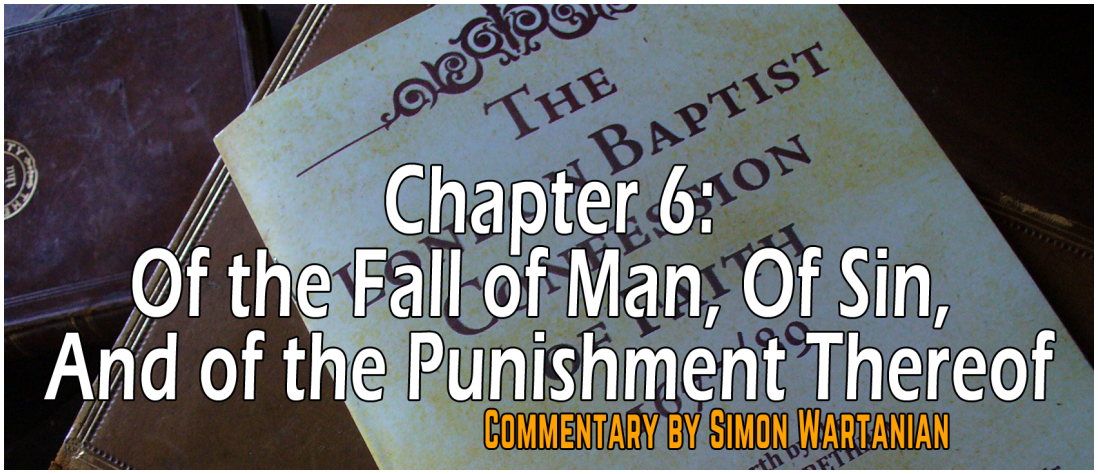
1689 Baptist Confession Chapter 6: Of the Fall of Man, Of Sin, And of the Punishment Thereof - Commentary

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Chapter 6: Of the Fall of Man, Of Sin, And of the Punishment Thereof

What is Total Depravity? Are men as bad as they can be? What is Original Sin? Are we born sinners? What is Federal Headship?

This chapter contains brief comments on the doctrines of Original Sin, Federal Headship and Total Depravity.

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§1 Man Was Created Upright And Perfect, But They Fell

1. Although God created **man upright and perfect**, and gave him a **righteous law**, which had been unto life had he kept it, and threatened death upon the breach thereof, yet he did not long abide in this honour; **1 Satan using the subtlety of the serpent** to subdue Eve, then by her seducing **Adam, who, without any compulsion, did willfully transgress** the law of their creation, and the command given unto them, in eating the forbidden fruit, **2** which **God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel to permit,** having **purposed to order it to his own glory. 3**
    1. Eccl. 7:29; Rom. 5:12a, 14-15; Gen. 2:17; 4:25-5:3[1]
    2. Gen. 3:1-7; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14
    3. Rom. 11:32-34; 2 Sam. 24:1; 1 Chron. 21:1; 1 Kings 22:22-23; 2 Sam. 16:10; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28

God made all things “very good” (Gen. 1:31), including **man**. He gave **a righteous law**, the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17). Had he **kept it** past his time of probation, it would have been **unto life**. And God **threatened death upon the breath thereof**, which passed down to all of Adam’s children. But Adam and Eve **did not long abide in this honour**. They fell by the **subtlety of the serpent** who **subdued** and deceived **Eve** (1Tim. 2:14). In turn, Eve **seduced Adam** to eat of the tree which he **willfully** did and **transgress the law of their creation, and the command given unto them** (Gen. 3:6). Even this was not outside of God’s providence and decree (**as chapter 5:4 says**). But was ordained and **permitted** according to **His wise and holy counsel**. God had a purpose in ordaining and permitting the Fall, which was for **His own glory**, which is the purpose and end of all things which He has ordained.

Our Confession is in agreement with Ecclesiastes 7:29 where it is said that man was created upright, but "they" (man) sought out many (evil) schemes. Adam and Eve received a direct command from God not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17), which (perhaps) caused the knowledge and experience of a new kind of morality, namely evil morality. There was nothing in the fruit that did that, but it was God's way of testing them. The Confession is clear that Adam out of his own will took of the tree and transgressed. He was not coerced against his will and desire, neither was Eve. Of this command, we read in Genesis 2:16-17:

> Gen. 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "**You may surely eat of every tree of the garden**, 17 but of **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat**, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Here, this command is directly given to Adam before the creation of Eve. Whether Eve knew of this command directly from God or not, I am unsure. But I have no doubt that she knew that she should not eat of the tree. Adam had one requirement: if he obeyed he would earn eternal life for himself and his posterity, if not he and his descendants after him will be born sinful and be condemned–they will die (see chapter 7 on **the Covenant of Works**). Adam, in the Garden of Eden, stood in the stead of all people that would come from him. See **paragraph 3 for federal headship**. Most importantly, the Fall is recognized to not be outside of God's sovereign decree, but in it. It pleased God to "permit" it, why? Because He had "purposed to order it to his own glory." In what way? By displaying a wider range of His attributes: by putting His wrath on display and by putting His grace on display; by conquering evil and getting glory over it; by saving His elect from the world; by becoming man in the process of saving the world. All these glorious things could not have happened if God had not decreed the Fall.

