

Lesson 3

What We Believe

4. We believe that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God and that repentance is commanded of God for all and necessary for forgiveness of sins.

To understand man's sinful condition and need of repentance; we need to understand man's original condition in the Garden of Eden.

Gen. 1: 26 Then God said, "Let us make human beings in Our **image**, to be **like** Us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth and the small animals that scurry along the ground."

9:6 – "For in the image of God made He man."

Terms: IMAGE & LIKENESS:

Image = "the shadow or outline of a figure."

Likeness = "the resemblance of that shadow to the figure."

- They are synonymous that man was made in the image and likeness of God is basic to all God's dealings with man.

1 Cor 11:7 "A man should not wear anything on his head when worshiping, for man is made in God's image and reflects God's glory. And woman reflects man's glory."

Eph 4:21-24 "Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from Him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy."

Col 3:10 "Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like Him."

James 3:9 speaking of our tongues: "Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father and sometimes it curses those who have been made in the image of God."

"Let US make man in Our image to be in Our likeness"

Image does not denote physical likeness:

God is Spirit; He does not have parts and passions as a man – [not like Mormonism and Swedenborgian views which promote – viewing God as a greater human being].

Deut 4:15-18 “But be very careful! You did not see the Lord’s form on the day He spoke to you from the heart of the fire at Mount Sinai. So do not corrupt yourselves by making an idol in any form—whether of a man or a woman, an animal on the ground, a bird in the sky, a small animal that scurries along the ground or a fish in the deepest sea.”

We learn from the scriptures what this image and likeness consist of:

Eph 4:23-24 “Let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.”

Col 3:10 “Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like Him.”

The image of God consists of **knowledge**, righteousness and **holiness, moral, not physical likeness**.

Original man was endowed with intellectual faculties:

Gen 2:19, 20 “So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them and the man chose a name for each one.”

- Adam exhibited the power of speech, reason and thought.
- Ability to attach words to ideas.
- This was not what evolution believes – an infantile savage slowly groping his way towards articulate speech by imitating the sounds of animals.

Original man possessed moral and spiritual faculties:

Gen 3 was a moral test with Adam having the power to resist or yield to moral evil.

- Sin is a volitional thing.
- Jesus endured a similar test in the Garden of Gethsemane but did not fail. Matt 4.
- Man's original state was of a higher state from which he fell and has been degrading ever since.
- Man, even though linked to the animal creation, is a supra-natural being of a higher order and nature being in the image and likeness of God.

The Fall of Man:

The doctrine of the fall of man is not unique only to Christianity; all religions contain an account of it recognizing the seriousness.

Yet, the doctrine of the fall has a relation to Christianity that is not found in other religions or systems.

Christianity, due to its view of The Supreme Being reveals a higher idea of sin and its effects on humankind.

Genesis 3 account of the Fall – give the account of how sin came into the human race.

Sin was already in the world through the enemy's rebellion against the Creator – 1 John 3:8 "But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil."

Comparing Gen. 1:26 with Gen 6:5 reveals the results of the fall of man from fellowship with his Creator.

Gen. 1:26 "Let US make man in Our Image and likeness."

Gen. 6:5 "The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and He saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil."

The Nature of the Fall:

Adam & Eve were free moral agents – sinless beings, yet with the possibility for them to sin, just as possible for them not to sin.

- The sin of Adam & Eve was purely volitional – an act of their own determination.
- Temptation came from an outside source because there was no sin in the first human pair.
- The ungodly principle of sin was already in the world through the rebellion of satan and the angelic who sided with him.
- The essence of the first sin lay in the denial of the Divine will; an elevation of the will of man over the will of God.
- It was a deliberate trespassing of a divinely marked boundary, an overstepping of the Divine limits.
- The first sin was what every sin committed since has been, a positive disbelief in the Word of the living God. A belief in satan rather than a belief in God.

The same lines of temptation presented to Adam & Eve were presented to Christ in the wilderness: Matt. 4:1-11 and to mankind ever since – 1 John 2:15-17.

Matt 4:1-11 "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights He fasted and became very hungry. During that time the devil came and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread." But Jesus told Him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil took Him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple and said, “If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, ‘He will order His angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won’t even hurt Your foot on a stone.’” Jesus responded, “The Scriptures also say, ‘You must not test the Lord your God.’” Next the devil took Him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. “I will give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship me.” “Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only Him.’” Then the devil went away and angels came and took care of Jesus.”

