

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Original Sin**

**Original Sin - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/8/18 11:21**

An earlier posting mentioned that Paris Reidhead opposed the generally accepted view on Original Sin. I spent some time listening to the sermon (The Hidden Things of God Part 1) and sure enough he blames Augustine for this 'error'. In the course of his preaching there are a fair few opinions that Reidhead states as though they were absolute facts, but this may just be 'preaching style' rather than anything else.

His views on 'original sin', of course, put him in opposition not only to Augustine, but to Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Spurgeon, and most speakers on sermonindex.org. It also puts him in opposition to most, if not all, evangelical statements of faith. There are a few leaders in the UK of Reidhead's persuasion but it is a very small group in comparison to the more orthodox view. I don't know how folks view things across the water.

Is anyone willing to take to the lists on Reidhead's behalf?

**Re: Original Sin - posted by todd, on: 2003/8/18 11:57**

Yeah, that was me who posted the earlier posting concerning this. Although I take it into account, those that Reidhead is opposed to theologically, they could easily be off on this tradition.

As I stated before, Finney also denied this doctrine. And people being in opposition on points of doctrine is so common. Yes, Reidhead would be opposed to these men concerning original sin, but those men would be totally opposed to each other in other doctrinal areas. It seems that Christians in general are more offended by this doctrine being challenged for some reason. Perhaps because they have built (at least in part) on this doctrine as a foundation which of course is a problem.

I don't know of any living and well-known preachers who share Reidhead's understanding. I think part of the reason is because it has so much precedence in Church history that it's often not even questioned and is quickly accepted and thrown into students' theological grid. And if it is ever challenged, few want to take the time to discuss it because (as I agree) there can be much more important things to be doing, especially if you are a pastor.

It also seems to me that most of today's pastors aren't versed and studied in Philosophy and Logic (especially the history of). From what I have heard, Reidhead seems to be. And I know that Finney had quite a grasp on these things.

I think those might be some of the reasons why this doctrine goes largely unchallenged today. I would love to go deeper into this. I never have dove into this debate before.

**Re: Original Sin - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/8/18 13:23**

I'm going to wait a while to see if any others come into the discussion. oh well perhaps just a little provocation.. One of the reasons that people have taken such a strong stand on this issue is that it removes the need for regeneration. Hold on, let me explain. If I arrived in this world without sin and acquired it, it ought to be possible to remove it. If sin is only transgression it ought to be possible to forgive it. But if I inherited a congenital spiritual condition the only possible solution is a new start e.g. I need to be born again (from above). Let's see what others have to say..

**Re:, on: 2003/8/18 15:14**

I don't have time to go deeply into this at the moment but I think the revealing truths concerning this can be found in Paul's letter to the Romans. In chapter 5 especially Paul says that by "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned". A study of Romans reveals that there are two things in Paul's mind. The first is sin(singular) as a principle which all come under because of Adam's transgression. The second is sins(plural) which we commit as fallen creatures. It would be worth your while to follow Paul's thoughts in relation to Sin and sins in the book of Romans 3 thru 8 especially and how the power of Sin is broken so that we no longer need to commit sins. Of course we still do but judicially this is the case and as Christians we do not need to sin.

Kevin

**Re: a little more fuel - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/8/18 16:05**

"I object to the doctrine of constitutional sinfulness, that it makes all sin, original and actual, a mere calamity, and not a crime. For those who hold that sin is an essential part of our nature, to call it a crime, is to talk nonsense." Charles Finney Lecture on Moral Depravity.

"All men were in that one man, Adam. All men were in him, as a river is in its source, and as a tree is in its root. We are all by nature in the First Adam, as we are all by grace in the Second Adam, Christ. We all fell and died in the first Adam; but, by God's free favour and love, we all rise and live in the Second Adam, Who is the antitype of the first." Augustine

**Re: - posted by todd, on: 2003/8/18 20:30**

I just wanted to quickly clarify something. I don't know if I said "original sin" in that other post but isn't this actually the doctrine of "sin nature" that we are talking about? I don't think anyone (Finney, Reidhead, etc.) is arguing about "original sin" so much. But perhaps that is the regular title in reference to this doctrine because it's obviously related.

**Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2003/8/18 20:44**

There are definitely two opposing views on this subject. I have not been able to see this doctrine dealt with any earlier than Augustine myself. The question is: Do we inherit the sinful nature of Adam? or Do we inherit the sin of Adam and therefore his guilt?

The former say that while we are born with a bent toward sin, we are not born guilty of it; the latter states that we are born guilty of Adam's sin.

I believe this is one of the origins of baby baptism. I believe that many of the mainline evangelical denominations in America believe in the former, but I have not investigated this statement yet.

In Christ,  
Jeremy Hulsey

**Re: original sin and/or original guilt - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/8/19 3:07**

your quote "Do we inherit the sinful nature of Adam? or Do we inherit the sin of Adam and therefore his guilt?"

This is the key question but I would like to sharpen it a little. A 'sin' is a transgression of the will of God. It is identifiable and, theoretically, quantifiable. Romans 5:12 tells us that it was as a result of one man's 'sin' (a transgression of the known will of God) that SIN (the dynamic) entered the world. This is a unique revelation. It occurs nowhere else in the Bible or in the history of man's search for truth. The revelation is that SIN entered the world (kosmos) at a point in time as a result of Adam's action. The important implication is to see that this shows that SIN is older than the human race! This is a staggering revelation but the only thing that makes sense of our world. SIN existed in another person, Satan, as a result of Adam's opened door, SIN entered the world (and in particular, our race) and DEATH followed. This SIN has passed through to the entire race, according to Romans 5:12)

The key thing is to realise that 'a sin' opened the door to SIN. Adam was the federal head of our race and this action changed our race forever. It is not just hereditary, passing to his children, it passed sideways too to Eve. Have you noticed how the Bible never holds Eve accountable for this. Eve committed 'a sin' before Adam but as she was not the federal head of the race her 'sin' only affected herself. Adam, on the other hand, committed a 'sin' which opened a door to an alien spirit that has radically changed the nature of our race. Reidhead accuses Augustine of contradicting God in that God said the human race was 'very good' whereas Augustine describes it as 'very bad'. Augustine, of course, was not contradicting God's description in Genesis 1, but was moving on to the events of Genesis 3. Genesis 6 shows that Adam 'begat' children 'in his own likeness, after his own image'. The problem is that Adam was no longer in the perfect image and likeness of God, and it is that distorted and spoiled likeness that has become our inheritance.

Back to your question.. It is not necessary to conclude that having inherited Adam's SIN we therefore inherit his guilt. Guilt is blameworthiness (never a feeling in scripture). Does God hold me accountable for what Adam did? I don't read that in the scripture. I see that the consequences of Adam's action have a continuing effect on the human race, but I don't describe that as 'guilt'. Personally, I distinguish between 'original sin' and 'original guilt'. I believe I inherited the former but not the latter. (SIN here being the nature not the act). It is not the nature (SIN) that is judged 'guilty' but sin. (James 4:17 gives a useful definition of 'sin' as an act)

SIN cannot be forgiven, it needs a far more radical solution... you must be born again!

We need to distinguish between 'sins' and SIN if we are to be true to the biblical revelation.

**Re: pre Augustine refs to Original Sin - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/8/19 3:33**

your quote: "There are definately two opposing views on this subject. I have not been able to see this doctrine dealt with any earlier than Augustine myself."

Tertullian 197-220 AD (Augustine of Hippo was later 354-430 AD) was one of the ante-Nicene fathers. He wroteÂ...

"NOTWITHSTANDING THE DEPRAVITY OF  
MANÂ'S SOUL BY ORIGINAL SIN, THERE IS YET LEFT  
A BASIS WHEREON DIVINE GRACE CAN WORK FOR  
ITS RECOVERY BY SPIRITUAL REGENERATION

There is, then, besides the evil which supervenes on the soul from the intervention of the evil spirit, an antecedent, and in a certain sense natural, evil which arises from its corrupt origin. For, as we have said before, the corruption of our nature is another nature having a God and father of its own, namely the author of (that) corruption."

And there are others, but as Tertullian is the best I will leave it at that. Augustine defined the issues much more precisely as a result of his writings against Pelagius, and prescribed 'infant baptism' as its solution! BUT the concept is much older than Augustine.

**Augustin wrong again - posted by rickfriedrich, on: 2003/8/19 17:21**

Confussion of causes:

"All men were in that one man, Adam. All men were in him, as a river is in its source, and as a tree is in its root. We are all by nature in the First Adam, as we are all by grace in the Second Adam, Christ. We all fell and died in the first Adam; but, by God's free favour and love, we all rise and live in the Second Adam, Who is the antitype of the first." Augustine

History showed this was wrong even though the bible did long before. 1 Cor. 15 and Romans 5 share the verses that relate to this. Historically Augustine's teaching lead and leads properly to universalism. Notice if ALL died in Adam, then ALL must be saved in Christ. This is so obvious that it is a wonder of wonders that such brilliant minds didn't see that :-o The "SO AS" or "SO THEREFORE" is an equal sign. What you attribute to the one you do to the other. You cannot say ALL died in Adam, but some are saved. The same words are used and thus the same meaning is intended. Here we see that it was not talking about the elect only being lost, and thus only the elect being saved. Rather, the true doctrine is this :

Adam's sin did indeed bring much sorrow and woe to this world. His sin those was not an efficient cause of everyone's sin in the sense of absolute cause, but rather an occational cause. Adam's sin made it possible for everyone to sin just as Christ's work made it possible for people to be saved. A possibility not an actuality. The universalists rightly saw that if ALL died in Adam, then ALL must be saved in Christ. The only way out of that is the truth of the matter and a proper reading of the bible. Thus either we have original sin that is inherited and universalism or we have the fact that children choose to sin when they do not have to. (Remember just because all choose to sin does not mean all had to sin, either).