The first sin may be the most difficult question to answer as to how it could have been that a perfectly good being like Adam or Satan could rebel and fall. What would cause them to do that? Free will has no explanatory power. We do not believe that it sufficiently answers the question. That's why the Fall and every sin needs to be recognized as ordained by God of old and is purposed to display His glory. Sin is never outside of God's control. It is indeed mysterious why would or how would a "very good" (Gen. 1:31) creature rebel against God. I reject the notion that there is no freedom without the opposite, that is, man must have the ability to obey and disobey to be *truly* free (**see chapter 9 on free will**). The Persons of the Blessed Trinity have always obeyed each other and never done anything contrary, yet God is most free and sovereign. The Lord Jesus has only done what the Father pleases, but that does not mean that He is not free because He cannot but love and obey His Father.

When God created, He consciously created Adam as a type of Christ. Adam did not become a type after the Fall, or when Paul wrote Romans, but he was, in fact, created as a type, he did not become one.

> Rom. 5:14 Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was **a type of the one who was to come**.

This would mean that Adam was created to point to Christ and display Christ. But this also means that Christ came to do that which Adam was supposed to do. When we look at what Christ accomplished, we can also look back to Adam and see what he was supposed to accomplish had he obeyed God in his time of probation. We can learn about the type from the antitype and vice-versa.

The fact that God predestines us to be holy and blameless presupposes that we would not be holy and blameless, and that God had purposed to permit the Fall. Therefore, God, before the creation of the world, predestined people to be sinless:

> Eph. 1:3-6 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as **he chose us in him before the foundation of the world**, **that we should be holy and blameless before him.** In love 5 he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

For more on these things, see **chapter 3** (God's Decree), **chapter 5** (Divine Providence) and **chapter 9** (Free Will).

§2 Our first parents, by this sin, fell from their original righteousness

0. Our first parents, by this sin, **fell from their original righteousness** and communion with God, and **we in them whereby death came upon all**: **1** all becoming dead in sin, and **wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts** of soul and body. **2**
    1. Gen. 3:22-24; Rom. 5:12ff; 1 Cor. 15:22-22; Ps. 51:4-5; 58:3; Eph. 2:1-3; Gen. 8:21; Prov. 22:15
    2. Gen. 2:17; Eph. 2:1; Titus 1:15; Gen. 6:5; Ps. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-18; 1:21; Eph. 4:17-19; John 5:40; Rom. 8:7

Our first parents, by transgressing this command of God, **fell from their original righteousness and communion with God** (Rom 3:23; 5:12-14). The relationship between man and God was damaged and has never been the same since then. Thanks to their sin and transgression, **death**, the punishment for transgressing the command (Gen. 2:16-17), came upon all their descendants. Adam was the federal head of all mankind (paragraph 3). What he did counted for all of us. Therefore, all of us became **dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all** our **faculties and parts** (Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10-18). No part or faculty of man was unaffected or untouched by sin. Our whole being became sinful because of the Fall.

The Confession here begins to define the classic doctrine of Original Sin. We, in some mysterious way, were present with and in Adam. Adam was chosen by God to represent us all in the Garden. If he had passed the probation, all his posterity would have been counted as righteous and would have remained in that state. But because he failed, all his natural posterity fell in him and with him. Thereby even the cutest baby is born with a sinful nature and is dead in sin. This is best seen in Paul's treatment of Federal Headship in Romans 5:

> Rom. 5:12 Therefore, just as **sin came into the world through one man**, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—
>
> Rom. 5:18 Therefore, as **one trespass led to condemnation for all men**, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

Sin entered into the world through the disobedience of one man, Adam. Through sin, the punishment of sin also entered into the world—death. In Adam, all sinned and thereby also came under the punishment of death. The "all sinned" in Romans 5:12c is not personal sin, but the sin of the representative, Adam. We all sinned *because* he sinned. His sin and trespass did not only lead to our death, but also to our judgment and condemnation. His sin brought both physical and spiritual death; natural and eternal death.

