



Introduction

- Guilt is imputed, and corruption is inherited.
- Before the fall man was *posse peccare, non posse peccare* (able to sin, able not to sin).
- After the fall man was *non posse non peccare* (not able not to sin).

History of the Doctrine of Original Sin

The Early Church

The Council of Carthage in 418 condemned Pelagianism and affirmed that infants are born with original sin.

- Pelagianism – Grace is not necessary since we are born without original sin. We have the ability in ourselves to live righteously.
- Semi-Pelagianism – Grace is helpful in our sinful state. We take the first step towards God from our free will and then he adds his grace to help us along.
- Semi-Augustinianism – Grace is necessary since we are born with original sin, but grace is not sufficient. God initiates our salvation through prevenient grace – a grace given to all men. Prevenient grace is the grace of God given to individuals that releases them from their bondage to sin and enables them to come to Christ in faith but does not guarantee that the sinner will actually do so.
- Augustinianism – Grace is necessary since we are born with original sin, and that grace is sufficient. God grants grace to his elect that results in salvation, sanctification, and glorification.

The Medieval Church

- Augustinianism and Semi-Augustinianism most prevalent.
- Emphasis on the realistic view of sin's transmission, which is through sexual reproduction.
- Original sin is not merely the absence of righteousness, but a habit or disposition toward sin.
- In the fourteenth century, William of Ockham, and in the fifteenth century, Gabriel Biel, taught that the unregenerate could accrue congruent merit by doing their best.

The Lutheran Church

- Grace alone is necessary because of sin.
- Erasmus said sin didn't destroy man's free will but only wounded it.
- Luther said God's commands demonstrate the inability of sinners to do what they ought to do, in order to drive them to Christ.
- Original sin is the deep and pervasive corruption of human nature.

The Early Reformed Churches

- The doctrine of original sin is prominent.
- Calvin says every part of human nature is corrupted.



- Our doctrine of original sin is based on the work of these early Reformed theologians.

The Roman Catholic Church

- Original sin is transmitted by propagation, not imitation. Only the grace of Christ can take away original sin.
- Baptism removes the guilt and stain of original sin and what remains in the baptized is not properly called sin but is merely an inclination to sin.
- Original sin centers on the loss of original righteousness, not the corruption of man's whole nature.

Socinianism

- Faustus Socinus was an Italian theologian that denied original sin.
- Sinning is not inherent but is formed by a habit of committing sins.

Arminianism

- Original sin is only the loss of righteousness. Does not include corruption.
- Arminius taught prevenient grace.
- We can accept or reject this prevenient grace.

Post Reformation

- John Taylor said Adam's sin only affected Adam, except that death was introduced into the world.
- Taylor said that the death that resulted from the fall was merely physical death.
- Jonathan Edwards pointed out that the Scripture is clear that man is also spiritually dead because of the fall.
- Liberalism denied original sin and proclaimed human goodness.
- Ritschl rejected any notion of original sin.
 - It does not mesh with moral responsibility
 - It undermines any reason for education;
 - It cannot account for differing degrees of evil in individuals.
- Liberal teach a form of Pelagianism in which man is basically good. When you add in evolution theological liberalism views mankind as improving through external means such as education and social justice. However, this primarily good humanity produced two world wars plus many other atrocities in the twentieth century. Neo-orthodox theologians refused to root the problem of sin in the fall of Adam.
- Brunner said evolution and human responsibility force us to abandon original sin.
- Many today think that modern culture and modern science have killed original sin.

Reformed Doctrine of Original Sin

Canons of Dort

- The Synod of Dort met in the years 1618-1619.
- Synod of Dort proclaims total depravity and total inability.



WCF and LBCF

- The Westminster Confession of Faith and the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith proclaim total depravity and total inability.

Puritans

- The Puritans held to the Reformed understanding of original sin.

Conclusion

- The Reformed doctrine of original sin is well documented from the time of the Reformation on.
- Pelagianism did away with original sin and said man has the power to do good without God's help.
- Romans 3:9-18
- Augustinianism was reaffirmed and clarified by Luther, Calvin, and other reformers.
- Romans 8:7-8
- Titus 3:3
- Ephesians 2:1-5