



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Systematic Theology

“The Effects of the Fall, or The Imputation of Adam’s Sin”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] For the great plan of salvation which has been formulated in eternity. It has been carried out in time by the eternal Son through which we have eternal life, and shall enjoy Thy presence throughout all of the ages of time that are to come. And we thank Thee that Thou art a sovereign God, and therefore, the affairs of this earth are not ever surprises to Thee, for Thou hast ordained all things in accordance with Thine eternal decree. We remember the words of the apostle that Thou dost work all things according to the council of Thine own will, and known unto Thee are all of Thy works from eternity. And so tonight, this is not a surprise to Thee that we meet to study the Scriptures. We pray, Lord, that Thou will bless, that the Holy Spirit who is responsible for the administration of the affairs of our salvation, may teach us and guide us, and accomplish his work in us. And we commit the hour to Thee.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight, we are beginning that aspect of our study of the doctrine of sin and of man, which has to do with the effects of the fall. And since it is probably more logical for us to begin with imputation rather than inability and total depravity, we’re going to begin with imputation and then move logically on from there. But this is the first

then in the series on “The Effects of the Fall” and as my outline suggests, I want to give you at first, a few words of introduction.

Nothing so illustrates the modern world’s lost sense of sin as the contrast between present day liberal evangelism and historic evangelism. Historic evangelism has always said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Liberal evangelism today says, “You are already elected and saved. Believe it.” In other words, the doctrine of historic evangelicalism has been based upon the fact that men are lost on account of their sin. They are not only in sin, but they are in condemnation because of their sin. Their sin involves guilt and it involves pollution. And consequently, no one can be saved apart from the work of Jesus Christ. Modern day contemporary theology believes that men are not lost, but rather, men are all the subject of the electing love of God. All men have been elected. All men have been saved. The only thing that an evangelist is to do today is to let men know that they have been elected and are chosen. And so consequently, the task of the evangelist is to tell people that they are elected and that they are saved.

Now, that proceeds upon the basis that men are not sinners and under condemnation. It may make allowance for the fact that men are sinners, but that sin is not reckoned to be worthy of divine judgment and condemnation. And as a result, no aspect of the gospel message should mention hell, or lostness, or the darkness of eternity apart from God, or any of those things that might suggest that men are lost. And we should especially avoid any kind of doctrine of eternal torment, for that is surely contrary to the doctrine of a loving God. And if you know anything about what is happening in American contemporary life, you will realize of course, that this idea of the nature of man, and the nature of God, that is, that he does not punish sin, that sin is not worthy of guilt and pollution and condemnation, is the basis of most of the activities and speeches and opinions of our civic leaders and social leaders of today.

The world, and much of the church, has lost then, its sense of sin, its guilt, its pollution, its transmission to every man. And today, if you were to mention to some of

your friends who do not know anything about the Scriptures, the fact that men are sinners and under divine judgment, you might receive a reply something like this, “Surely, you’re not going to raise that old bogeyman of sin and judgment. Well, that’s the mere moonshine of an antediluvian Calvinism, or Puritanism.” That’s what they used to believe, but now we know that that’s not true.

There is an old story about Frederick the Great who was listening to a modernistic kind of preacher, and in this sermon, the preacher glibly glorified the idea of progress. He was pointing out that man was a marvelous creature who would soon work out his salvation and make the earth a paradise. But Frederick began to grow more and more impatient, and finally he looks scornfully at the idle chatterer and muttered, “*Er kenne die verdammt Rasse nichts*,” or “He doesn’t know the damned race.” And that, I think, is a judgment that won the place upon much of the opinions that modern men have today of human nature. They do not know *die verdammt Rasse nichts*, or the damned race.

“If you believe what you like”, Augustine said, “and reject what you like, it’s not the gospel you believe, but yourselves.” So there is no use for us to speak about divine things, and to go through the Bible, and pick out the things that we like, and accept them, and reject the others. Because then, we are not really believing what God has said in his word. We’re believing ourselves. We are just seeking conformation for the things that we already accept.