When sin entered into the world, separation came between man and God. Separation from all good, physical and spiritual death also, the second death, the death of all eternity and torment in Hell. Sin creates separation between the Creator and creature. The sin that is in us causes Him to grief and be angry with us and make His wrath abide on us (Gen. 6:5-6; John 3:36).

> Isa. 59:2 but **your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God**, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

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§3 Original Sin and Federal Headship

0. They being the root, and **by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind,** the **guilt of the sin was imputed,** and **corrupted nature conveyed,** to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation, being now **conceived in sin,** and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, **unless the Lord Jesus set them free. 1**
    1. Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22, 45, 49; Ps 51:5; 58:3; Job 14:4; 15:14; Gen. 8:21; Prov. 22:15; Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 6:20; Heb. 2:14, 15; 1 Thess. 1:10

They were not only the **root**, i.e., the first parents of all humans, but also **by God's appointment, standing in the room**

and stead of all mankind (Rom. 5:12-19). It was God Who decided that Adam be the federal head of all his descendants. This meant that whatever Adam did in the Covenant of Works (**see chapter 7**) counted for his descendants also. Since Adam disobeyed, all the curses of the Covenant came upon us, too. Thus, the **guilt of sin was imputed** (Rom. 5:12) to us and the **corrupted nature conveyed** by **ordinary generation**, i.e., procreation. Note especially the word **ordinary**, which excludes our Lord from being under Adam since His birth or **generation** was *un*ordinary. From our first point of life we are sinful. We are **conceived in sin**. Conceived *in* and not *by* sin. We are **by nature children of wrath** (Eph. 2:3), not children of God. And we are subject to all the curses of God because of Adam's law-breaking and our own sins against God and will remain so **unless the Lord Jesus** sets us free.

Here is the Confession's full statement on the classic doctrine of Original Sin, or as Dr. Wayne Grudem suggests, *Inherited Sin*. We see that Adam and Eve, or more specifically, Adam, stood in our place in the Garden. They were the tree of the human family, so to speak, and if the tree is corrupt, its fruits will also be corrupt (Matt. 7:18). It was God Who appointed Adam as the Federal Head of the human race, the legal representative. It was His doing, there is no questioning of God's decision. He is righteous in all His ways and is never "unfair" (Deut. 32:4; Gen. 18:25; Job 34:10). None of us would have done otherwise if we were in their shoes, being tempted by the deceiver. Because of Adam and Eve's transgression of God's Law, the guilt of sin is imputed (attributed) to all their posterity and also the punishment, hence even children die (that's the punishment of disobedience). This is not to imply that all children go to Hell anymore than to say that the reason that Christians die is that God is punishing them (**see chapter 31 for more on this subject** and **chapter 10 on infant salvation**). The corrupted nature was carried over, transmitted, transported and imparted to all his descendants coming by "ordinary generation" (excluding the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was the seed of the woman, not man and conceived by the Holy Spirit).

This doctrine of Original Sin or the Federal Headship of Adam is best seen in Romans 5:12-21. Let's take a look at Romans 5:12:

> Rom. 5:12 Therefore, just as **sin came into the world through one man**, and **death through sin**, and so **death spread to all men because all sinned**—

Here we see the entrance of sin into the world through Adam and by the breaking of God's law, came the punishment upon sin–death (Gen. 2:16-17). Because of that disobedience and having Adam as the representative, all sinned. This is not referring to people *actually committing sin,* but this refers to all who were *in* Adam or had Adam as their covenant head. In the mind of God, when he sinned, they sinned. This is confirmed by the fact that people die not (necessarily, or always) because of their personal sin, but because of Adam's sin (Rom. 5:15). Death was the penalty for Adam's transgression and thus it is imputed and transferred to all his descendants. This is seen in the tragic death of many infants who have not yet sinned themselves, but are born sinful in Adam and receive his punishment–death. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), why would "sinless" babies die? Some may want to say that death is just natural in the world, no, it's not. From a secular point of view, it obviously is, but not from a biblical view. Death came through man. It was not there when God created a "very good" creation (Rom. 5:12, 15, 17; Gen. 1:31). The verse is best understood to refer to the fact that when Adam sinned, we sinned in him. Wayne Grudem notes the following:

> The aorist indicative verb hēmarton in the historical narrative indicates a completed past action. Here Paul is saying that something happened and was completed in the past, namely, that "all men sinned." But it was not true that all men had actually committed sinful actions at the time that Paul was writing, because some had not even been born yet, and many others had died in infancy before committing any conscious acts of sin. So Paul must be meaning that when Adam sinned, God considered it true that all men sinned in Adam.[2]