Also consider that Jesus was of the "SEED" of Abraham, etc. He had his blood. I have seen the strangest reasonings to get out of that mess. "IN ALL POINTS HE WAS MADE AS WE WERE." He was tempted as we were. But if He was not born with a supposed original sin sinful nature (whatever one wishes to call it), then this was not true.

Hope this helps as it did the 18th century overcome universalism and other isms I dare not say :-)

Rick

**Re: - posted by rickfriedrich, on: 2003/8/19 17:48**

...The former say that while we are born with a bent toward sin, we are not born guilty of it; the latter states that we are born guilty of Adam's sin.

I believe this is one of the origins of baby baptism. I believe that many of the mainline evangelical denominations in America believe in the former, but I have not investigated this statement yet.

In Christ,

Jeremy Hulseley

Actually there is no record in the Christian church of infant baptism ever starting. All new errors have a history as people opposed them and there was controversy about it. If Infant baptism ever begun then people would have hotly disputed it. I grew up Baptist count not believe that until I looked at history myself. What I found was that in the early church the debate was not about whether infant baptism was true and right or not, but how soon. There was a big meeting of leaders early on where a big question was "Shall we wait for the eighth day?" In other words, they all believed baptism to be similar to circumcision and thus the question about the 8th day. This was long before Augustine and later apostacies.

All the objections to Infant Baptism would set aside the practice of the Hebrews circumcising. Which would prove too much therefore are invalid. The Hebrew children did not yet have faith, while their parents brought them into the camp. etc. Anyway, a common mistake people make who do not know history (and we had many friends who are Anabaptist who were the main opposers of Infant Baptism) is that they do not realize that Augustine and others did not START the practice of Baptizing infants but began to suggest that such act saved the children. These children like the Hebrews needed to get saved after they sinned. But it was around that time where the formal church began to have this formal infant salvation by mystical water, etc. So when people look back they reject the baby with the bath water :( See A. M. Hills on the subject on my web site: <http://truthinheart.com> His Fundamental Christian Theology. This woke me up to these things some years back. It also led me to see that Immersion is not the only way. I have an old book that is also online and I print: Letters on Baptism where a former Baptist minister and College president set out to publish an authoritative book proving his doctrine by the request of a major baptist publisher. After doing all of his research here he went over to the holy land and found all his arguments to fall to the ground, and that he had misunderstood the eastern ways. He then wrote the book I have and had to leave the denomination because he did not even see any evidence that anyone would have been immersed in any of the passages mentioned! This book convinced me even though I long had believed the contrary. Not too long ago an old Baptist minister ordered it and confessed he could not refute it and would not speak against sprinkling and pouring.

Just a note for your interest.

Rick

**Re: Augustin wrong again - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/8/19 18:14**

You haven't thought through the issue of what happens to a man when he comes to be 'in Christ'. Paul shows clearly in Romans 5 how we came to be 'in Adam'. These two conditions are mutually exclusive. A man remains 'in Adam' until he comes to be 'in Christ' when he is no longer 'in Adam.' But for all 'in Adam' Adam's condition remains their condition.

In 1 Cor 15 Paul is speaking of 'physical death' which is the consequence of the DEATH that entered the human race through Adam. This is the 'so great a death' referred to elsewhere by Paul.

To say that Augustine's teaching leads to universalism only shows that you haven't understood it. Rather than produce a universalism it resulted in an exclusivism that insisted that outside the 'church' there was no salvation at all, hence limbus patrum, limbus infantum, and hell. He was wrong on so many things but to accuse him of creating an inevitable road to universalism is unjust.

**Re: - posted by jeremyhulseley (), on: 2003/8/19 20:19**

Philo wrote: Tertullian 197-220 AD (Augustine of Hippo was later 354-430 AD) was one of the ante-Nicene fathers. He wrote...

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MAN'S SOUL BY ORIGINAL SIN, THERE IS YET LEFT  
A BASIS WHEREON DIVINE GRACE CAN WORK FOR  
ITS RECOVERY BY SPIRITUAL REGENERATION

Reply: Thank you for your information. I did not know that those quotes existed.

Philo wrote: Does God hold me accountable for what Adam did? I don't read that in the scripture.

Reply: Amen; neither do I. According to Ezekiel chapter 18, God, through the prophet, explains that a man is responsible for his own sins. He goes on to say that a son will not be judged for what his father did and vice-versa.

Philo wrote: SIN cannot be forgiven, it needs a far more radical solution... you must be born again!

Reply: Amen(!), There is no redemption for the sinful nature, only death, and the replacement of it by a new nature. God promised also in Ezekiel, I think it's in the 36th chapter, not to fix our heart and spirit, but to give us a new heart and a new spirit.

If we only had more preaching like this in our pulpits instead of the post-modern, humanistic, seeker-sensitive, junk that "can't shake a leaf, let alone a soul" (David Wilkerson), we would have revival in our churches and a spiritual awakening in our communities.

In Christ,  
Jeremy Hulse

P.S. if you are wondering why I use the "so and so wrote:" and "reply:" method; it's because I haven't figured out how to use the quote button without messing up my whole entry.

**Re: - posted by Maria (), on: 2003/8/19 21:46**

I don't think any of us would argue that one must be born again to inherit eternal life. But, as I read through these posts I must comment because I think a lot of the argument would be solved if we looked at the Scriptures.

Much of the problem with this issue is improper translation of Scripture. For one thing, although many versions use the phrase "sinful nature," the actual Greek word is translated "flesh."

There is no denying that we were all born into flesh and therefore we all have fleshly desires -- but the problem I have with calling it a "sinful nature" is that our fleshly desires (when in submission to the will of God) are not at all sinful. When God created Adam, GOD placed certain desires in Him. (And God gave Adam a covering of flesh BEFORE he sinned.) Sin entered the world when Adam chose to be master of his flesh, instead of bringing his flesh into subjection to God. So, this is where man was corrupted -- and this disease of ruling ourselves is what we must be saved from. This is the whole essence of sin.

The Bible makes it clear that ALL have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God. And there is truly no way that one can obey God apart from the enabling power of Christ -- which only comes when one is born again.

The issue that I have with this doctrine is that many use it as an excuse to sin. "Well, I've been born with a sinful nature, so I can't help it." But Jesus walked in the flesh as we do and was faced with every temptation that we are faced with but He resisted sinning because (by the power of the Holy Spirit) He brought His fleshly desires in subjection to God.

My point is that our flesh is corrupted when we rule ourselves -- not just because Adam sinned so now we can't help it. And we sin when we choose to rule ourselves -- not just because we were born with a nature to do so. Is it possible to not sin apart from God? No! But that doesn't mean that it was Adam's fault that I did.

I hope and pray this made sense.

--Maria

**Re:, on: 2003/8/19 22:39**

Marie,

I don't think blame is the issue here. No one is blaming Adam. What is the issue is how the principle of Sin entered the world and it did come through Adam. To deny this is to deny the scriptures. Sins(plural) is another issue altogether. Yes sins came about because of Sin but we are all responsible FOR our personal sins. Even though the power of sin is broken over us, as believers, we all do still sin. There is NO such thing as sinless perfection EXCEPT in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. I John 1:8 & 9 deals with this very issue in another way. If we say we have no sin(singular), we DECEIVE ourselves, AND the TRUTH is NOT in US!. But it goes on to say that if we CONFESS our sins(plural), He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins...etc. Each of us must take responsibility for our sins but the fact that we do sin is because of the Sin nature within our flesh. Even though the Spirit may have taken up residency in our spirit it may take time for the



e flesh to be changed. This is called "santification" and it happens over a lifetime not at some altar call in a few minutes of prayers and tears.

Kevin

**Re: - posted by rickfriedrich, on: 2003/8/19 22:47**

You haven't thought through the issue of what happens to a man when he comes to be 'in Christ'. Paul shows clearly in Romans 5 how we came to be 'in Adam'. These two conditions are mutually exclusive. A man remains 'in Adam' until he comes to be 'in Christ' when he is no longer 'in Adam.' But for all 'in Adam' Adam's condition remains their condition.

In 1 Cor 15 Paul is speaking of 'physical death' which is the consequence of the DEATH that entered the human race through Adam. This is the 'so great a death' referred to elsewhere by Paul.

