

Salvation—The Fall and Depravity of Man

(1st)

(Today we are studying the fall and depravity of man and its connection to salvation.)

Like all of the other ways and works of God, why God allowed man to fall is incomprehensible. God could have created man as He did with the elect angel by keeping him from falling. Also, the Lord could have only created those He elected to salvation so that all mankind would be saved and none would be eventually condemned to the lake of fire. Equally, God could have only created elect angel (cf. I Timothy 5:21) and not others that would be cast into the lake of fire with the non-elect. While theologians have supplied their reasons or answers to such questions, in reality the answers lie in the depths of “the wisdom and knowledge of God,” Romans 11:33. As with all things, we can only say what the Scriptures reveal. It cannot be quoted too much and must be continually remembered: “The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are* revealed *belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law,” Deuteronomy 29:29. All too often man seeks to know or explain “the secret things” of God instead of doing what the Scriptures declare unto “us and to our children for ever.” I believe Robert Traill wisely said regarding the creation of Adam: “But it pleased God (and against that no man should reply) not to give him establishing, preserving grace. It seemed fit to God, that establishing grace should only be dispensed in and by Jesus Christ, who was to restore fallen man, and to be the head of a new and better covenant, of which Christ is Mediator, which was established on better promises, Heb. viii. 6.” Volume II, Page 208 of his *Works*.

After the Lord created the moon, stars, sun, and all the vegetative life and animal life He created the apex of His creation—man. Listen to the inspired words of Holy Scripture: “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. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 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,” Genesis 1:26-28. Further on, God revealed somewhat how He created the first man and woman. “And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. . . . And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. . . . And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh,” Genesis 2:7, 18, 21-24. God created everything “very good,” Genesis 1:31. Man was placed in a garden called Eden and was given the command to dress and keep it, Genesis 2:15. Furthermore, the Lord told Him that he could eat of everything in the garden except of “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil . . . for in the day that” he ate of it he would “surely die,” Genesis 2:16-17. Some have suggested that if Adam had lived long enough he would have attained eternal life. I find it strange that those who affirm such a belief never state how long Adam needed to live to attain such a state. All we can say is that as long as he obeyed he would have lived. There is no hint that if he or Eve lived so many years that either or both would have achieved eternal life. In reality, it is futile to suppose or infer what would have happened in the future because we know that he disobeyed the Lord and ate of the forbidden fruit.

Allow me to digress shortly and say that the forbidden fruit was not an apple as have been suggested by so many for many years. The question might be raised, “If not an apple, then, what was it?” It was the fruit of “the tree of knowledge of good and evil,” Genesis 2:9, 17. No, we do not (as far as we know) have

such a tree today but that does not mean that it did not exist. Just as there were dinosaurs and other creatures and plants that do not exist today, does not mean that they did not exist prior to the flood.

The command was that man was not to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the consequence of eating it was death. Since Adam represented the whole human race, the Scriptures tell us, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Romans 5:12. Note carefully that the verse says "all have sinned" by "one man." Even in the nineteenth verse declares, "by one man's disobedience many were made sin." The Greek word (καθίστημι [kathístēmi, *kath-is'-tay-mee*]) translated "made" means "constitute" among other synonyms, and carries the idea to be legally constituted sin. In Adam all mankind became "dead in trespasses and sins," Ephesians 2:1. This means everyone (other than Jesus) is born a sinner. He is not born sinless. David spoke to this in Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." At conception in the womb of his mother, David was a sinner. Note the words of John Gill regarding this verse: "Hence we learn the earliness of the corruption of nature; it is as soon as man is conceived and shapen; and that it is propagated from one to another by natural generation; and that it is the case of all men: for if this was the case of David, who was born of religious parents, was famous for his early piety, and from whose seed the Messiah sprung, it may well be concluded to be the case of all. And this corruption of nature is the fountain, source, and spring of all sin, secret and open, private and public;" Equally, the comments of Matthew Henry are apropos: "It is to be sadly lamented by every one of us that we brought into the world with us a corrupt nature, wretchedly degenerated from its primitive purity and rectitude; we have from our birth the snares of sin in our bodies, the seeds of sin in our souls, and a stain of sin upon both. This is what we call *original sin*, because it is as ancient as our original, and because it is the original of all our actual transgressions. This is that foolishness which is bound in the heart of a child, that proneness of evil and backwardness to good which is the burden of the regenerate and the ruin of the unregenerate; it is a bent to backslide from God." Even the Arminian, Adam Clarke, said of this verse: "I believe David to speak here of what is commonly called original sin; the propensity to evil which every man brings into the world with him, and which is the fruitful source whence all transgression proceeds." His concluding remark translates this verse as follows: "As my parts were developed in the womb, the sinful principle diffused itself through the whole, so that body and mind grew up in a state of corruption and moral imperfection." Obviously, we could provide many other comments from various authors to support the truth that man is defiled and designated a sinner, not only at birth, but even in the womb. In the Gospel of John, chapter nine, the disciples asked Jesus about the man that was born blind, "who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:1-3) Jesus replied, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Notice that Jesus did not correct the disciples by saying that the man could not sin while in the womb of his mother. He simply declared that the man was born blind "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." It is obvious that if the man was not a sinner he could not have been born blind because the reason there are diseases, sicknesses, and other deformities in life is because of sin. Likewise, death is the result of sin. Nevertheless, this man was allowed to be born blind so "that the works of God should be made manifest in him" by his healing by our Lord. However, the point regarding our subject is the possibility of him sinning or being a sinner prior to birth.

It is believed by many that the book of Job is the oldest book of the Bible and, if so, Job indirectly acknowledged the sinfulness of man. In Job 14:4, Job declared, "Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean? not one." In other words, since the parents of Job were sinners they could only produce another sinner. They could not produce an offspring different from their nature. Science teaches us that snakes produce snakes, dogs produce dogs, birds produce birds, and the list could be expanded. There is no proof of the contrary regardless of the presuppositions of some men who suppress or "hold the truth in unrighteousness," Romans 1:18.

Regarding Job 14:4, again we quote the comments of John Gill, “Either produce a clean person from an unclean one: it is not to be expected that one, perfectly free from sin, should be generated by, or brought out of, one that is defiled with it; which is the case of all men; the first man, though made upright, sinned, and by sinning defiled himself, and all human nature in him: and so those that immediately descended from him were polluted likewise, and so on in all generations, every man being conceived and shaped in iniquity; so that it is not possible that man that is born of a woman, sinful and unclean, should be clean himself, or be free from sin; by which it is manifest, that the sinfulness of human nature is unavoidable; it is natural and necessary, and cannot be otherwise, such being the case and circumstances of immediate parents, from whom men descend; and that this is the case of all men that come into the world by ordinary and natural generation; there is none righteous or pure from sin.” Even the Arminian John Clarke admitted the same in his comments: “The text refers to man’s original and corrupt nature. Every man that is born into the world comes into it in a corrupt or sinful state. This is called original sin; and is derived from fallen Adam, who is the stock, to the utmost ramifications of the human family. Not one human spirit is born into the world without this corruption of nature. All are impure and unholy; and from this principle of depravity all transgression is produced; and from this corruption of nature God alone can save.”

It is clear to honest men that according to the Scriptures man fell in the Garden of Eden and all mankind being represented in Adam sinned in him. (Romans 5:12)

Our time is up for today. The Lord willing we will have more to say regarding this subject in our next podcast. Farewell.