John MacArthur says the following on Romans 5:12 –

> **5:12 just as sin came.** Not a particular sin, but the inherent propensity to sin entered the human realm; men became sinners by nature. Adam passed to all his descendants the inherent sinful nature he possessed because of his first disobedience. That nature is present from the moment of conception (Ps. 51:5), making it impossible for man to live in a way that pleases God. Satan, the father of sin (1 John 3:8), first brought temptation to Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1-7). **through one man.** When Adam sinned, all mankind sinned in his loins (Rom. 5:18; cf. Heb 7:7-10). Since his sin transformed his inner nature and brought spiritual death and depravity, that sinful nature would be passed on seminally to his posterity as well (Ps. 51:5). **death.** Adam was not originally subject to death, but through his sin it became a grim certainty for him and his posterity. Death has three distinct manifestations: 1) spiritual death or

separation from God (cf. Eph 2:1-2; 4:18); 2) physical death (Heb. 9:27); and 3) eternal death (also called the second death), which includes not only eternal separation from God, but eternal torment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15). **because all sinned.** Because all humanity existed in the loins of Adam, and have through procreation inherited his fallenness and depravity, it can be said that all sinned in him. Therefore, humans are not sinners they sin, but rather they sin because they are sinners.[3]

John Gill comments, saying, "all men were naturally and seminally in him; as he was the common parent of mankind, he had all human nature in him, and was also the covenant head, and representative of all his posterity; so that they were in him both naturally and federally, and so "sinned in him"; and fell with him by his first transgression into condemnation and death."[4] Philip Schaff likewise notes:

All sinned, not, 'have sinned.' A single historical act is meant, namely, the past event of Adam's fall, which was at the same time virtually the fall of the human race as represented by him and germinally contained in him. (For the views of this connection between Adam and his posterity see Excursus at the close of the section.) As regards the interpretation of the words, it may be insisted that 'sinned' is not equivalent to 'became sinful.' There remain two views: (1.) As a historical fact, when Adam sinned all sinned, because of the vital connection between him and his posterity. (2.) When Adam sinned, all were declared sinners, he being the representative of the race. The objection to this is, that 'sinned' is not equivalent to 'were regarded as sinners,' It makes the parallel between Adam and Christ more close than the passage, thus far, appears to warrant.[5]

The children of Adam, we, are already born under God's judgment because of what Adam did in the Garden on our behalf. Some may be offended by this doctrine of Adam's Federal Headship, but there is no questioning the justice of God, it is what the Scriptures teach. We must deal with it! Let us not forget how we are saved and made righteous. We are saved also by way of Federal Headship–that of Christ, and not of Adam. It is not because of our works that we are saved, but because of Christ's works that we are saved (Rom. 5:18-19). Somebody else represented us before God and did for us that which we could not do. So, before we dismiss Adam's Federal Headship, let us not forget about Christ's Federal Headship. If we dismiss that, we also dismiss the only way of salvation and justification. See for more on justification and imputed righteousness, **chapter 11**.

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§4 Total Inability

0. From this **original corruption,** whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made **opposite to all good,** and **wholly inclined to all evil, 1** do proceed all actual transgressions. **2**
    1. Matt. 7:17-18; 12:33-35; Luke 6:43-45; John 3:3, 5; 6:37, 39-40, 44-45, 65; Rom. 3:10-12; 5:6; 7:18; 8:7-8; 1 Cor. 2:14
    2. Matt. 7:17-20; 12:33-35; 15:18-20; James 1:14-15

All actual transgressions proceed from this **original corruption** of Adam and Eve (Matt. 7:17-20; 15:18-20). Through this **original corruption**, the nature of man was distorted and separated from God whereby it was **made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil** (Gen. 8:21; Rom. 3:10-12; 8:7-8). And from this corruption do all our sins spring and have their origin.

Here follows the classic Reformed doctrine of Total Depravity from the acronym *TULIP*. I and many others think it is better named *Total Inability*. Total Depravity gives the idea that we are as bad as we could be, which is obviously not true and not the historical sense given by the name. Rather, what is communicated by the phrase is that the total, i.e., whole, person is depraved and sinful. There is not an inch in us where sin does not dwell and have its reign in us. On the other hand, Total Inability better expresses the point of the doctrine in saying that we are totally unable to do anything that is pleasing to God. Let's define Total Depravity.

Because of the Fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free; it is in bondage to his evil nature. Therefore, he will not –indeed, he cannot—choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ. Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is

not salvation, but itself a part of God's gift of salvation. It is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God.[6]

This is a pretty good definition of what Calvinists believe about the state of the unregenerate man. Now let us see what the Bible says. Here is a list of verses on **Total Depravity**.

