

# BIBLE CHALLENGE 2019

Week 18: April 28-May 4

## *What is Original Sin and How Does it Affect Us?*

Read: Genesis 3:14-24; 5:3; 9:6; Exodus 34:7; Leviticus 26:39; Deuteronomy 24:16; 2 Kings 14:6; Job 11:12; 15:14-16; 25:4; Psalm 5:9; 14:1-3; 51:5; 58:3; Proverbs 22:15; 27:19; Ecclesiastes 7:29; 9:3; Jeremiah 3:25; Lamentations 5:7; Ezekiel 18:20; Matthew 5:48; Romans 3:10-12,23; 5:12-13,18-19; 7:13-25; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Ephesians 2:3; James 3:9; 2 Peter 2:4-10; 1 John 5:17.

*"We believe that, through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature, and an hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof; and therefore is so vile and abominable in the sight of God, that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind. Nor is it by any means abolished or done away by baptism; since sin always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain; notwithstanding it is not imputed to the children of God unto condemnation, but by his grace and mercy is forgiven them. Not that they should rest securely in sin, but that a sense of this corruption should make believers often to sigh, desiring to be delivered from this body of death. Wherefore we reject the error of the Pelagians, who assert that sin proceeds only from imitation." — Belgic Confession, Article XV*

*"Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression? The Covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression." — Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question & Answer 16*

*"Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell? The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called Original Sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it." — Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question & Answer 18*

*"But are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any good and inclined toward all evil? Yes, unless we are born again, by the Spirit of God." — Heidelberg Catechism, Question & Answer 8*

The Doctrine of Original Sin is one of the most foundational doctrines in the Christian faith and it answers the question as to why we need a Savior. It seems that the common attitude of most westerners today is that "I'm not that bad — surely I will go to heaven when I die." Of course, people who say things like this are measuring themselves according to the standard of the worst person they can think of — Adolph Hitler, Jeffrey Dahmer, Charles Manson, etc... Yet, God does not judge us by a human standard, he judges us by a divine standard — his own perfection. By that standard, we are all in a lot of trouble.

But, "What if?" Some might suggest the impossible hypothetical question. "What if I lived a perfect life and had never sinned?" That, of course, is an impossible hypothetical because we are all have a natural bent toward sin rather than toward righteousness (what theologians sometimes call "original pollution"). Yet, even if that did not lead us into sin, we have inherited the guilt of the sin of our fathers for generations going all of the way back to Adam. So, even if we could live sinlessly, we still have a burden of guilt that is covenantally handed down to us generation by generation (what theologians sometimes call "original guilt").

Thus, when we talk about "Original Sin," we are not just speaking of the sin of Adam and Eve, but also of the effects of their sin upon their generation — effects that are inherited by all of mankind. The presence of Original sin, then, means that we, on the most basic level, "by nature, tend to hate God and our neighbor" (Heidelberg Catechism Answer 5).

What part of our person does Original Sin affect? This is what we call the Doctrine of Total Depravity. Sin affects our minds, so that we don't reason correctly. It affects our bodies, so that we long for things we ought not long. It affects our wills, so that we give into temptations. In other words, the whole of our nature — body, mind, and spirit — is

affected by Original Sin.

The question of Original Sin and its transmission has been the source of great debate, though, through the history of the church.

### **Realistic Theory vs. Federal Imputation**

One of the debates in the life of the church was over the question as to how the effects of Original Sin are transmitted from generation to generation. Out of this, two major views developed. The first is called "Realistic Theory," which argued that Adam's basic cellular structure and DNA were affected by the Fall and thus became corrupted. This corruption was then passed along from generation to generation through ordinary biological processes.