Well, we have looked at man’s fall into sin. We have seen that it is an internal and an external act, and we have considered its nature. We have defined that sin as unbelief, leading to rebellion, and issuing in lack of conformity to the moral law of a loving, but holy God, either in act, disposition or state.

Now, I have a good friend who is a great elder, and you’ve heard me speak of him a number of times. He may even be in the audience tonight. Who can tell? But anyway, this past week, I received a letter from him. Now, I wish I receive more letters like this, because he raises a couple of interesting questions. He says, “Very much

enjoyed your lecture on “The Nature of Sin, 10/03.” That means, last week. “In view of your conclusion with which I agree, I would make more use of Romans 14:23 as a definition. Point out that sin is sensuousness et cetera, are not definitions, but illustrations. Theology suffers much from lack of definitions that are logically complete. Too many definitions must be constructed inductively, hence, are really structures of inferences, rather than definitions extracted from Scripture. This need not be the case with sin, for Romans 14:23, plus 1 John 3:4, is a logically complete definition of sin.” Now, I appreciate this because I had overlooked Romans 14:23. We had talked about 1 John 3:4, “Sin is lawlessness. Sin is the transgression of the law.”

But when we do add to that, “Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin”, well then we do add precisely what I was trying to say last time; that sin is essentially, unbelief. Therefore, “Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin.” And so Romans 14:23 does belong with 1 John 3:4, and I accept the word of my logical thinking elder that that’s a complete definition of sin, if we put those things together. Now, he may want to add a few more things this next week, and that’s all right.

He also asks another question. This one he asks. He says, “Question: What was the unbelief specifically at the root of Adam’s sin? I find that difficult in view of the fact we’re told he was not deceived.” Remember, we read the text in 1 Timothy chapter 2, in which it is stated that the woman was utterly deceived, but the man was not deceived. Yet, he has come to be in the transgression. We’re told he was not deceived. Which statement seems to remove any possibility that his unbelief was as to the consequences he would suffer?” And I presume that my friend means by that, that Adam understood plainly, the consequences of his act. He was not deceived. What then, was Adam’s unbelief? So I want to offer an answer to that. We were speaking a long time ago, most of you were probably not in that class, on the nature of faith. What is biblical faith? And I pointed out in our discussion on “What is faith?” that faith is made up of three elements. It is made up of *notitia*. Let’s see if I cannot write this here for you so, in case you would

like a record of it, you can see it. I’ll just write it over this. *notitia*. *Notitia* is a Latin word that means “knowledge” or “perception”. There is no faith if we do not have knowledge of the facts of the gospel. Now, that is why when we preach the Word of God, if we never give the facts of the gospel, then it is really foolish for us to give an invitation to believe in Jesus Christ. We have not given people anything to believe. Now, Dr. Chafer used to tell us at the seminary, “Men, give them something to believe.” And he was right because there is no gospel without facts. Christ dies for our sins. He was buried. He was raised again on the third day. He appeared. These are facts that make up faith.

Not only, however, is faith made up of knowledge, for it is not enough to know about facts, but one must also be convinced that those facts are true. Now, theologians call that *assensus*. That is the word from which we get our English word “assent”. So we must have perception of facts. We must also assent to them. In other words, we must, after we have heard the facts of the gospel, we must be brought by the Holy Spirit to the place where we say, “Those facts are true. Jesus Christ did die. He was buried. He was raised the third day from the dead,” *assensus*.

But that’s not a saving faith yet, for there must also be *fiducia*. Now, *fiducia* as you can tell, this word is the Latin word from which we get the English word “fiduciary”. Fiduciary institutions are trust companies, banks, institutions like that. Trust companies. *Fiducia* means trust. So true saving faith is not only knowledge of facts, it is not only assent to those facts in the sense that you acknowledge that they are true, but it is personal trust in the facts. It is a committal to those facts or better still, the person concerning whom the facts relate. So in order to have faith, one must not only have knowledge, one must not only be convinced that it is true, but one must also trust.