To say that Augustine's teaching leads to universalism only shows that you haven't understood it. Rather than produce a universalism it resulted in an exclusivism that insisted that outside the 'church' there was no salvation at all, hence limbus patrum, limbus infantum, and hell. He was wrong on so many things but to accuse him of creating an inevitable road to universalism is unjust.

**Re:, on: 2003/8/19 22:56**

:~O :~O

**Re: THE SIN and sins, THE DEATH and death - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/8/20 1:23**

I find myself in the unique position of having to defend Augustine. Unique because I disagree with him on almost everything, defending because there is no necessary connection between him and universalists. Universalism did not arise from a wrong view of sin but from a wrong view of love. Universalists said (and say) that God's love must ultimately win through and guarantee final salvation; thorough-going universalists include all the creation (and Satan in this). They have not understood that what is demonstrated at Calvary is not 'love' as men use the word but 'holy love'. Augustine was not the first to speak of 'original sin', (see my earlier posting) and I would rather move away from him to the biblical revelation.

Beginning at Rom 5:12 Paul speaks of 'sin' as a person. If you read the verses in Youngs Literal Translation (or the Greek) you will find that having referred to 'sin' without the definite article, from this point he refers to THE sin. This abrupt change is highly significant. I will try to illustrate; when NT uses the word 'spirit' without the article it has 'characteristic' as its focus. When it uses 'the spirit' (with the article) it has 'his personality' as focus. I won't clog this post with references but I can supply if any request.

The significance is that at Rom 5:12 Paul begins to speak of 'the sin'; this is not sin as an event nor sinfulness as a characteristic but SIN as a person.

Something has happened to our race; and alien life force has invaded it. I have visited Nazi death camps in Poland; only Paul has an explanation for the 'diabolical' behaviour of the human race.

What is true for THE SIN is equally true for THE DEATH which followed THE SIN through the door opened by Adam. It is because THE DEATH has entered that people (and babies, and birds and trees) die even though they are not 'guilty' of Adam's disobedience. It is regeneration that puts us 'into Christ'. No one is 'in Christ' automatically because of what Christ has done. Regeneration changes our nature. "If any man (note the 'if') be in Christ he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things 'have become' new." Hence in the regenerate 'the old man' is no more but the 'new man' has begun.

**Re: - posted by todd, on: 2003/8/25 12:34**

This post is an attempt to carry over from the "Ravenhill" section because the thread was taking this new direction. In the "Ravenhill's Roots" thread, philologos wrote:

"Todd

Thanks. I certainly see your point, but the implications are puzzling. How many times could a man do this? I am aware of Finney's idea of the first conscious rebellion of an individual constituting a covenant with sin and death. I think the teaching is that this initial act puts an individual 'into Adam'. ('revivaltheology' if this statement needs tweaking, please tweak) If this be described as an old nature I can see that regeneration/sanctification could be said to 'eradicate' this, however wh

at happens the next time the individual is consciously rebellious? Would that re-constitute the old nature? I suppose a man could then be 'sanctified' again, and again.... How many times could this happen? I think the answer has already been given by 'revival theology' in that Finney was not strictly speaking 'eradicationist'.

This is one of the dangers in lumping folks together into groups. I don't regard myself as an 'eradicationist' simply because I don't like the word. However that particular group has most in common with my own understanding and I am not reluctant to be associated with them. Sometimes when you only have 2 options its difficult to make the call.

Here's a little bit of trivia. The Finnish language didn't have a word for the colour 'orange' until the 20th century. On seeing an orange (the fruit) you had to decide whether or not it was red or yellow. I feel a bit like that when asked whether I am a 'suppressionist' or 'eradicationist'."

I like that trivia. Thanks. I might use that someday.

Here's my response to our little debate:

Once a man has chosen to sin, and thus sin has entered and become a part of him, it reigns in him as well as death. That is, unless he comes to have faith in Jesus Christ at which time death is overthrown and no longer reigns but instead life reigns. It is a shift in natures I guess. You may consciously sin again, but your new nature doesn't change. Once you have believed, you have a clean slate by the blood of Jesus. But if you sin, you have an advocate with the Father and He is faithful and just to forgive our sins if we confess them. When we confess them, we once again have a clean slate. You can never become "clean" by nature in the first place without the blood. But by the blood we pass from death to life.

I really like what you said in your teaching entitled "Propitiation."

You said something like (please correct this), "Until you talk to God about your sin He will talk to you about it. Once you talk to Him about it, He won't mention it again."

That's wonderful. I think you phrased it better though.

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/8/25 16:28**

If you liked that trivia you may like this. Hebrew didn't have word for 'frustration' until the mid-seventies. Before the new word was absorbed into the language, people who spoke only Hebrew were never "frustrated". They may have been "angry" or "disappointed" or they may have experienced a sense of turmoil in certain situations, but the acute feeling of frustration itself was unknown to them until the word for it was translated from the English language.

You see that up until that time if people identified their reaction as 'anger' or 'disappointment' it was much easier to target the remedy. But if I am 'frustrated' it is somehow not my problem but someone else's. The labels we put on things have lasting significance.

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/8/25 16:40**

Why does my human nature change the first time but not subsequently? I think the Romans 5:12 statement gives us an amazing insight. Sin did not begin with Adam, but as a result of Adam's disobedience SIN entered and DEATH by SIN.

Something was lurking outside the human race, and Adam opened the door to it. Eve also transgressed (and in fact earlier) but her transgression did not have the devastating consequences of Adam's. The curse did not enter the creation because of Eve's transgression but because of Adam's. Adam was uniquely responsible. If you read Genesis 3 you will see it is Adam who is held responsible, and Adam who is expelled from the garden. Of course, Eve accompanied him but she was specifically expelled. The Germans call 'Original Sin' 'Hereditary Sin' and many refer to it passing down the generations, but the more I think about it I don't think it did pass DOWN the generations, I think it passed into the human race, and changed it.

This is why Adam is a figure of Him who was to come. Christ passes His nature to all His race too. The new nature is IN Christ just as SIN and DEATH ARE IN Adam. Whichever 'man' we are IN determines which nature we share. My unders

tanding is that these states are mutually exclusive and that a man cannot be in Adam and in Christ at the same time.

**Re: - posted by revivaltheology, on: 2003/8/29 0:52**

Finney was not alone in denying the Augustinian notion of Original Sin. In fact, his views merely reflected the "New School Calvinism" that was quite influential in the Arminianizing of evangelicalism during the 1800s. The noted Bible commentator, Albert Barnes, also denied original sin, as did many important leaders in the Second Great Awakening.

That said, the question is asked about eradication, constitution/reconstitution of the "sin nature," and so forth. Briefly, it should be distinctly kept in mind that Finney denied sin being a "nature" at all. He affirmed the scriptural definition of sin as "a transgression of the law;" that is, "a WILLFUL transgression of KNOWN law." Finney certainly recognized the power of BONDAGES that occur as a result of sin "he that commits sin is the slave of sin," (John 8:31ff; see also Romans 6). What Finney steadfastly denied was the idea that sin was a nature that was somehow passed down genetically. To him it was sheer confusion to speak of a "sin nature."

That said, it should also be distinctly kept in mind that Finney taught a distinction between PHYSICAL depravity and MORAL depravity. That all Adam's posterity were gravely affected by the sin of Adam, primarily physically (lack of perfect health and presence of eventual death). In Finney's thought, one's physical depravity exerts a powerful influence towards selfishness. This, along with the fact that one is raised among selfish beings, greatly aggravates the situation that children find themselves in.

As these inborn selfish tendencies generally are allowed to rule the young child until the dawn of moral accountability, as soon as the child is old enough to choose good or evil, he or she will in fact choose selfishly (sin = selfishness).

In my opinion (and of course I could be wrong), Finney's concept of physical depravity is essentially the same thing as what most people mean when they say "sinful nature." The distinction Finney makes is important though, if one truly wishes to posit an "age of accountability," before which infants and young children are by definition morally neutral (unable to choose right or wrong due to lack of understanding of the law). Paul says "by the law is the knowledge of sin," and "sin is not imputed when there is no law."

Unless we want to think that God sends babies to hell on account of their being born "in Adam" (a completely unjust and disgusting idea if ever there was one), I think we need to have some kind of rational, scriptural basis for the age of accountability, before which one is not guilty.

I suspect the real difference between Finney and Augustine/Calvinian theology on this subject is really about whether or not the GUILT of Adam is imputed to us, not the "tendency to sin." For Finney makes it quite clear that all will sin when they have reached an age at which they KNOW what the difference is between good and evil.

As to the "in Adam" vs. "in Christ" issue, I will have to get back to you on that, philologos, but I would hazard to guess that Finney would define this as what state one ABIDES in. Finney definitely denied the whole imputation scheme as inherently antinomian.

I would recommend Dennis Carroll's website, <http://www.gospeltruth.net> for study of Finney. All of Finney's works are available there, in addition to many works by others.

I don't get to check in here very often, but please feel free to ask questions. I will do my best to answer to the best of my ability. There also are quite a few Finney experts who are regularly engaged in the discussions in my Revival Theology discussion group. Would love to see you there.

