

Humanity and Sin

God created man and woman in His image. Humans are distinct from all other forms of creation, having spiritual as well as physical characteristics. Physically, each person has a body made from the elements of earth -- a body that grows, matures, and eventually returns to the earth in death. People also reflect certain moral discernment, spiritual awareness, and freedom of choice. As spiritual beings, humans are created to be in fellowship with God. We cannot find peace apart from a right relationship with God.

Freedom of Choice

The image of God in each person includes the capacity to make moral choices. We can choose good or evil, to obey or disobey God. The freedom to choose makes us responsible for our decisions and liable for their consequences.

We understand from Scripture that while God grants humanity this freedom of choice, God also knows the end from the beginning and in His wisdom and grace is working out His eternal purposes within human history.

Source of Sin

Man and woman were created sinless and innocent, living in harmony with God and creation. But evil entered the human family when Adam and Eve yielded to Satan's temptation. As they chose to disobey God, their nature became sinful. This sinful nature has been transmitted to all their descendants. Thus sin, moral depravity, and death became an inherent part of the human experience.

Satan, also called the devil, is the personal embodiment of evil and the original source of sin. His evil rule constantly rebels against the authority of God. We live in the arena of the resulting conflict, and must choose between the rule of Satan and the reign of God.

Effects of Sin

Corrupted by a sinful nature, humans are unholy, self-centered, self-willed, and rebellious toward God. In character and conduct, all humanity stands guilty before God. On our own, we cannot achieve any righteousness acceptable to God. Humanity's inclination toward evil is universal, and the accompanying guilt or shame is common to all people.

Through the fallen human family, sin permeates the social order, alienating persons from God, from one another, from themselves, and from the rest of creation. Sinfulness is evident in the breakdown of human relationships and family structures, in social and economic systems that violate God's order and ignore human dignity, in philosophical systems that deny God and deify humans, and in religious systems that distort truth and create illusions of reality.

In a world system permeated by satanic influence, sin is spread by human wickedness and the powers of evil. At the personal level, sin arises from the inner inclination toward disobedience and rebellion.

Personal Accountability



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Creation shows God's glory and nature to all people, therefore all are responsible to honor and glorify Him. While sin permeates the social order, accountability for sin remains personal. Each of us is accountable to God based on his or her personal ability to know and to choose good from evil. We believe that persons developmentally unable to discern right from wrong are accepted by God through His mercy, covered by the atonement of Christ.

With the fall of the human race into sin, the image of God in humanity was seriously flawed, but not totally destroyed. In spite of a bend toward evil, aspects of God's likeness remain in humankind, glimpsed in such characteristics as creativity, generosity, and compassion. Nevertheless, it is only by God's grace that people can respond to God's gift of salvation.

Supporting Scriptures

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[Genesis 1:26-28](#); [2:7-9,15-20](#); [9:1-6](#); [Psalm 8:3-8](#); [90:1-6](#); [139:13-16](#); [Ecclesiastes 12:1-7](#); [Acts 17:26-28](#)

Freedom of Choice

[Genesis 2:16-17](#); [Deuteronomy 30:15-20](#); [Matthew 7:13-14](#), [John 1:11-12](#); [Romans 12:1-2](#); [Ephesians 1:3-4](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#); [Revelation 22:17](#)

Source of Sin

[Genesis 3:1-19](#); [Psalm 51:5](#); [Isaiah 14:12-15](#); [John 8:44](#); [Romans 5:12](#); [Ephesians 2:1-3](#); [6:10-12](#)

Effects of Sin

[Psalm 53:1-3](#); [Isaiah 59:1-8](#); [64:6-7](#); [Romans 1:18-32](#); [3:9-20, 23](#); [5:12](#); [6:23](#)

Personal Accountability

[Genesis 1:27-30](#); [2:7-9, 16-17](#); [3:1-19](#); [Leviticus 4:27-35](#); [Ezekiel 18](#); [Mark 10:13-16](#); [Romans 1:18-20](#); [3:23](#); [2 Corinthians 5:10](#); [Ephesians 2:8-9](#)