Now, it seems to me that Adam’s failure did not rest here. He knew. He knew precisely what God had said. God had said, “And the day thou eateth thereof, thou shalt surely die.” Adam could have said, “That was God’s word.” He probably even assented

to the truth of it. He acknowledged that it was true, perhaps. But his failure lay in one of these two realms at least; not in this realm, for there was no deception. So hence, when Adam acted, he acted in full knowledge of the consequences. He knew precisely what God had said. He may even have been sure, but still in willfulness, lack of trust, he disobeyed. Now, I think that is, with me at least, the answer to the question that my great elder friend has posed, but we may hear from that later.

At that point, let’s turn to our outline; “The Biblical Account of the Effects of Adam’s Sin”. And so turn with me now to Genesis chapter 3, verse 14 through verse 24. Remember, we have been dealing with the consequences of the fall. After it, Adam and Eve are running in the age-old path of self-vindication, and therefore, it is necessary for God to execute judgment. And this he does in a threefold way. In verse 14 we read,

“And the Lord God said to the serpent; Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field. On your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.” Here is the judgment that is meted out upon the serpent. The serpent is cursed. “Cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field. On your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life.”

Now, this beast, this serpent which was more crafty than any beast of the field, according to chapter 3, verse 1, now becomes an animal that slithers along the ground. And every time you see a serpent slithering, you should be thinking of the fall, for that is the serpent’s judgment. The serpent is cursed, and he is cursed by the judgment, “On your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat.”

Now, standing back of the serpent, of course, is Satan himself. For in the Book of Revelation, he is called “that old serpent”. In his case, he is ultimately to be crushed, and the judgment of Satan is given in the 15th verse through the coming of the woman’s seed. Now, since we are not dealing with soteriology, we’re going to omit that, for we are dealing with sin. So merely, I want to say merely, that the serpent is cursed and Satan is crushed.

It is an interesting thing you know, that Deltizsch points out “that the serpent is the only animal that has a bony skeleton that goes upon its belly.” And that in itself shows that his present manner of transportation is contrary to his nature, and testifies to the fact that God has made a change in his essential status because he was used by Satan as a tool.

Well, the woman’s judgment is given next. Verse 16, “To the woman he said; I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth. In pain, you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.” And I would simply say this; that it is evident, to me at least, from verse 16, that true subordination, which Eve was to render to Adam in the paradise of the garden is now made a laborious or burdensome subjection. And, consequently, all of the exhortations addressed to the women in the New Testament to be subject unto to the men are related in some way to this judgment that was pronounced upon them. So they too are under judgment.

Now we come to man’s judgment, and man’s judgment is the most severe, and I would gather from that, that we have a recognition of the fact that Adam is the representative head of the human race and, thus, he stands responsible for what is happened in his own special sense. Now, Adam’s fall resulted in physical, moral, and local changes. The physical changes are given us in the opening verses,

“Then to Adam he said; Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you saying; You shall not eat from it,

cursed is the ground because of you. In toil, you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Now, you can see there is the cursing of the ground, which led to a life of toil and infirmity, and it was to result in physical death. That is the physical change that takes place as a result of the fall. The cursing of the ground, the labor of work in the perspiration, the sweat of Adam’s brow, and the sweat of all of the Adams afterwards, and ultimately, physical death.

But there are also moral changes, and we look back a few verses for this, for we read in verse 8 remember, “And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the Garden.” Now there it is evident, that they already have a sense of fear in the presence of God. Further, that they have a sense of guilt, and also, a sense of remorse. God comes and says, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said; The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” And so, as a result of the Fall, there has come to pass in the inner man of Adam, a self deprivation. From just one sin, Adam has become an entirely different person. That might seem to be a very harsh thing, but when you reflect upon the fact that one sin may change a man’s entire nature, it does not become so harsh. Because you see, this one sin changed the chief end of the creature which he had created; the chief end of which was to glorify God.