God bless,

John Earp

<http://revivaltheology.net>



Re: - posted by revivaltheology, on: 2003/8/29 1:27

Quote:  
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philologos wrote:  
I'm going to wait a while to see if any others come into the discussion. oh well perhaps just a little provocation.. One of the reasons that people have taken such a strong stand on this issue is that it removes the need for regeneration.  
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John replies: Actually, this would be incorrect if we are talking about Finney and Reidhead's views (which, by the way, were shared by MANY revival leaders in the Second Great Awakening). All a denial of the Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin does is make all TOTALLY responsible for their OWN SINS! Neither Finney nor Reidhead denied that all will in fact sin, they just denied that Adam's sin was imputed to all his posterity. On Finney's view, a sinner must be born again even if he has sinned only once in his life, and apart from the prevenient grace of God he never will choose to repent and obey the gospel.

Quote:  
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Hold on, let me explain. If I arrived in this world without sin and acquired it, it ought to be possible to remove it. If sin is only transgression it ought to be possible to forgive it.  
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Well, as I'm sure you know, the Bible makes it clear: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." So yes, we need both forgiveness and cleansing from sins.

Quote:  
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But if I inherited a congenital spiritual condition the only possible solution is a new start e.g. I need to be born again (from above). Let's see what others have to say..  
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Finney defined MORAL depravity (sinfulness) as total, by which he meant that all the actions of the unregenerate are totally depraved until regeneration. He also defined moral depravity as a universal fact of human existence, as well as made it quite clear that the sinner absolutely must be regenerated (that is, born again) in order to see the kingdom of heaven (as described in John 3 by Jesus to Nicodemus).

Please be assured that Finney did not in any way allow for a self-salvation or a works righteousness, not in the least. His sermon, "Justification by Faith," among many others, makes this quite clear. If one has ever sinned, even once, (and all have), then one can never deserve anything BUT hell forever. It matters not how much good one might think they have done to "outweigh" their evil deeds, they will always still DESERVE hell. Finney went to great lengths to emphasize that the only means of forgiveness of sins was by virtue of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and that Christ himself WAS Eternal Life.

Re: Sin and sins - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/8 4:12

This topic has emerged again elsewhere but would be better continued here, I think.

Nasher wrote: Is Sin, or are sins attached/imputed/reckoned to the body / soul / spirit or a combination of any or all three ?

Hi Nasher

I think your distinction is important. In my understanding the first 4 chapters of Romans focus on 'sins' and bring in the verdict 'guilty'. The second 4 chapters focus on 'Sin' and bring in the diagnosis 'dead on arrival'.

I'll just touch on one aspect. 'Sin' is not locatable. If it were it would be 'eradicable'. I have a great affinity with the 'eradicationists' and agree with many of their conclusions but I cannot use their language. Technically, 'eradicate' means to remove the 'root'. This implies that 'Sin' is locatable and I don't think this is the way the scripture reveals things. Sin is not like a rotten tooth that can be removed from an otherwise healthy mouth; it is my nature by first birth.

rth.

Romans 5:19 says "for as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners: so also through the obedience of the one, shall the many be constituted righteous." (Young's Literal Translation) Our human constitution changed as a result of one man's disobedience. This is not locatable, it is what I am by first birth. This verse points to two great initiating events both of which result in a change in our constitution. 'Sin' cannot be detached or subtracted the problem is 'me'. No amount of 'tweaking' will alter our constitution.

Our case is hopeless. Jeremiah says "Crooked is the heart above all things, And it is incurable—who doth know it?" Young's Literal Translation.

Our condition cannot be remedied. We are DOA (dead on arrival), that's why He said 'You must be born again'.

**Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2003/10/8 7:54**

Matt 7:11

"If you then, **being evil**, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!"

**Re: - posted by todd, on: 2003/10/11 12:19**

My understanding right now is that we are not DOA. Rather, at some point in life everyone sins and, therefore, dies.

Just as through one man (Adam) sin entered the world and therefore many were made (became) sinners. In the same way, through one man (Christ Jesus) the power of sin and death was broken and many will be made (become) righteous.

But just as it is man's free choice to sin (and thus become separated from God), and it is completely his own fault and of his own free will, in the same way it is the sinner's free choice to repent and believe in the gospel (and thus be reunited with God).

If we use Romans 5:19 to make the argument that all men are born with a sinful nature (therefore sinners, regardless of their own choice or free will), then it seems to make the most sense and be most logical to apply this understanding in the same way for the rest of the verse. That is to say that, due to Christ, all men are saved (therefore righteous, regardless of choice or free will). But it is my understanding that those who argue in that manner for the first half of the verse, don't do so for the second. This seems to make it a weak and clearly biased argument.

This morning I discovered a verse that brought more clarity and confirmation to me concerning this issue.

Romans 7:9

"And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died"

You see? Paul says that he was once alive, before he knew the Law. But when he came to know the Law, sin became alive in him, and he died. He wasn't DOA. He was alive on arrival, then died in sin.

At some point every human goes through this process from spiritual life to spiritual death.

We are born alive (AOA), then at some point we all die in sin and take on a sinful nature that is eternally death-bound instead of eternally life-bound. So we must be born again, receive new life, new nature, in order to have life eternal.

Though this seems very clear to me at this point, I realize I am young, and largely unversed and unstudied in the history of this doctrine (at least I believe this to be the case in comparison to other contributors on this site). I gratefully invite every hammer strike that will refine my understanding.

**Re: - posted by aphill777 (), on: 2003/10/12 11:37**

In the discussion of Original Sin it is very important to understand that the Jews NEVER believed in Original Sin. Paul being a Jew would not have believed in original sin and if he had at some point invented or accepted the idea I am sure he would have been very emphatic about its importance. Instead, like everywhere else in the Bible, Paul attributed sin to the free moral action of responsible moral agents. If "original sin" is true do not attribute it to Paul!

The Eastern Orthodox church has never accepted the concept of "original sin", some protestants have also rejected it, i.e. Finney, Reidhead and many others.

Unfortunately, most Christians are unwilling to objectively investigate this doctrine as well as most other doctrines.

Tony Phillips

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/12 14:44**

If I dance once would you call me a dancer? If I surf the net once would that make me a surfer? Does one act create a nature? Does one lie make me a liar? A liar is someone whose characteristic is to lie; it is their nature. If one sin makes me a sinner how many regenerations am I going to need? May I suggest that you trace all NT uses of the word 'sinner'? You will find that it refers to character/nature rather than single event. The NT usually refers to us as saints; this is a reference to nature; new nature coming as a result of regeneration. Before regeneration we are not saints. What are we? We are sinners; that is our character/nature. BTW God does not hold us responsible for our nature but for our acts. I am not 'guilty' as a result of what Adam did but as a result of what I did. A belief in 'original sin' does not necessarily imply a belief in 'original guilt'.

Eve sinned before Adam but Eve's sin did not constitute a changed nature for humankind because she was not the federal head of the human race. Adam's sin did have an effect on our constitution or nature; Romans 5:19 for as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners: so also through the obedience of the one, shall the many be constituted righteous. Youngs Literal Translation.

This states clearly that through the action of one many were affected. The 'one' is Adam, and Romans 5:12 reveals that through that one act of one man something entered; "through one man the sin did enter into the world, and through the sin the death; and thus to all men the death did pass through, for that all did sin;" Youngs Literal Translation. This passage gives us two unique revelations. Sin did not begin with Adam but it entered the world through Adam; Sin is older than our race. Adam was the bridgehead through which Sin entered our race.

The Germans call 'original sin' 'hereditary sin' but this is a mistake. Eve came from Adam before Sin had entered our world. Her sin did not affect Adam but Adam's sin (one man's disobedience) affected Eve; this was not heredity. Sin did not go downwards from Adam through each successive generation. It permeated the entire race in an instant and Eve was constituted a sinner not through her own sin but through Adam's. I became a Sinner the moment Adam sinned. I was not born a sinner because my father was a sinner, (it was not hereditary) but because I was in Adam when he sinned; death spread through the whole human race in a moment. The evidence for this is that "death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression"; babies died who had not sinned. Why? Because Adam's disobedience had an immediate effect on the whole human race of which he was the federal head, even before the law of Moses made it possible to quantify sins.

Adam's race has a built-in nature and my only hope is to be taken out of Adam and put into Christ; in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. "In him", says John, "is no Sin".

BTW quote: "Unfortunately, most Christians are unwilling to objectively investigate this doctrine as well as most other doctrines." I have been prayerfully investigating this doctrine now (and one or two others) for 45 years. As God is my witness, I have no axe to grind and no creedal statement that demands my allegiance, and have tried to be as objective as I know how.

**Re: - posted by todd, on: 2003/10/12 17:27**

For convenience sake, much of the below is stated as fact, though discussion of this topic is much more experimental for me than a defense or statement of my solid belief.

Quote:

"If I dance once would you call me a dancer? If I surf the net once would that make be a surfer? Does one act create a nature? Does one lie make me a liar? A liar is someone whose characteristic is to lie; it is their nature."