The second of the theories is called "Federal Imputation." This theory asserts that since Adam is the federal head, the guilt of his sin is imputed to all who descend from him. This has more to do with the nature of covenant and what it means to be a covenant head than it does biology, for the sin that is imputed to Adam's line is not physiologically bound to Adam's children, yet we are "clothed" in it as we are under his headship. The word "imputation" is chosen historically because it refers to something that is possessed by someone but that is not infused permanently into our nature. Like the old Mark Twain story of the Prince and the Pauper, the pauper, while wearing clothing that was not his, was treated as if he were the prince even though he was not the rightful prince. And thus, though we did not actually commit the sin of Adam, we are held guilty of it.

Both views are held to be orthodox and both of these views are not mutually exclusive, so one might embrace a kind of blended approach.

### **Pelagius, Augustine, and Arminius's Rejection**

This topic is far too involved to tackle thoroughly here, but in brief, a 4th Century Monk named Pelagius objected to the idea that Original Sin was handed down from generation to generation. He argued that we are all born morally neutral and that habits and tendencies to sin are learned by watching bad examples.

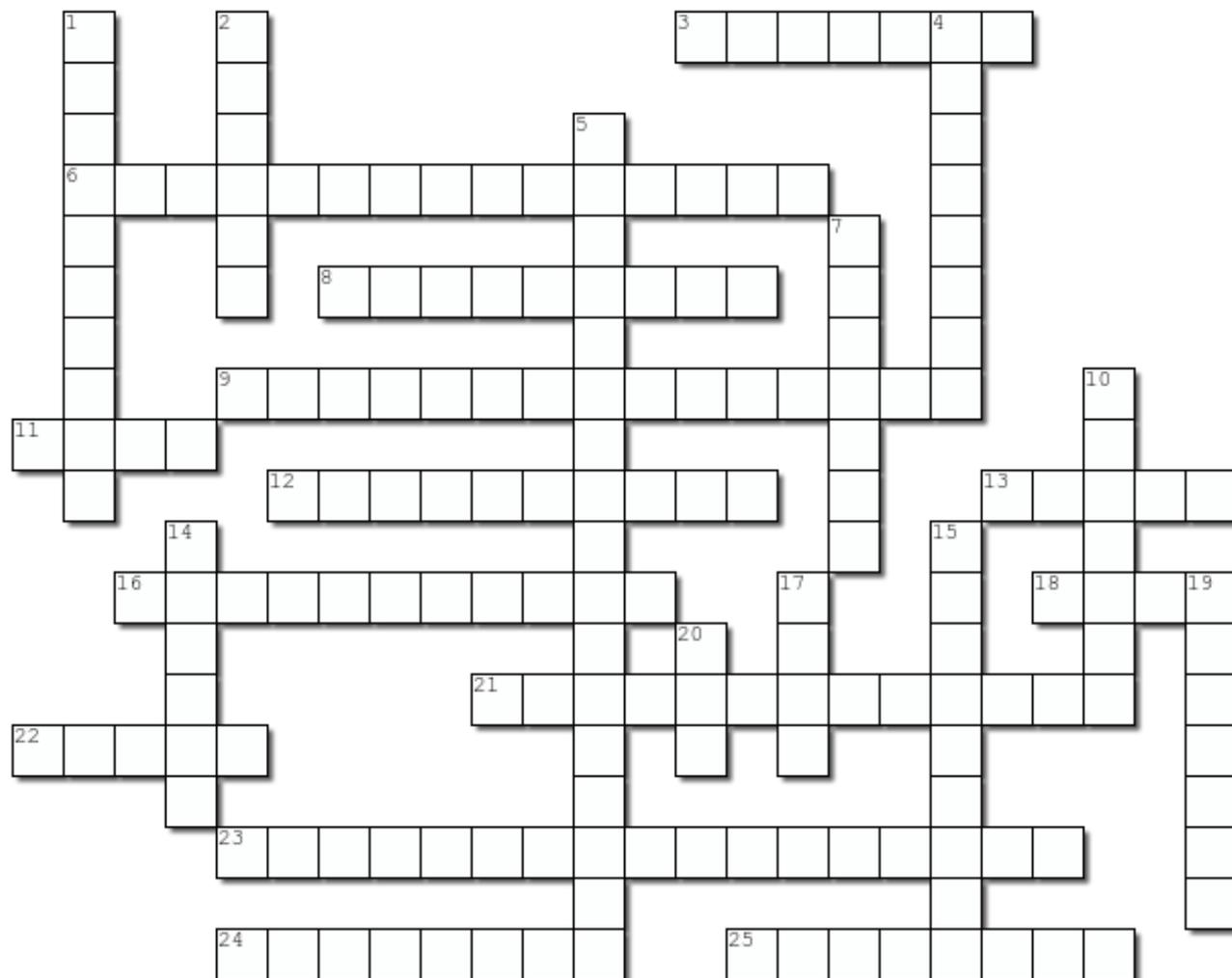
Augustine defended the Biblical teaching of Original Sin and Pelagius' view would be demonstrated to be heretical. After the death of Augustine, there began to develop in the church what was called a "semi-Pelagian" view, which placed much more evidence on human choice and obedience for salvation. This Semi-Pelagian view would be picked up by the Dutch theologian, Jacob Arminius, and once again presented for debate. Arminian views, like Pelagian views, was demonstrated to contradict many parts of the scripture and once again, was declared to be heretical.