That chief end has now become the glorification of man by that act of sin. And that chief end controls the whole stream of the moral actions that flow from Adam, and while he has not yet had time to commit other sins, it is inevitable that he will, because

his bent of character has now been transformed. Instead of looking wholly to the glory of God, and desiring to only glorify him, his nature having become changed, desires to glorify man. And it’s not long before Adam’s descendants are murdering one another. And what we see today is the effect of that one sin, which has so transformed the nature of man that basically, we are all now directed away from the glory of God, rather than to the glory of God. Furthermore, as you know yourself from your own experience, sin provokes God’s righteous anger and God comes down in the Garden and Adam is fearful now and hides from God.

Further, it provokes his withdrawal of favor, and it is necessary for God to pronounce punishment upon Adam and Eve. It induces guilt and fear of judgment. That’s why Adam hid. That’s why he sought to cover himself with his fig leaves. Then also, it induces hostility to God. That too, is why Adam hid from God. Further sin follows, and furthermore, since there is no deliverance apart from the word of God, one sin following another sin leads to further separation, and faster pace down the slippery road that leads to hell. That’s why one sin is so evil in the sight of God, and why it should be so evil in our sight as well.

Dabney says, “Sin of itself kills the spiritual life of the soul.” And furthermore, if you will reflect for one moment about the character of sin, you will see, if what I have told you is true, and our Lord says, “Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin.” And all who have ever fallen into a life of sin, knows that one sin leads to more sin, and more sin leads to more sin, and more slavery to more slavery, and the more we sin, the more we are bondage to sin, and the more it becomes obviously impossible to us, if we recognize what we are, for us to be delivered of ourselves. Now if that is true, then you can see why endless punishment is a necessary doctrine. For if we are endlessly and permanently being separated from God, then it follows naturally, that the punishment which God has pronounced must be an endless punishment. And if you’ll remember, that if you are guilty of a sin today, 1972, if there is no satisfaction for that sin, you are just as guilty next

year as you are today, and just as guilty ten years from now as today. And just as guilty one hundred years as today, as just as guilty a thousand years, or a million years, you will see why men throughout eternity shall suffer endless punishment. That is a biblical doctrine, and is a doctrine that is drawn from the very nature of sin and God’s reaction to it.

Now, I wish I had time to read you some things written by one of our outstanding theologians in connection with this. I don’t know whether I do have time or not, but I think I’m going to take a little bit of time. “From the account which has been given of the sense of guilt, it seems to imply two propositions, which are sometimes represented as peculiar to the Christian revelation, but which on more careful examination, shows to be natural to the human mind. The first, is that from the very nature of sin, of guilt, one sin entails a hopeless bondage to sin. As the law makes no provision for pardon, and as all self-devised satisfactions are felt in proportion to the degree of moral illumination to be delusive and worthless, the natural effect of guilt is to widen the breach betwixt the sinner and God. Sensible of the divine displeasure, he is prone to withdraw farther and farther from the divine presence.” Did you feel like that before you came to Jesus Christ as your Savior? “Like Adam, when he hears the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, he seeks to hide himself from the divine eye. Every augmentation of guilt is an augmentation of his estrangement. The more the sinner sins, the broader is the gulf betwixt him and God. Hence, all experience shows that the native tendency of punishment is to harden.

“It provokes the malignity of the heart against the law, against the judge, against all holy order. It exasperates the spirit of rebellion to unwanted fierceness, and makes the sinner desperate in sin. The apostle speaks of the law as provoking in secret lusts, instigating the opposition of the heart to God, and working in him all manner of concupiscence.” I’m going to skip some reference he makes to Thucydides.