Man's Intentions Are Evil

Gen. 8:21 And when the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for **the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.** Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done.

Even from the beginning of our lives our motives are evil. This, the Lord God, said after the Flood, after cleansing the earth from wickedness. The Flood did not change human nature, but it demonstrated God's hatred and abhorrence of sin and what has become of His good creation. The same was said before the Flood (Gen. 6:5). Here it is said that our intentions–our motives, goals, purposes, ends, aims are evil from our youth. From the very beginning of our lives we are evil and what we do is evil. John Gill notes the following in Genesis 8:21–

for the imagination of man's heart [is] evil from his youth; his nature is depraved, his heart is corrupt, the thoughts of it evil, yea, the imagination of it, and of them, is sinful, and that originally, even from his birth; from the time he is shook out of his mother's womb, as Jarchi interprets the phrase: man is conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and is a transgressor from the womb, and so a child of wrath, and deserving of the curse of the law upon himself, and all that belong to him; and yet this is given as a reason why God will not any more curse the ground for his sake: that which was a reason for destroying the earth, is now one against it, see Ge 6:5 which may be reconciled thus, God for this reason destroyed the earth once, for an example, and to display his justice; but such is his clemency and mercy, that he will do it no more to the end of the world; considering that man has brought himself into such a condition, that he cannot but sin, it is natural to him from his birth; his nature is tainted with it, his heart is full of it, and all his thoughts and imaginations are wicked and sinful, from whence continually flow a train of actual sins and transgressions; so that if God was to curse and drown the world as often as man sins, he must be continually doing it; for the words may be rendered, "though the imagination of man's heart is evil", c. {h} yet I will not do it; and so they are expressive of the super abounding grace of God over abounding sin:[7]

Charles Ellicott comments on the Genesis 6:5, saying, "More exactly, *form, shape.* Thus every idea or embodied thought, which presented itself to the mind through the working of the heart—that is, the whole inner nature of man—"was only evil continually"—Heb., *all the day,* from morning to night, without reproof of conscience or fear of the Divine justice. A more forcible picture of complete depravity could scarcely be drawn; and this corruption of man's inner nature is ascribed to the overthrow of moral and social restraints."[8] Matthew Poole observes that it is "To the heart the Scripture commonly ascribes all men's actual wickedness, as Psa 41:6; Pro 4:23; 6:14,18; Jer. 17:9; Mat 15:19; Rom. 3:10, &c.; thereby leading us from acts of sin to the original corruption of nature, as the cause and source of them."[9]

See also Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; John 8:44.

Man Is Unable To Do Good

Indeed, we may do good in the eyes of man, but our works cannot be seen as good by the All-Knowing God Who does not tolerate an ounce of sin. The Scriptures say:

Rom. 3:12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; **no one does good, not even one**."

Rom. 14:23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For **whatever does not proceed from faith is sin**.

Many may be shocked when they hear that no one does good, surely the Bible is not right here! There are many unbelievers who do good. That is true and that is due to the grace of God in their lives, but even our best deeds are filthy rags in the sights of an all-holy God Who penetrates to the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Isa. 64:6). Biblically speaking, that which is good conforms to the will of God. God is good (Mark 10:18), and that which wants to be truly good must conform to His holy and righteous standard. The first step toward doing that which is pleasing in God's sight is repentance and faith – the forgiveness of our sins and being made a new creation. We must have faith in the Son of God. This is not generic faith, but saving faith in what God has done in His beloved Son. Hebrews 11:6 says: "And without faith it is impossible to please

him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him." Faith is necessary for us to please God. Everything we do outside of faith, no matter how good from the outside, is filthy in the sight of God. The Scriptures do not only say that we are unable to do good (e.g., Rom. 3:12), but that even our good works, outside of faith in Christ, are sinful (e.g., Rom. 14:23; Isa. 64:6). Secondly, good works to be good, they must be done with God's glory as the highest intention and motivation. The Lord Jesus in Matthew 5:16 told his disciples: "In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Our good works have to display the glory of God. They must be done with God's will and glory as the primary cause of our action (1 Cor. 10:31). See further chapter 16 on **Good Works**.

Man Is Unable To Come To God

Our sin makes a separation between us and God (Isa. 59:2). We do not desire to seek Him. We do not seek Him for the same reason a thief does not seek the police.

> Rom. 3:11 no one understands; **no one seeks for God.**
>
> Rom. 8:7-8 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it **does not submit to God's law**; indeed, **it cannot**. 8 Those who are in the flesh **cannot please God**.
>
> John 6:44 **No one can come to me** unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

The Scripture directly says that none of us seeks after God. There is one Seeker, and it is God Himself. Man is running away and hiding from God, as Adam did, because they do not desire the presence of the Almighty. When we hear people who say that they are seeking God, two things may be the case, as far as I can see:

1. God is seeking them, and therefore they seek Him; or...
2. They are not seeking the God of the Bible, or they are seeking the blessings of God, but not the person of God.