The first two things you mention here are not like sin. Sin is a living thing (right?), and it has been around longer than humans (as you have mentioned before). This thing (sin) was allowed access into the world through Adam's sin. One consequence of this was sure physical death to all, another was the potential for spiritual death.

Lying is different because it is sin. Ray Comfort teaches that if you lie once you are a 'liar' (at least prior to conversion). That doesn't mean he's right but maybe we could flush this out more later and not get stuck on it now.

One sin does make you a sinner because of the nature of sin. The nature of sin is to completely take over and reign in it's subject. And death reigns in sin. Once allowed access (which only takes once), sin takes up residence inside of you and becomes your master, and you spiritually die. You now have a sinful nature. You are a sinner.

Quote:

"If one sin makes e a sinner how many regenerations am I going to need?"

One. Once you are regenerated and have a new nature sin can no longer have dominion over you (and thus regenerate you into a sinful nature). With your new nature sin is the exception and not the rule. It is out of character for a Christian to sin.

One Quote:

"May I suggest that you trace all NT uses of the word 'sinner'? You will find that it refers to character/nature rather than a single event."

I may do what you suggest sometime, but I think it is unnecessary at this time because I think that I agree with you about the term 'sinner' "referring to character/nature rather than a single event." I hope all the above helps to clarify this.

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/12 19:48**

Your quote: "For convenience sake, much of the below is stated as fact, though discussion of this topic is much more experimental for me than a defense or statement of my solid belief." I really appreciate this and I hope I approach this discussion in the same spirit. I have no wish to 'convert' any to my opinion, but I do want to give a reason for the hope that is in me.

Your quote: "The first two things you mention here are not like sin. Sin is a living thing (right?), and it has been around longer than humans (as you have mentioned before). This thing (sin) was allowed access into the world through Adam's sin. One consequence of this was sure physical death to all, another was the potential for spiritual death." I wonder why you say 'the potential for spiritual death'. God said "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die". Apparently 'Sin' and 'Death' arrived at the same time, and on the same day as Adam's disobedience, according to Romans. Adam opened a door and Sin came through it, bringing Death with him. I have capitalised Sin because in Romans 5 following Paul uses a definite article which could be translated 'the sin'. This is 'sin' personified and Paul gives it personal qualities; it enslaves, it reigns. (death is also 'the death') This 'person' entered the world ('the cosmos' is the Greek) through one man's disobedience. Once 'he' had 'entered' he would never need to enter again. I think it is very important to note that according to Romans 'the sin' and 'the death' did not just enter Adam, but it entered the 'world'.

Every individual sin is grievous, offensive to God, and deserving of punishment. But not every sin has the same consequence as Adam's initial disobedience. 'the sin' is now here and it continues to effect the whole 'cosmos'. If a man sins it will have consequences but it will not introduce 'the sin' into the world.

I touched on 'guilt' in the last posting. Biblically, guilt is 'blame-worthiness'. It is a judicial verdict and never a feeling. Most believers in 'original sin' also believe in 'original guilt', but I do not. I don't believe that God holds me responsible for Adam's sin, but He does hold me responsible for mine. Personal sin has personal consequences; "the soul that sinneth, it shall die". I do not believe that the Bible teaches that we suffer eternal separation from God because of Adam's sin, but we certainly risk that because of our own.

I would like to move on to what happened to Christ on the cross; He called it 'my baptism'. What was He baptised into? What does it mean when it says "(God) hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"? But I will pause to give folks time to respond or to digest this posting.

**Re: - posted by jeremyhulsey (), on: 2003/10/12 22:27**

Ron,

I really enjoyed reading your posts on this subject. I have a question though.

It is probably one of the obvious ones that would arise. If, by nature, I am a sinner and I act according to my nature, then why am I guilty if I have not violated my nature?

I agree with what you have said. I am just curious as to how I would articulate an answer to that question if and when it were posed to me.

In Christ,  
Jeremy Hulsey

**Re: - posted by aphil777 (), on: 2003/10/13 12:36**

If man is a sinner by virtue of an inherited nature. How is it then that Jesus did not have such a nature. Look at Hebrews 2:16 "For verily he took not on the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham."

It is true that man becomes a sinner and therefore develops a sinful nature, "all we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way" Isaiah 53:6 Could this not be more plain. It would be a perversion to say that this is saying we were all "born astray" and "already turned" to our own way?

Again I ask where in the Bible does it say that sin is anything but a choice?

**Re: - posted by todd, on: 2003/10/13 21:51**

The stickiest verse for me at this point is Psalm 51:5 which states:  
"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me."

Does anyone have some insight into this verse? It is likely not as simple as it seems or those opposed to the doctrine would have no argument. What do they say?

Who was David's mother? Could she have been in sin when she conceived and brought him forth?

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/10/13 22:03**

Psalms 51:5 (*Taken from: Spurgeon's Treasury of David Commentary on Psalms*)

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity." He is thunderstruck at the discovery of his inbred sin, and proceeds to set it forth. This was not intended to justify himself, but it rather meant to complete the confession. It is as if he said, not only have I sinned this once, but I am in my very nature a sinner. The fountain of my life is polluted as well as its streams. My birth-tendencies are out of the square of equity; I naturally lean to forbidden things. Mine is a constitutional disease, rendering my very person obnoxious to thy wrath. "And in sin did my mother conceive me." He goes back to the earliest moment of his being, not to traduce his mother, but to acknowledge the deep tap-roots of his sin. It is a wicked wresting of Scripture to deny that original sin and natural depravity are here taught. Surely men who cavil at this doctrine have need to be

taught of the Holy Spirit what be the first principles of the faith. David's mother was the Lord's handmaid, he was born in chaste wedlock, of a good father, and he was himself "the man after God's own heart;" and yet his nature was as fallen as that of any other son of Adam, and there only needed the occasion for the manifesting of that sad fact. In our shaping we were put out of shape, and when we were conceived our nature conceived sin. Alas, for poor humanity! Those who will may cry it up, but he is most blessed who in his own soul has learned to lament its lost estate.

*Psalms 51:5 (taken from: Adam Clarke's Commentary)*

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. The word "cholalti," which we translate shaped, means more properly, I was brought forth from the womb; and "yechemathni" rather signifies made me warm, alluding to the whole process of the formation of the fetus in utero, the formative heat which is necessary to develop the parts of all embryo animals; to incubate the ova in the female, after having been impregnated by the male; and to bring the whole into such a state of maturity and perfection as to render it capable of subsisting and growing up by aliment received from without. "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."

*Psalms 51:5 (taken from: Barnes Commentary)*

And in sin did my mother conceive me - Margin, as in Hebrew, "warm me." This language simply traces his sin back to the time when he began to exist. The previous expression traced it to "his birth;" this expression goes back to the very beginning of "life;" when there were the first indications of life. The idea is, "as soon as I began to exist I was a sinner; or, I had then a propensity to sin - a propensity, the sad proof and result of which is that enormous act of guilt which I have committed."

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/14 13:49**

This is a long posting; my apologies. I usually try to restrain the "preacher" in these notes but sometimes he just gets loose!

Quote: If man is a sinner by virtue of an inherited nature. How is it then that Jesus did not have such a nature. Look at Hebrews 2:16 "For verily he took not on the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham."

I think we come to the very borders of revelation here. It is holy ground and time again to quote one of my favourite snippets of scripture "we know in part..." However, let's take a look. The Bible is extremely precise in the way it states some of these issues. E.g. Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: the phrase used is 'the likeness of sinful flesh'. If it had said 'the likeness of flesh' it would have supported the ancient heresy of Docetism. If it had said that God sent his Son 'in sinful flesh' the scripture could no longer refer to Him as the uniquely 'holy one'.

Jesus was the Word made flesh. He became authentically human in all attributes. A definition of attributes is 'characteristics without which it would no longer be authentic'. If any of God's attributes were removed He would no longer be God; the supporters of 'Open Theology' need to consider this with regard to omniscience. My question then is what is 'human'? Is 'original sin' an essential characteristic of man without which he would no longer be man? Not at all. What is man? Psalm 8 gives an answer to that we have no reference to Sin or sins. In fact, mankind became less than God's definition when it sinned. Here's God's definition 'Let us make man in our own image'. (He has never changed His mind on this!) Have you noticed that Jesus is called the Second Man in 1 Cor 15. There have only ever been 2 men who fulfilled the original criteria, Adam and Christ. All those in between, and after, fail to qualify.

The incarnation brought into the world a perfect man. Hallelujah. C S Lewis uses a phrase to describe 'man' as we have seen him. "we have spent all our lives among shadows and broken images". In Christ we see man as God intended him to be. He identified with all that man had become 'yet without sin'. So He knew weariness and hunger and pain, but as Paul says 'He knew no sin'.

He referred to His death on the cross as a Baptism. (Luke 12:50, Mark 10:38) This is a key revelation and, it seems to me, sorely neglected in our theology. Biblically, baptism is always linked to death and effects a union. It is important to understand that the consistent testimony of scripture is that 'death' was not something that happened to Christ. It was something to accomplish or fulfil. (Luke 9:31) That cross-baptism united Him with 'the death' into which our race lives. He was made to be sin for us. "for him who did not know sin, in our behalf He did make sin, that we may become the



righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor 5:21) It was the prospect of this event which broke His heart in Gethsemene. If the prospect was so unbearable what of its consummation?