“He who begins to fall must continue to fall forever, unless relief be found elsewhere than in himself. To sin once, is to be doomed to sin forever, unless a ransom be found. The inexorable imperative of penal justice puts a gulf betwixt the sinner and God which bars all hope of return. A frown rest upon the face of the judge which repels the transgressor, and seals him up in despair. How little do men reflect what an awful thing sin is. How little do they know of its inborn malignity. How feebly conscious of the tremendous fact, that it carries death in its very womb.

“The other truth is that, as the state into one sin introduces us as hopeless, the punishment must be endless. If we must continue to sin, we must continue to die. The deeper we plunge in guilt, the deeper we sink in death. This truth seems to be shattered forth in the very nature of the fear which enters into the constitution of remorse. A guilty conscience dreads the future. It is always looking for a wrath to come. Even in our endless state, when we shall have entered upon the experience of penal fires, there will always be, in the prospective apprehension of guilt, a revelation of still deeper woe. The future will always be blacker than the present, the night ahead, more appalling than ought behind. Hell will be thick darkness waxing blacker, and blacker, and blacker forever.”

That’s an amazing statement about sin, but that’s its character.

Now, the local changes that are referred to here are very simple. We read in verse 24, “As a result of the judgment, he drove the man out, and at the east of the Garden of Eden, he stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword, which turned every direction to guard the way of the tree of life.”

Let me sum it up. Autonomous man, man who sought to be independent of God in his unbelief, is now shown his limits. He is told that he is not only not autonomous, but now being a sinner, he is subject to the consequences of his sin. He is in bondage as a result of his sin. Furthermore, the chains of time clank on the man who reached for eternity. He sought to be like God, but now he has become a person who ultimately, shall be no physical person. He shall die. Now, death is his ultimate penalty.

Let me say just a word about this. I often hear people say there are in the Bible, three kinds of death. Well, that is really not true. Adam was not subjected to three different kinds of death as penalties, I should say. There was one penalty, and that penalty is spiritual death. You’ll remember the text says, “In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” That’s the penalty. Now, that’s not physical death. The penalty is spiritual death, but that spiritual death results in bodily death, and the bodily death, if there is no deliverance, that spiritual death which results in bodily death, also results in eternal death. So really there is one penalty. It is spiritual death, and that spiritual death involves physical death. If there is no deliverance, that spiritual death continues throughout all eternity.

Now, what are the remedies? Well, the remedy for spiritual death is eternal life. And that comes through Jesus Christ and his sacrifice for us. What is the remedy for physical death? For all of us shall die if Jesus Christ does not come in our lifetime. What is the remedy for physical death? Well, the remedy for physical death is the resurrection, and that is why we have the doctrine of the resurrection. At the doctrine of the resurrection, we who are spiritually alive from the moment we believe in Jesus Christ, we’ll then be also physically alive. There is no remedy for eternal death. That, as we have just read, is a death that persists, and becomes blacker and blacker as the ages of eternity roll on.

Well, let’s move on from this. Most of this is familiar teaching to you, I’m sure. Let’s move on to the biblical teaching of the universality of sin. Few of us will deny the existence of evil in the human being. Even the Palegians, who have a high view of human nature, have acknowledged that there is evil in the nature of man. And the Socinians who did not believe in the fall, they too taught that there was a universality of evil in the world. But the thing we want to be looking at is the connection between the universality of sin and the sin of Adam, for we are looking at the effects of the sin of

Adam. Can we really say that the universality of sin among human beings is the result of the sin of Adam? Can we prove that? Is that biblical teaching?

Well now, let’s first of all look at the testimony of religion and philosophy to the universality of sin. Heathen religions are characterized often by their blood-reeking altars. Those altars are the altars of sacrifices. On those altars, the sacrifices that are offered testify to their sense of need of divine propitiation. When they take an animal, and slay the animal, and put the animal upon the altar, or sprinkle the blood upon the altar, they are saying, “We know that God is angry with us, and we know that, that God must be propitiated. We know that he must be satisfied, and we are slaying the animal in order to propitiate the angry deity.” The heathen religions, in their activities around their altars confess the universality of human sin. If you read ancient philosophy, you will discover that the problem of evil is not a modern problem at all. Plato wrestled with the problem of evil long before the time of Jesus Christ.