It is true that the Bible calls us to seek God (e.g., Isa. 55:6), but that is exactly how the Bible awakens us to our inability and we realize we cannot and thus seek help from above. Furthermore, there is not only unwillingness but also an inability. Ability refers to *power*, willingness refers to *desire*. We are unable to come to God because we do not desire Him. More on this in chapter 9 on **Free Will**. The prime commandment of God's Law is to love Him and love our neighbor, which presupposes repentance and faith in Him. But this is the very thing which the natural man cannot do (Rom. 8:7-8). He does not merely *want* or *desire* to do that which is pleasing in God's sight, including having faith, which is pleasing to God (Heb. 11:6), but he *cannot*. He does not have the power and ability. The Greek word in Romans 8:7-8 as well as John 6:44, is δύναται (*dunatai,* G1410), which means "to be able, have power whether by virtue of one's own ability and resources, or of a state of mind, or through favourable circumstances, or by permission of law or custom"[10]. But in these instances, it is used with the negative. It means *not* having the ability, *not* having the power and so on.

The Lord Jesus does not say you do not want to come, no, He says that we are unable (the difference between *ability* and *will*). That is because their mind is set on the flesh and not on the things of God. They are slaves of Satan. Satan will never desire his subjects to seek God. They seek that which they desire, which is anything (sin) but God. Matthew Poole comments on Romans 8:7, saying, "Those that are at enmity, cross each other's wills, and will not submit to one another: and the carnal mind is rebellious in the highest degree against the will of God, unless it be changed and renewed; it is impossible it should be otherwise; there is in it a moral impotency to obedience: see Joh 8:43; 1Co 2:14."[9] *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* comments:

> *enmity*] Cp. ch. Rom. 5:10. The expression here is as forcible as possible. As truly as "God *is* Love," so truly, essentially, and unalterably *is* the "mind of the flesh," the liking and disliking of unregenerate man, "enmity," "personal hostility," towards the true God and His real claims.
>
> Nothing short of this is St Paul's meaning. It is not to be toned down, as by the theory that other impulses in the unregenerate may counterbalance, or at least modify, this enmity. We must keep clearly in view the reality of the claim of the Holy Creator to the *love of the whole being*. To decline this, when it is the *creature* that declines it, is not mere reserve; it is hostility.
>
> *the law*] In its two great Precepts. Mat 22:37-39.
>
> *can be*] Again a perfectly uncompromising statement. The will of the unregenerate, *as such*, is incapable of cordial submission to the claim of the true God. Its essence is alienation from Him; self, not God, is its central point. When the man in reality "yields himself to God," *ipso facto* he is proved to be no longer "in the flesh," (see next verse,) but "in the Spirit."[11]

The natural man is not a friend or child of God, but is hostile to, a hater and an enemy of God (Rom. 1:30; 8:7).

More on inability, see John 6:43-71; 8:39-47; 10:22-29; 12:37-41; 1 Corinthians 2:14.

Man Is A Slave Of Satan

The Lord Jesus declares that man is a slave of sin (John 8:34). What does it mean to be a slave to sin? A slave is "One who is subject to or controlled by a specified influence" and "One who is subservient to or controlled by another."[12] What is the controlling influence in an unregenerate person's life? It's sin. We've seen earlier that everything done outside of the faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). The unregenerate do the pleasure of Satan who is their master, not of God, Whom they hate and are hostile to.

> 2Tim. 2:25-26 correcting his opponents with gentleness. **God may perhaps grant them repentance** leading to a knowledge of the truth, 26 and they may come to their senses and **escape from the snare of the devil**, after **being captured by him to do his will**.

2 Timothy 2 teaches us that the unregenerate are slaves of Satan, they are not free. So much for free will! They are said to be captured and captivated to do Satan's will. They are Satan's prisoners and are captured to do his will. Notice the aggressive language to describe this slavery. Satan is not a good master. A slave is not free. The slavery to Christ is a slavery to righteousness and peace and is unlike the aggressive slavery to Satan. The unregenerate follow Satan's will and lead. They are sons of disobedience doing the pleasure of their father which they also delight in. We were at one time like them, wicked and unregenerate, but for the loving-kindness of God our Savior we would have still remained like that (Eph 2:1-5)! We must ask ourselves, will Satan allow his subjects to seek Christ and receive him? Christ is Satan's foremost enemy, how will he leave them to come into Christ's arms? He will not! Such is the miserable state of the unregenerate man. He is not protected from the evils and slavery of Satan.