1 John 2:15-17 “Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.”

The Results of the Fall:

1. On Adam & Eve – Gen. 3

- The ground was cursed – v.17
- Sorrow and pain to the woman in childbearing, subjection of the woman to the man – v.16
- Exhausting physical labor in order to subsist – v.19.
- Physical and spiritual death – v.19; 3:2; 5:5; Rom 5:12
- Shame and fear of God causing them to hide from His presence, expulsion from the Garden – Gen 3:8-11, 22-24

2. On the Human-race – because of the unity of the race in Adam and the organic unity of mankind, Adam’s sin is imputed to his posterity.

The nature man now possesses is like the corrupted nature of Adam.

Federal Headship of Adam:

In theology, federal headship is one theory used to explain imputation—how Adam’s sin was imputed to all his descendants and how Christ’s righteousness was imputed to those who believe the gospel. According to the federal headship theory, or federalism, Adam was the federal (or representative) head of the human race; Adam chose to sin and all of us are considered guilty, because he was our representative. Federal headship is seen as a possible

explanation of Paul's comparison of the roles of Adam and Christ in Romans 5:18: "As one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men" (ESV).

Adam's sin brought condemnation on the human race; Christ's sacrifice brought salvation for the whole race. The idea of federal headship involves the teaching that Adam was the first representative of the human race and Christ was the second representative.

Scriptural Teachings:

1. All men, without respect of condition or class are sinners before God.

Rom. 3:9, 10, 22, 23 "Well then, should we conclude that we Jews are better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin. As the Scriptures say, "No one is righteous—not even one.

We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."

Sin in Greek ***hamartia*** = "Missing the mark." Missing the mark of God's righteousness.

2. The universal sinful condition is connected with the sin of Adam.

Rom 5:12 "When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned."

5:19- "Because one-person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous."

This raises questions in people's minds:

1. How can man be held responsible for a depraved nature?
2. How can God justly impute Adam's sin to us?
3. What is imputed sin?

3. The whole world rests under condemnation – wrath – the curse!

Rom 3:19 "That every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God.

Gal 3:10 "But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God's Book of the Law."

Eph 2:3 “All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.”

- The law of God demands a perfect obedience; but no son of man can yield such obedience; the curse of the broken law rests upon those breaking it.
- The wrath of God abides on all not united by faith to Jesus Christ – John 3:36 “And anyone who believes in God’s Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn’t obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God’s angry judgment.”

4. Unregenerate men are regarded as children of the devil, and not sons of God.

1 John 3:8-10 “When people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. Those who have been born into God’s family do not make a practice of sinning because God’s life is in them. So, they can’t keep on sinning because they are children of God. So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God.”

John 8:44 “For you are the children of your father the devil and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

1 John 5:19 “We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one.”

5. The whole race of men are in helpless captivity to sin and satan.

Rom. 7; John 8:31-36; Eph 2:3

John 8:31-36 “Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” “But we are descendants of Abraham,” they said. “We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, ‘You will be set free’?”

Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. A slave is not a permanent member of the family but a son is part of the family forever. So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.”

Eph 2:3 “All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.”

Jesus said: “No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” Luke 13:3 ESV

6. The entire nature of man: Mental, Moral, Spiritual, Physical has been affected by sin.

Eph 4:18 “Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against Him.”

1 Cor 2:14 “But people who aren’t spiritual can’t receive these truths from God’s Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can’t understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means.”

Jer 17:9, 10 “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve.”

- **The mind and conscience are defiled:** Gen 6:5; Titus 1:15
“The Lord observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil.”
“Everything is pure to those whose hearts are pure. But nothing is pure to those who are corrupt and unbelieving because their minds and consciences are corrupted.”
- **The flesh and spirit are defiled:** Matthew 15:11 “It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.”
Matthew 15:18 “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart and those defile the man.”
- **The will is made feeble:** Rom 7:18 “And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t.”

This power of sin does not mean that mankind is absolutely without conscience or some sense of moral right and wrong; but without the love of God, the natural man has an aversion to God and righteousness – Rom 8:7 “For the sinful nature is always hostile to God. It never did obey God’s laws and it never will.”

Man is totally unable to free himself from the downward moral slide that opposes God – Rom 7:18, 23-25 “And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t.

But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. **Oh, what a miserable person I am!**

Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death?

Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.

So, you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

Rom 8:1-2 *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."*