So the philosophers and the religions have testified to the universality of sin. But what does the Scripture say? Let’s look at a few texts tonight, and I’m going to ask you to turn to those I have put on the outline. There are some others that we could have put there, but we will use these. Let me move this up a little bit so you can see it a little better. First, 1 Kings chapter 8, verse 46. 1 Kings chapter 8, verse 46. This is Solomon’s prayer of dedication, and in the midst of it we read, “And when they sin against thee, for there is no man who does not sin.” “For there is no man who does not sin.” 1 Kings 8:46. Sin is universal.

Now second, Psalm 51:5. Psalm 51:5. In Psalm 51:5, David in his prayer of confession says, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.” What David is trying to say is that our heritage from birth is sin. It cannot be the result of imitation. Why is it that our children do not have to be taught that we are sinners? They do not have to be taught to do evil things. They immediately, the moment that they are able to express themselves, are able to demonstrate that they too are

descendants from Adam. The very way in which they are born, with their hands clenched, seems to suggest that they are in total opposition to everything about them. And the way that they enter this life with their cry is also evidence of their displeasure with the world about them.

Why is it, that when there are fifteen toys on the floor, and there are two kids in the room, that when my kid comes in the room, if he has fourteen of them, he is unhappy until he has the one that the other poor kid has. Why is that? And why is it that the other kid is unhappy that he doesn’t have the fourteen? Why is that? They didn’t have to be taught that. I didn’t have to teach my children how to sin. They knew how to sin from the beginning. And I have often quoted the statement of one of the professors at the University of Edinburgh Medical School, and I cannot quote it exactly, but it comes out something like this, that he was in that section of the medical school which dealt with babies. He said, “He had never seen a child enter human existence that did not convince him, that in every way, it was totally full of aggression toward humanity, and in every way”, he said, “a potential criminal.” Why is that? Well, David says, “In sin, my mother conceived me.” They do not have to learn.

Ephesians chapter 2, verse 3. Ephesians 2, verse 3. Do you know why you like those kids? Because they dependent on you, and they make you feel good. And so you think you are so necessary to them, and so you put up with all of their foolishness and nonsense and sin, but when the time comes that they are not dependent on you, then your attitude toward them changes a little bit, doesn’t it? You may love them still, but you know they’re not the same sweet, cuddly little thing that you kidded yourself into thinking they were in those early days. And that happens to grandchildren too. [Laughter] I like my grandchildren like they are. Two years old, three years old. J. Vernon McGee has a grandson. He likes to let me know that he has a grandson. I have only granddaughters. But he also says, “You know, I have never realized what fun grandchildren were. If I had known what fun grandchildren were, I would have had them first”, he said.

Now Ephesians chapter 2 in verse 3. “Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature, children of wrath even as the rest.” “Were by nature, children of wrath.” In other words, by this little word *physis* nature, Paul points to something that is inborn, something that is original. It is not something acquired. This is one of the texts that lets us know that the doctrine of original sin is biblical. That is, the sin that we are living in is sin that we have from the beginning. It is original sin.

Now, turn over to Romans chapter 5, verse 13 and verse 14. Romans 5, 13 and 14. I think I hear one of the children objecting in the nursery, [Laughter] illustrating perhaps, what we have been talking about. Ephesians chapter 5, verse 13 and 14. I better be careful. I don’t know which child that is, whether that’s my grandchild or not. Verse 13, “For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law.” By the way, that does not mean sin did not exist, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. “Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses.” Well, we’re going to say something about this ultimately, but the reason that Paul says this is, death reigned when sin was not reckoned.