The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges comments on John 8:34, saying:

> Christ does not say that a single act of sin enslaves. 'To *commit* (*poiein*) sin' is the opposite of 'to *do* the Truth' (Joh 3:21). Again, 'servant,' though often a good translation where nothing degrading is implied, is not strong enough, where, as here, the degradation is the main point. Moreover, the connexion with *Joh 8:33* must be kept up. The words for 'bondage' and 'servant' are cognate; therefore either 'bondage' and 'bond-servant,' or 'slavery' and 'slave,' must be our renderings.[11]

Philip Schaff likewise comments on John 8:34, saying, "Every one who is living a life of sin is a slave; each act of sin is no mere accident of his life, but a token of its nature, a mark of a bondage in which he is continually held. The word 'doeth' is not the same as that which is used in chap. Joh 3:20, Joh 5:29 in connection with evil: that had reference to the commission of particular acts, this to the general course of life, when sin *is chosen*,—'Evil be thou my good.' The thought is best illustrated by Romans 6 and (especially) Romans 7."[5]

More on slavery: Romans 6:6, 15-20; Titus 3:3-7; John 8:44.

Man Is Dead In Sins

This means that man is dead to all that is holy and righteous, he is soaked in sin, he is inactive to all that is good. Ofttimes, we hear the doctrine of election explained as God extending His arm to those who are drowning, and those who seek to be saved, grab His arm. Oh, how far is this picture from the biblical portrayal of man! The lyrical theologian, shai linne, expresses it in the following words:

> Some people say that we were drowning in the ocean
> Barely floating until God threw us the rope then
> Our free will helped us as we groped
> Our faith is the hand that grabbed the rope and God put us back in the boat
> Nope! Without apology I deny that analogy
> Reality- we were dead at the bottom of the sea
> I was a swollen corpse with hope no more
> Until Jehovah the LORD dove from the shore to the ocean floor
> Yeah, I was a corpse and I smelled like it

I'll keep it simple, why did God choose me? Because He felt like it!
He brought me out, not an act of my volition
Breathed life into my lungs and didn't ask for my permission

shai linne – Election ft. Wille Will

The God-breathed Scriptures declare:

> Eph. 2:1, 5 And you were **dead in the trespasses and sins** 5 even when we were **dead in our trespasses**, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved—

It does not say that we were sleeping or drowning in our sins, it says we were dead. We were fixed in sin. All that we did was sin and sin alone. Even what may be considered from outside to be good was in actuality tainted with sin (Rom. 14:23). This metaphor of deadness of sin describes our helplessness to save ourselves. It is ridiculous to think that a dead person can raise themselves up from the grave, it is the same way with a slave of Satan, one who is dead in sins, to choose to be alive. The act of making alive must come from outside himself (Eph. 2:5; John 5:25-26). Think of the new birth, why would we need to be born again if we were "alive and well"? The text is explicit in saying that we were *made* alive and that not because of our choice, obviously. This state of deadness in sin is further fleshed out in vv. 2-3:

> Eph. 2:2-3 in which **you once walked**, following the course of this world, **following the prince of the power of the air**, the **spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience**— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, **carrying out the desires of the body and the mind**, and were **by nature children of wrath**, like the rest of mankind.

The fact that we were dead, or that the unregenerate are dead in their sins, means that they are in a state of disobedience and sin. It was something "in which [we] once walked", it was a state of being where we only sinned and were separated from God. We were not following God, but "the prince of the power of the air", i.e., Satan, and were "sons of disobedience", living not in the Spirit, but we "lived in the passions of our flesh", not doing the will of God, but "carrying out the desires of the body and the mind" and in this way we showed ourselves to be "by nature children of wrath" and not children of God. The state of the unregenerate man is miserable, and it is the state which we, because of our fallen nature, love and do not want to escape. Until the gracious Lord—our Sovereign—comes to invade our lives, change our hearts, set us free from the slavery of Satan, open our eyes to our miserable condition so that we would flee to Christ. Such is the depth of our depravity that the Son of God had to pay the penalty for our sins and that we need a spiritual *resurrection*, not a *renovation*. John Gill comments on our miserable state, saying:

> **who were dead in trespasses and sins;** not only dead in Adam, in whom they sinned, being their federal head and representative; and in a legal sense, the sentence of condemnation and death having passed upon them; but in a moral sense, through original sin, and their own actual transgressions: which death lies in a separation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit, such are without God, and are alienated from the life of God, and they are without Christ, who is the author and giver of life, and they are sensual, not having the Spirit, who is the spirit of life; and in a deformation of the image of God, such are dead as to their understandings, wills, and affections, with respect to spiritual things, and as to their capacity to do any thing that is spiritually good; and in a loss of original righteousness; and in a privation of the sense of sin and misery; and in a servitude to sin, Satan, and the world: hence it appears, that man must be in himself unacceptable to God, infectious and hurtful to his fellow creatures, and incapable of helping himself...[7]

More on deadness in sin see John 5:25-26; Colossians 2:13-15.