He used the most amazing symbols to describe His death. He likened His death to a snake on a pole. (John 3:14). In Adam's transgression a deadly venom passed into our race. Now He must become one with what the race became and take in down into death with Him. In that moment He forfeited the relationship of Son to Father and could only pray "My God"; the only time in His recorded life that He did not say "Father". (More food for thought here for the Oneness members of our forum family) The testimony of Jesus is captured in Psalm 22 and includes the statement "I am a worm and no man". Isaiah 52:14 says "his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the sons of men" RSV.

I dare not try to explain what I read but I know that in solitary darkness, with none to witness the scene, He cried "it is completed". It is because He broke Sin's stranglehold that we can now know "freedom from Sin".

**Re: - posted by aphill777 (), on: 2003/10/14 13:57**

Psalm 51:5 was written by David after the death of Uriah the Hittite which was David's cause.

When the Lord revealed this horrible sin of David through the prophet, David was struck with extreme guilt. He then penned this Psalm and in his grief was admitting that he had sinned from his earliest recollection. He used a statement of extreme to illustrate his own frustration with himself. Just like when we make a mistake we may say "I am such a dummy" or "I always do this". In no way was David developing a doctrine of Original or "constitutional" sin.

Of course, nowhere in this verse is it said that the human race is "shapen in iniquity". David uses personal pronouns here only. Therefore the extent of this "constitutional" depravity ended with himself.

Another reasonable view of this text is that David was conceived out of wedlock. In fact when Samuel the prophet came looking for the new King for Israel, David was overlooked by his father for some reason. The culture of the day did NOT prohibit youth from being King, many of Egypt's rulers were but children when they came to power. Nonetheless, David was seen as not being eligible for Kingship, seems our Lord Jesus was of the same reputation??

Again I remind you that the Jewish theologians never, to this day, believed such a doctrine even in light of Psalm 51:5

Tony Phillips

**Re: Psalm 51 - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/18 16:19**

For myself I have never considered Psalm 51 as primary evidence for 'original sin'. This is an intensely personal psalm where David acknowledges full responsibility for the man he is. As such I conclude that the reference to his conception is really a metaphoric way of expressing the extremity of his sin. I think the speculation that David was illegitimate is unnecessary.

My own understanding of 'original sin' is that we are contaminated as a direct result of Adam's disobedience, which is why I don't call it hereditary sin. I think the idea of sin percolating down the generations is not particularly scriptural. In Rom 5:12 all the verbs are in the Aorist tense which signifies an action complete in itself at a point in time. These verbs point to a fixed time when 'sin entered', 'death spread', 'all sinned'. The use of 'out of' translated 'so' in the AV is also significant; it implies consequence not a subsequent event. To try to simplify all that Rom 5:12 is recording a single event when 'sin entered', 'death spread', and 'all sinned'. This event can be timed exactly, it was when 'one man disobeyed'.

**Psalm 51 and original sin - posted by openairboy, on: 2003/10/18 21:18**

I fully hold to the doctrine of original sin, but I don't think Psalm 51 is there for this doctrine. What is the purpose of the Psalm(s)? It is poetry and song and this Psalm is believed to be describing David's repentance after his adultery with Bathsheba. Take some of your favorite poems, songs, or any other communicative means along these lines and look at their words. What do they seek to accomplish? Yes, they are expressing truth, but usually in heightened language. For example, in the song "Lemon Tree" the author describes his love as "a girl so sweet that when she smiled the stars rose in the sky, we passed that summer lost in love beneath the lemon tree, the music of her laughter, hid her father's words from me..." Now, if we are "literalists" here these words make no sense, but when we allow them to be poetic we understand their content. So poetry, etc., captures your thinking, but usually in a heightened expression. David here is expressing the depths of his sin. No matter where he looks he finds sin. He isn't arguing for original sin, but repenting.

FWIW

**Re: - posted by openairboy, on: 2003/10/18 21:31**

"Again I ask where in the Bible does it say that sin is anything but a choice?"

I think it is part of the thematic whole of Scripture. For example, when Jesus speaks of good and bad trees. We recognize a tree by its fruit. We recognize the fruit of "the flesh" and the fruit of "the Spirit", both are consistent with the nature of the two. I think this proves that "sin" is more than merely wrong choices, although it isn't less than that. This is a key point, because many, especially individualistic Americans, have a self-determining view of themselves and the world. A little bit of effort and we can do whatever we want, but this is a far cry of the Bible's teaching.

Practically, if we reject original sin (imputation of Adam's sin), then we have to reject received righteousness (imputation of Christ's righteousness). The minute we reject Christ's righteousness, I think we begin to stray from the Gospel. Suddenly Adam was just a bad example and redemption becomes following Christ's example.

This may start to stray from the topic, but all of this is tied into an understanding of the covenant. God always deals with His people through representation. This doesn't sound good to democratic Christianity in America, but is true to Hebrew thought, I believe.

**Re: imputed or imparted - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/19 10:34**

quote: Practically, if we reject original sin (imputation of Adam's sin), then we have to reject received righteousness (imputation of Christ's righteousness). The minute we reject Christ's righteousness, I think we begin to stray from the Gospel. Suddenly Adam was just a bad example and redemption becomes following Christ's example.

I have problems with the concept of Adam's sin being imputed. That would create 'alien sin' and 'alien guilt'. My understanding of 'guilt' is that it is blameworthiness. Does God hold me guilty for Adam's sin? I think not, but Adam's condemnation has touched me because I was in Adam when he disobeyed. (for the judgment was by one to condemnation Rom 5:16)

I would regard Adam's sin, not as imputed, but as imparted. It was not 'reckoned' to all men but 'spread' to all men. God's solution to this is to take me 'out of Adam' and put me 'into Christ'. In Adam I was a 'sinner'; in Christ I am a 'saint'. I think we are touching some important issues here. What do you understand by the phrase 'our old man' in Rom 6:6? According to the revelation 'our old man was co-crucified with' Christ.

**Re: - posted by openairboy, on: 2003/10/20 0:51**

If we step away from Christ's righteousness being imputed to us, then I think we begin to stray from the doctrine of justification. In sanctification I am imparted with Christ's righteousness, but in justification I am "accredited" with Christ's righteousness. In the Gospel a righteousness from God is revealed. My righteousness is from God.

I see the "old man" as the flesh, which is the whole of our fallen nature.

**Re: justification or sanctification - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/20 3:29**

Hi openairboy

This is my whole point. How does God deal with the 'congenital sin' (my own label for the doctrine)? By Justification or sanctification. Justification deals with what I have done, my own account, and God declares me 'just' on the basis of what He has done in Christ and my total dependence upon that. Sanctification deals with what I am.

My understanding is that it is Regeneration/Sanctification that deals with my nature.

WKIP

**Re: - posted by openairboy, on: 2003/10/20 14:42**

I don't think I would disagree with any of that. I'm not necessarily into an ordo salutis, because I think it is rather anachronistic, but we are rebirthed in "regeneration", which is followed by faith and justification, then follows our sanctification, and ultimately glorification. Just like Lazarus coming out of the tomb. If Jesus didn't call him, he would have remained dead. So it is with us, who are dead in our sins and trespasses. BUT GOD...

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/21 4:34**

Hi OAB

your quote: "I see the "old man" as the flesh, which is the whole of our fallen nature."

Did you notice that we have a plural possessive pronoun but a singular noun? 'Our' plural, 'man' singular. Apparently there is just 'one' old man for all of us. We are touching the corporate personality of the human race here. This is a difficult concept for people who have grown up in the fierce individuality of western culture. Here is a useful little test; "(Levi) was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him Heb 7:10". The writer to the Hebrews, under the inspiration of the Spirit, proves his point on the superiority of Christ's priesthood to that of Aaron with this fascinating argument. Melchizedek is greater than Aaron because Aaron's ancestor Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek and the greater must always bless the lesser and Aaron was in Abraham when Abraham was blessed by Melchizedek! Here is the test; how does that appeal to your sense of reason? In ordinary logic that reasoning would be laughed out of court, but we are dealing with God's logic here and this is a revelation.

Western culture has overdosed on individuality and personal rights. I hope I won't offend any of my USA brethren if I quote something which is usually close to their hearts. "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness -- That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted..". This is noble and praiseworthy but the 'right to pursue happiness' as an 'unalienable right' is not a biblical revelation, it is a Greek philosophy usually known as hedonism. (for an expansion of this idea listen again to '10 shekels and a new shirt'. <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid=2902>)

The Sinai covenant united people together into a corporate entity under the lawgiver; they were 'baptised into Moses' (1 Cor 10) Using an old translation e.g. the KJV will illustrate this again and again by the way it changes from the plural pronoun to the singular and back again constantly in reference to Israel. From one perspective 'the man that sinneth, he shall die' from another Achan's sin contaminates the whole nation. Sin offerings are prescribed for individuals and for the whole nation. This is such an alien concept to our generation that it has become one of the main reasons I stick to the KJV; it forces me to consider myself as an individual AND as a member of a corporate entity. I could say much more but I will press on...