Men were not responsible for the breaking of the law, and yet they died. Why did they die? Well, they must have died because of Adam’s sin. They didn’t die for their own, because theirs was not reckoned during that period of time. “And even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam’s offense, because he broke a law, who is a type of him to come.” Even infants you see, died. And so it is evident then, that infants are born in sin. Infants are not righteous, and then suddenly at the age of accountability, become unrighteous. Infants are born in sin, and they live in sin. They also are under condemnation. So sin exists even in infants, but proof of it is that they die. Now, I don’t want to scare you. Infants may be saved if they die before the age of accountability, but it’s not because they were righteous. It’s because God, in his grace, reckons to them as they die, the benefits of the saving death of Jesus Christ. They are lost as long as they live

because they are born in sin. That’s Paul’s point. They have not broken a law. They have not broken a commandment. Why then do they die? They die because of Adam’s sin, but they die. That’s the thing. They are thus, under sin and condemnation.

Now, one last text. John chapter 3, verse 3, verse 5. We all know this one, I hope. This is the great text that Jesus uttered to Nicodemus, when Nicodemus asked that he might be taught the way of life. Verse 3 of John chapter 3. “Jesus answered and said to him; Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Verse 5, “Truly, truly I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Now, it is evident by virtue of what Jesus says, that one must be born again in order to enter the kingdom of God. By this very necessity of redemption, by this very necessity of entering into the experience of regeneration, and the resultant forgiveness that follows from it, it is evident then, that all are in sin, else they would not need to be born again. So consequently, the command of our Lord, “He must be born again” is built upon the foundation of the recognition of universality of sin among men.

Now, let’s move on to the biblical theology of the connection between Adam’s sin and the universality of sin. Can we assert a connection between sin’s universality and the sin of Adam? Now, we have seen from the Scriptures, and we have seen from philosophy, and we have seen from the religions, though we didn’t try to point that out in great detail, that there is a universal testimony to the universality of sin. But can we prove that, that universality of sin comes from Adam’s one sin? Can we prove that? That’s roman III.

Now, before we look at that, I want to say just a few words about objections to a connection. Various types of objections have been offered to the doctrine of imputation. It has been said for example, by Pelegians and Socinians that this is not a biblical doctrine. They have said, “The first sin,” the Pelegians and the Socinians, they have said, “The first sin was Adam’s sin only, and it does not concern his posterity.” Well how then,

my Socinian friend, my Pelegian friend, how is it then that we have this universality of sin among human beings? If Adam is responsible only for his sin, and his sin did not concern his descendants, how is it that everybody is in sin? Well, Adam set us a very bad example, and we have all followed Adam’s example. It’s sad but, nevertheless, it was only an example. Well, that is the way the Pelegians have denied original sin, and its imputation.

The semi-Pelegians and the earlier Dutch Arminians, who were semi-Pelegians, Wesley was not really a semi-Pelegian in their sense, and, therefore, I call him a later Arminian. The earlier Dutch Arminians and the semi-Pelegians believed that men inherited a corrupt nature from Adam, but they deny that this involves any sin or guilt. They say, “Yes, it’s true. We do inherit Adam’s corrupt nature, but since we inherited it, we are not responsible for it. God may justly allow this corrupt nature to exist, but only because he’s going to introduce adequate compensation through the saving ministry of Jesus Christ. And so, he will give us sufficient grace, and as a result of sufficient grace, if we, by the decision of our will decide for Jesus Christ, that sufficient grace will help us so that finally we will be saved from the evil nature in which we were born.”

Well now, we have often talked about this, and we have pointed out that, that really is a form of work salvation, for if our salvation is dependent upon our decision of will, as initiating our salvation, then there is something in us that is acceptable to God. And the Bible plainly says that salvation is of the Lord.

