve did become "like God" in the sense that they became their own absolute authority. They also gained the knowledge of good and evil, but that knowledge came at a very high price. We were not designed to experience evil, and unfortunately evil is an all encompassing force. Innocence and sin cannot coexist. Either God is sovereign in our lives, or we are. The consequences of Adam and Eve's choices were and are devastating. They became sinful, literally permeated by sin.

Now it is imperative to note that Adam and Eve's choice did not only have the consequence for them, but also for the entire human race. We became sinful through their act.

As we continue to look at sin and its effects, we will see that we are guilty of sin in two ways. The first is by nature, the second by choice.

## 2. By Nature

**Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-26, 5:12-19, 8:1-11; 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:17-19; Titus 1:15-16; 1 John 1 :8-10**

The Bible teaches that through Adam's sin, mankind sinned. Since Adam and Eve became sinners, we as a race, became sinners. Every human born since (except Jesus Christ) has been born with a sin nature. This sin nature includes not only the capacity to sin, but the desire for and tendency towards sin. Unfortunately, there is no human remedy for this condition. Many don't like what the Bible says, but even if we want to deny that we are all sinners by nature, no one really can deny that we are sinners by choice.

## 3. By Choice

Not only are we sinful by nature, but we also choose to sin. **Romans 3:23** states that *"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* Furthermore, **1 John 1 :10** says, *"if we claim we have not sinned, we make Him (God) out to be a liar and His word has no place in our lives."*

No one in their right mind claims to have not sinned. We are corporately guilty of sin in Adam, and we are individually guilty of sin in ourselves. The Bible goes on to say that because we are sinful, we all stand guilty, already condemned before God.

God had promised that if Adam and Eve chose to sin, they would surely die, and God always keeps His word. It is because of this sin that we are now cursed and condemned.

## CURSED

### 1. Isolated

When Adam and Eve sinned, things immediately changed. For the first time they noticed their nakedness and they covered themselves. Their total innocence was gone and their intimacy with each other was affected. Their intimacy with God was also affected, and they hid (or tried to hide) from Him.