Once again, about 100 years later, the Semi-Pelagian and Arminian views were "rediscovered" by John Wesley and adapted once again so they were not outrightly heretical. With the new revision, Wesley's view became influential and is still influential today outside of Reformed circles. Wesley embraced the idea of Original Sin, but created what he called, the Doctrine of "Prevenient Grace." Wesley argued that though we are born into this world dead in our sin, part of Common Grace permits man to be "alive enough" to choose eternal life and seek it out in Christ. Again, this cannot be supported with Scripture and is more of a practical way of facilitating Wesley's theology than a Biblical theology to present.

### **Rome, Luther, and Baptism**

In Roman Catholic Theology and in Lutheran theology, there is the view that in your baptism, the guilt of Original Sin is washed away permanently. This places a higher emphasis on the sacrament in terms of what it is believed that the sacrament effects. The difficulty of this view should be apparent as it places salvation into the realm of works of the church (given through Baptism and sacraments) rather than upon that of God's saving grace.

# Week 18 - Original Sin



Created using the Crossword Maker on TheTeachersCorner.net

## Across

3. If we are to earn merit in God's eyes, we must be \_\_\_\_ as our heavenly Father is.
6. The view that Original sin is passed down through DNA. (2 words)
8. The throat of the wicked is like this (2 words).
9. This drives sin from a child (3 words).
11. 'There is \_\_\_\_ who does good.'
12. Job says that this animal's colt will be born a man before the stupid man gains understanding. (2 words)
13. The wicked tell lies from this point in their lives.
16. 'Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this \_\_\_\_' (3 words)
18. He was the replacement for Abel.
21. This is the term theologians use to describe the inherited (Federal) effect of sin. (2 words)
22. 'Children shall not be put to \_\_\_\_ because of their fathers.'
23. This is the term theologians use to describe the generational effect of sin. (2 words)
24. He rediscovered the Semi-Pelagian view.
25. This protestant body holds that the sacrament of baptism washes away the guilt of Original Sin.

## Down

1. All fall short of this (3 words).
2. The promoter of 'Neo-Arminianism.'
4. 'In sin did my mother \_\_\_\_ me.'
5. The ground produced this for man as a result of man's sin. (3 words)
7. 'God made man \_\_\_\_ but they have sought many schemes.'
10. God humiliated this beast because it brought temptation to Adam and Eve.
14. God promises to visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to this generation.
15. He refuted Pelagius
17. The first one of these brought death, the second, life.
19. 'Your desire shall be contrary to your \_\_\_\_.'
20. 'All wrongdoing is \_\_\_\_.'