One might also ask, “If it’s really true that men are born with a sinful nature, but it’s not really sin, and we’re not really punished for it because God is going to give Jesus Christ to die for sin, then why is it that the remedy is not applied to the heathen?” If God is so loving, as to give Jesus Christ as a compensation for our sin nature, and consequently, our sin nature is not really sinful in the sense that it brings us condemnation, what about the heathen who have not had the Gospel? What about them? You see, this type of theology does not handle the question of the heathen. Furthermore,

our condemnation is of justice, and our redemption is of grace. They are not the same at all.

Neo-orthodox men are the men who follow in the line of Karl Barth, Emil Bruner, Reinhold Neibuhr, great names that you have seen on your newspaper pages, often the front pages, in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. They have been the theological leaders of the twentieth century. They are called neo-orthodox men because, as a result of the experience that Barth primarily had, of recognizing that men were sinners after he had been trained in liberal theology. He introduced into the theological world again, the doctrine of the sin of man. And they are called neo-orthodox because they were, generally, liberals who came back to something of an orthodox position, particularly in the doctrine of sin. The neo-orthodox have believed that we are in sin, but not from the one sin of Adam. For example, Professor Bruner who taught at the University of Zurich in Switzerland said, “In Adam, all have sinned. That is the biblical statement. But how, the Bible does not tell us that.” “The doctrine of original sin is read into it” Professor Bruner says. In other words, all we can say is that men are born, or in Adam, all have sinned. But how we are to understand that, the Bible does not tell us, and we must not read the doctrine of original sin into it.

Now, let’s come to the proof of the connection between the universality of sin and Adam’s sin. It’s very important for us to show this from the Scripture, to show that there is a link between the sin of Adam and the fact that all men are in sin. So let’s turn to one of the great passages on this doctrine, Romans chapter 5. Again, Romans chapter 5. Where does the Bible say that God condemned the race for Adam’s apostasy? Where does it say that you’re guilty because Adam sinned? You don’t like that doctrine, do you? Later on, I will show you I think, I hope, successfully, that I am eternally grateful that God did that; that he actually condemned me because of Adam’s sin. And I think I will be able to show that to any straight thinking person. But now, we are seeking to answer the question, “Where does the Bible say that God condemned the race for Adam’s apostasy?”

Well, let’s look at Romans chapter 5, verse 12. “Therefore, just as through one man, sin entered into the world, and death through sin, so death spread to all men because all sinned.” Here we read that through one man, sin entered into the world. In other words, Adam was the means by which sin made its entrance into the world. Now furthermore, death came through Adam’s sin too. So sin and death entered the human race through Adam and death spread to all men. The Paul says, “Because all sinned.”

Now, I think it would be reasonable to suggest from this text that, that must mean that we sinned in Adam. But, nevertheless, that is not stated, and the very fact that this text has been understood in different ways is evidence of the fact that by itself, it might not give us a clear answer to our question. So we must look on in the passage, but we have the answer later on.

Will you notice the seventeenth verse? “For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one.” In other words, there it is stated that death reigns through the one transgression of Adam. Verse 18, “So then as through one transgression, there resulted condemnation to all men.” There it is. Plain as day. “Through one transgression.” That’s Adam’s transgression. “Through one transgression, there resulted condemnation to all men.” There it’s plainly stated. Adam sinned, and we were condemned. Not only we, everybody was condemned because Adam sinned. Verse 19, “For as through the one man’s disobedience, the many were made sinners.” There it is, just as plain as day. Adam’s sin brought the whole race into condemnation.

Now Paul, over in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 22 says, “In Adam, all die. In Christ, all shall be made alive.” There he says much the same thing that he says here.

Well, I’m going to stop at this point, and we’re going to take up the ground of the connection next week, and we will talk about why this is justifiable theologically, and then we’re going to talk about specifically, the kind of imputation that the Bible teaches. Let’s close with a word of prayer.

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[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the Scriptures. We thank Thee for their teaching concerning sin. And, Lord, as we reflect upon the terrible nature of sin, it sends terror into our hearts. We thank Thee that Thou hast delivered us from the penal consequences of sin. Lord, deliver us from the power of sin in our daily life.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.