The human race, under the wrong head, is a corporate entity. This is why Adam's sin has affected it. This is the 'old man'. (In Hebrew man and Adam are often the same word). Jesus identified Himself with this utterly on the cross; this was His baptism (my baptism, He called it). In Rom 6:6 many modern translations have not translated the phrase 'our old man' but have interpreted it. Consequently we have 'our old nature' (NASV), 'our old self' (NIV). These interpretations break a link. The 'old man' is used in contrast to the 'new man'. If we lose the phrase 'old man' we lose the word link with 'new man'. There is an unfailing characteristic of the 'old man', "in Adam all die".

According to Romans 6:6 "...our old man, was crucified together with him in order that the sinful body might be made powerless, that we should, no longer, be in servitude to sin;" Rotherham Literal Translation. (this would have been even better if it had used the old phrase 'body of sin'. )

There's much more to say, but I'll pause to give chance for reflection and comment or protest! WKIP

**Re: - posted by aphill777 (), on: 2003/10/25 21:19**

Lots of great philosophy guys, but where's the beef? There is no belief in original sin in Jewish theology. Why do we as Christians feel the need to excuse our sin by blaming it on some "congenital" disease. You guys can keep baptizing your children to "remove the stain of original sin" if you choose. I just hope that you tell them "the soul that sinneth, it shall surely die"!

Read the chapter "Moral depravity" in Charles Finney's Systematic Theology, also Read Albert Barnes commentary on Romans 5. Both are excellent on the subject.

Why is there this strange assumption that to be "mainstream" you must adhere to this ridiculous doctrine. I don't know if you have looked lately, but the "mainstream" and "orthodox" christianity has become quite pathetic.

Until you can get this generation to fess up to their own guilt and responsibility for the sins they have committed the church will continue in its lethargy. As long as you convince them that they were born sinful, they will remain sinful.

The homosexuals are arguing that they are born that way. How can we tell them any different?

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/27 5:44**

Hi aphil

Your quote: "Lots of great philosophy guys, but where's the beef? There is no belief in original sin in Jewish theology. Why do we as Christians feel the need to excuse our sin by blaming it on some "congenital" disease. You guys can keep baptizing your children to "remove the stain of original sin" if you choose. I just hope that you tell them "the soul that sinneth, it shall surely die!"

I don't know how you can write this if you have read the previous postings on this thread.

1. You reject a Christian consensus on 'original sin' but constantly refer to a Jewish consensus on the same subject. There is no belief in Jewish theology for the Trinity, the substitutionary death of Christ, Jesus as the Christ, heaven, the Personality of the Holy Spirit, turning the other cheek, the New Man church of Christ etc etc. In fact, almost every major Christian doctrine. If you are going to insist on Jewish theological approval you will need to throw away your New Testament. Do you think it likely that a Jewish consensus is more reliable than a Christian consensus? The reason Paul hit so much opposition was because he rejected so much 'Jewish consensus theology'.

2. I don't blame Adam for my sins, my sins are my responsibility, 100%. But there is a diabolical character to human sin which does not have a human origin. Greg has two sermons of mine on this website which will amplify this. One is called 'repentance' and the other 'regeneration'. If you really want to know what I believe that's your best source.

3. I have never believed in 'infant baptism'. Often people make the right diagnosis but prescribe the wrong remedy. Infant baptism is a case in point. Augustine (and I think it is one of the few areas where I agree with him) made a correct diagnosis but his remedy was nonsense. He arrived at his prescription partly as a result of his 'loyalty' to the Roman church. According to that view salvation was only possible within the 'boat' of the Roman church, and entrance into that boat was by official Roman baptism. Infants needed to be in the church to avoid limbus infantum, hence infant baptism. If you start from the wrong place it doesn't matter how logical your thinking is you get the wrong answer. Sometimes our loyalties can give us tunnel vision. I acknowledge your debt to Paris Reidhead but don't entrench yourself in a blind loyalty, examine the evidence, listen to the arguments and make your own decision.

4. If you have read my contributions to this thread you will know that I am not presenting Augustinian, Calvinistic or Lutheran theology. For good or bad this is my own. Don't try to pigeon hole me into a doctrinal group, just listen to me. If my statements are not consistent with the biblical revelation reject them and try to correct me. I don't want to be proved right, I just want the truth.

**Re: - posted by aphil777 (), on: 2003/10/27 10:28**

Philologos,

It is true that the Jews did not understand new covenant theology. They did however understand the nature of God and man. They did understand atonement, repentance and faith. They understood community and covenants. The revelation of the life, ministry, death, resurrection and introduction of a new covenant by the Lord Jesus remains a mystery to them. Yet the new testament was hidden within the old. Paul received much of the revelation of Christian theology and he taught us in light of his Jewish theology and culture. Surely, Paul must be interpreted in a historical context.

I am sorry if you feel I have "pigeon holed" your theology. Not my point. However, it is true that most Christians have no original thoughts on Christian doctrine. In fact most of what Christians believe they have learned through osmosis, that is from their preacher's and teachers. Augustine and Calvin have created the thoughts of most of western Christianity.

I do owe a tremendous weight of gratitude to Paris Reidhead, however, there are many others who influenced my conversion and education. I have never argued in favor of a doctrine that I myself have not spent countless hours of prayer and study to come to a conclusion of.

My argument against original sin is that the Bible defines sin as "transgression of the law" This transgression is a free choice by moral beings. The effect of Adam's sin does extend to his posterity. That is, we will die physically because of him. We are born with the need for self preservation, ultimately this leads to sin.

Nowhere in the story of the fall does the Bible say that Adam was the "federal head" or that his sin would be transmitted to his posterity. I believe it would have said so if the doctrine of original sin was true.

You say that there is a "diabolical character to human sin which does not have a human origin" What sin have you ever committed that you did not originate? If any sins are not of our own invention we have a great argument on judgment day.

y. The Jews have held to a dual nature of man. Whereby man has both the nature to choose good and the nature to choose evil. Neither nature is righteous or sinful. Which nature we live by is what determines our character. This is the same view held by Pelagius, who suffered under Augustine.

How is it that we are created in the "image of God"? Is God's image marred by the stain of original sin. Jesus was born with a human nature, was this nature sinful? If not then He was not "tempted as are we".

At some point we have to stick with the fact that sin is a choice. That temptation is at the root of sin. If we can overcome temptation we overcome sin.

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/27 13:23**

aphill  
Your quote: "My argument against original sin is that the Bible defines sin as 'transgression of the law' This transgression is a free choice by moral beings. The effect of Adam's sin does extend to his posterity. That is, we will die physically because of him. We are born with the need for self preservation, ultimately this leads to sin. Nowhere in the story of the fall does the Bible say that Adam was the 'federal head' or that his sin would be transmitted to his posterity. I believe it would have said so if the doctrine of original sin was true. You say that there is a 'diabolical character to human sin which does not have a human origin' What sin have you ever committed that you did not originate?"

You are not distinguishing between The Sin and A sin.

"to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). (Literally 'a sin' the definite article is missing) The consequence of such an action is a sin but 'a sin' does not create The Sin. However, it did so in Adam's case. Eve transgressed a known law and that was a sin. Adam transgressed a known law and that was both 'a sin' and the beginning of The Sin. Eve's sin had no apparent knock-on effect to creation in general or humanity in particular.

I know that the Bible doesn't use the word 'federal' any more than it uses the word 'governmental' or 'moral' but please consider the following. God held Adam responsible for what had happened. He came searching for Adam; Adam, where are thou. Note the personal pronoun. On reading the remainder of Genesis 3 we discover that the ground is cursed because of what Adam has done; 'thou' again. The 'curse' is the consequence of what 'thou' has done. It was Adam that was expelled from the garden; 'thou' again. God drove out 'the man'. God made 'coverings' for both Adam and Eve but He held Adam responsible. I know that Eve went with him but it was Adam who was expelled. Eve shared his fate, as do we.

In one climactic moment The Sin entered the world (it is older than our world) 'through' (dia) one man, and The Death through (dia) The Sin. Consequently (out of) The Death 'passed through' into (eis) all men for all did sin (this is Aorist and should be translated 'did sin'). 'have sinned' would be Perfect tense. To Nebuchnezzar Daniel said 'Thou art this head of gold'. In a similar way we may say of Adam 'thou art Man'.

'Federal' BTW is a happy choice of word; it is a corporate entity in which individual members retain individual responsibility.

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/11/3 14:38**

We can't let this thread end on this note so I will talk to myself a little. (A very biblical concept, BTW.)

"knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin;" Rom 6:6 ASV

I've turned to the old ASV for its accuracy of tenses at this point. Literally this verse speaks of "the old ours man". In other words "our 'the old man'". This combination of the singular for 'man' and the plural for the possessive pronoun is thought-provoking. We might have expected 'our old men' or 'my/thy old man' but instead we have this combination of singular and plural. Apparently we share something; all of us have something in common. The word for 'old' is 'palaios' which is the prefix we use in 'Palaeolithic' or 'Paleontology'. It means from 'ancient times'. Apparently we all share something from ancient times. Add to this the fact that to the Hebrew mind the word for 'man' at this point would be 'Adam' and we have a fascinating insight into the mind of Paul and the heart of God. If I were



paraphrasing it I might say something like "that ancient Adam who is shared by us all".

My hypothesis is that what we have here is a corporate entity that includes the whole race 'in Adam'. The corporate entity (aka 'body') is now under the wrong 'head' and is consequently "the body of sin" or as it says literally "the body of The Sin". I think we have synonyms here; 'our "the ancient man"' and 'Sin's Body'. The body exists to fulfil the intention and direction of the head. One way in which it is sometimes helpful to identify something is to try to identify its antonym. What would be the opposite of 'the Ancient Man'? I suggest 'The New Man'. What would be the opposite of 'Sin's body'? I suggest 'Christ's body'.

My hypothesis is that God has brought something to an end in order to make way for something else. Sin's Body has been rendered ineffectual; katargeo does not mean cease to exist. (katargeo is a great word to meditate on. I have added a post to the Word Study section) Satan's control of the human race was broken in Christ as He became Sin for us. This is only true 'in Christ' which is why God puts us into Christ, (irrespective of whether we are Gentile or Jew, Male or Female etc) and in doing so God has created a New Man or a New Body. If any man be in Christ he becomes a new creation: old things are passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Consequently Adam "is the figure of him that was to come" (Rom 5:14), and Christ is rightly described as the Second Man, the Last Adam. BTW it is amazing how often hymns and commentaries get these the wrong way around. Biblically, Christ is the Second Man; there have only really been two and all individuals are in one or the other. Again, biblically, Christ is the Last Adam; there will be no more beginnings for the human race.

Adam headed up the old race; Christ heads up the New.

I'll pause a while.

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/11/5 15:41**

Do you recall that word 'katargeo'? If we translate it 'neutralised', here is a little list of some things which are already 'neutralised' 'in Christ'. Please check them out.

Sin's Body Romans 6:6  
The Law's Control Romans 7:2,6  
The Glory of the Old Covenant 2 Cor 3:7  
The Veil on the Heart of Israel 2 Cor 3:14  
The Demands of the Law Eph 2:15  
Death 2 Tim 1:10  
The Devil Hebrews 2:14

Sure, there's more to come but this is already done 'in Christ'. If a Brit may borrow a favourite North American word, awesome!

'How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation...?

**Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/11/6 4:23**

Hi Todd

your quote "2. I have recently been learning and thinking more about repentance. Since one important meaning of it is "turning back (to God)," what could this be referring to if not to how we originally were (as children before the age of accountability)? Well, I suppose it could be taken more "spiritually" to turning back to how we (as a race) were before the fall (in relation to God). But I still find it interesting."

More directly, 'turning' is the result of 'repentance', in the same way that 'repentance' is the result of 'godly sorrow'. Don't be misled by the English word 'repentance', many Bible translators have argued against it. The Hebrew concept for repentance has grief and mourning at its heart. The Greek word 'metanoia' is used as a translation for the Hebrew but the original Greek meaning for metanoia cannot do justice to the Hebrew concept. We need to have an understanding of 'repentance' which includes the both Hebrew and Greek concepts.

A word more linked to 're-turning' would be the words for 'convert'.



I always find it difficult to promote my own stuff, but I did a Bible study on Repentance that Greg has included on this site. In the language of preachers 'I felt helped' and would encourage you to listen to it. My own understanding clarified in the course of the delivery.

**Re: to the third and fourth generation Ex 20 - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/11/10 9:42**

I came across a thread on another site which recounted that many Polish Christians would not adopt children for fear of bringing 'generational' curses into their family.

In the UK we have 'ministries' that specialise in breaking such 'curses'. I thought the implications might be relevant to this thread and would like to hear others' comments before giving my own.

**Re: - posted by almondBranch (), on: 2003/11/10 9:54**

Quote:  
-----  
philologos wrote:  
In the UK we have 'ministries' that specialise in breaking such 'curses'. I thought the implications might be relevant to this thread and would like to hear others' comments before giving my own.  
-----

I have quite a problem with that whole concept to be honest, we are living in the new covenant and as in Ezekiel 18, as I read it, it says that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father. I believe that Ezekiel prophesied of these days. The message that is promoted today seems to say that the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge.

Most of the cities that Paul preached in were steeped in paganism yet we don't read anywhere that Paul encourages them to go rooting around in their past in case their granma had ever been to a witch or what have you. On the contrary he seems to deal with the present generation as it stands; after listing out certain iniquities he says "such were some of you, but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God"

Stuart.

**Re: Sin and sins thread - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/11/10 10:55**

Just wanted to make a link from here to a relevant posting to our debate.

Sin and sins

BTW if there are any Palm OS users out there who would like a Palm version of Oswald Chambers 'My Utmost for His Highest' just let me know and I will send you one. My son did it for me and it works well.

**Re: third and fourth generation; whose? - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/11/11 12:42**

Here's another hypothesis. I have thought about some of these issues for a long time and developed a kind of 'best fit' theology for some of these issues. Perhaps you can tell me how well you think it fits?

The 10 Commandments are a uniquely Jewish application of a universal law written in the hearts of all nations. The account in Ex 20 is a kind of tenancy agreement for the people of Israel. Keep the commandments, keep the land, otherwise - eviction. The 'children honouring parents' code has a distinctive tenancy flavour but the notion runs all through the chapter.

This 'iniquity' passing to the 'third and fourth generation' is apparently addressed to those for whom God is 'Thy God' (see Ex 20:5 and the original conditional clauses of 19:5) This can only apply to Israel; He declared Himself as Jehovah to none other.

The 'curse' then is to come on the 'third and fourth generation' of Israelites who have committed idolatry and who God describes as 'those who hate me'. This is by no means a universal dictum but something uniquely Israelite. I think the hypothesis gathers evidence from verse such as Amos 3:2 "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I

will punish you for all your iniquities."

That seems to be saying that extra privilege brings extra responsibility, and that Israel's unique relationship with God brings the threat of punishment for 'all' your iniquities.

I think this is where almondbbranch's line fits in. God has now established a New Covenant "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt" Jer 31:32. In this New Covenant it will not be said that "the fathers have eaten bitter fruit and the children's teeth set on edge". Jer 31:29,30 Ezek 18:2.

What do you think?

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/11/14 12:41**

Quote:  
-----I think this is where almondbbranch's line fits in. God has now established a New Covenant "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt" Jer 31:32. In this New Covenant it will not be said that "the fathers have eaten bitter fruit and the children's teeth set on edge". Jer 31:29,30 Ezek 18:2.  
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I agree with alot that you said Ron, but I am very weary with dispensational thought, to make sense of an hard biblical thought. I still believe that there is a very good chance that generational curses and blessings are still in effect.

**2 Timothy 1:5(kjv)** - When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

*blessing carried through:*  
Grandmother Lois --- Mother Eunice --- Son Timothy

and maybe this needs to be another forum but: Was the new covenant in effect in Abraham and others that knew of Jesus and had the Holy Spirit in them?

**Re: - posted by almondbBranch (), on: 2003/11/14 12:52**

Quote:  
-----2 Timothy 1:5(kjv) - When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

*blessing carried through:*  
Grandmother Lois --- Mother Eunice --- Son Timothy  
-----

I would be inclined to think that the blessing in this case was carried through in the sense of "train up a child in the way he should go" Godly example, Godly prayer, Godly instruction. I am sure that the reverse is also true in many cases, we see it with alcoholism and other destructive behaviour patterns. This, I would think, is different from the iniquities being visited on the children to the third and fourth generation by God. I would certainly believe it is polls apart from the "generational curses" being expounded upon by today's deliverance ministers.

Stuart

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2003/11/14 17:48

Quote:  
-----I would be inclined to think that the blessing in this case was carried through in the sense of "train up a child in the way he should go" Godly example, Godly prayer, Godly instruction. I am sure that the reverse is also true in many cases, we see it with alcoholism and other destructive behaviour patterns. This, I would think, is different from the iniquities being visited on the children to the third and fourth generation by God. I would certainly believe it is quite apart from the "generational curses" being expounded upon by today's deliverance ministers.  
-----

Agreed, "evil company corrupts..."  
"likelihood" seems to be the emphasis, since we learn so much from our parents subconsciously, by their actions and reactions. And it does work both ways, a healthy set of morals, strong work ethic etc. Beyond that even our peers can strongly shape us for good or evil.

Certainly 'generational curses' cannot be in effect to a Christian and in effect all are under one universal 'generational curse', sin.  
Only those who have turned to the Redeemer are cured.

But for all that, does God merit out individual 'curses' on the unbelieving today? Or is it the apprehension to come to The Light that brings a curse upon themselves?

More inclined to think that Ron's reasoning may be closer to the intention in regard's to this issue.

But I am curious as to what your thoughts are Greg, in what ways do you think this is still applicable?