Conclusion

Sin is not something to be taken lightly. It's terrible. Because of Adam and Eve's disobedience, the whole race is cursed. Because of Christ's obedience, all those who take refuge in Him are saved. Lord, thank You, for raising the dead in sin; those who were unable to come to You, You have drawn to the Son; those who have done no good works, You have beforehand prepared for good works (Eph 2:10); those who were formerly slaves of Satan, have been made slaves of God (Rom. 6:18, 22). O, great God, glorify Your holy Name and make us flee from sin to You!

> Question 18: What is sin?

Answer: Sin is transgression of the revealed will of God which teaches that we are to act in perfect holiness from a heart of faith to the glory of God.

Scripture: 1 John 3:4; Romans 5:13; 14:23; 1 Peter 1:16; Matthew 5:48; 1 Corinthians 10:31.[13]

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§5 The corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain

0. The **corruption of nature, during this life, doth remain in those that are regenerated;** and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and the first motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.
    1. 1 John 1:8-10; 1 Kings 8:46; Ps. 130:3; 143:2; Prov. 20:9; Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 7:14-25; James 3:2
    2. Ps. 51:4-5; Prov. 22:15; Eph 2:3; Rom. 7:5, 7-8, 17-18, 25; 8:3-13; Gal. 5:17-24; Gen. 8:21; Prov. 15:26; 21:4; Matt. 5:27-28

This **corruption of nature** thanks to the Fall remains even in **those that are regenerated** until they are set free from it when they meet the Lord. Yet in Christ, it is **pardoned and mortified**. We are given the ability, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, to resist our sinful inclination and please God, which those devoid of the Spirit cannot do. The sins of the redeemed also spring forth from this **corruption of nature** which remains in us (Rom. 7:24-25).

In this life, we are not perfected and therefore still sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are lying and the truth is not in us (1 John 1:8-10). But all our wickedness has been atoned for on the cross by the perfect High Priest, Who also intercedes with God the Father for us and for our sin! Now we fight the war between the flesh and the Spirit. Before this we were slaves to sin, only doing sin, but now, by the grace of God, we are made able to do that which is pleasing in the sight of God. The struggle that Paul has in Romans 7 between the flesh and the Spirit describes only the Christian life. This is the Christian in the State of Grace. See **chapter 9** for more on this.

Rom. 7:14-25 For we know that the law is spiritual, but **I am of the flesh, sold under sin**. 15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but **I do the very thing I hate**. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now **it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me**. 18 For I know that **nothing good dwells in me**, that is, in my flesh. For **I have the desire to do what is right**, but **not the ability to carry it out**. 19 For **I do not do the good I want**, but **the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing**. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22 For **I delight in the law of God, in my inner being**, 23 but I see in my members **another law waging war** against **the law of my mind** and **making me captive to the law of sin** that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 **Thanks be to God** through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, **I myself serve the law of God with my mind**, but with **my flesh I serve the law of sin**.

The “I” of Paul is his new identity in Christ, it’s the new creature (2 Cor. 5:17), the sin is his old man, it’s the sinful nature. It’s not what he or any Christian really desires to do, but sometimes we surrender to sin and thus do what we (as new creations) hate to do, yet still choose to do (so much for “free will”). The natural man does not even have the desire to do that which God desires, or have any willingness to serve God, yet the regenerate man does, and still struggles and wars with sin. Sometimes, we still go and visit the grave of the old man and do not leave him to be. We still go to those sins for which our Lord was crucified because our flesh has not been destroyed yet. Oh, that day, when He comes back to give us bodies like His and when we are freed from sinning...Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, Lord!

O that day when freed from sinning,
I shall see Thy lovely face;
Clothed then in blood washed linen
How I’ll sing Thy sovereign grace;
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry,
Take my ransomed soul away;
Send thine angels now to carry
Me to realms of endless day.[14]

Footnotes

1. ^ *Many Scriptural references have been supplied by Samuel Waldron's Modern Exposition of 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith which was apparently supplied by the Westminster Confession of Faith 1646.*
2. ^ *Wayne Grudem. Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994). p. 494, n. 9.*
3. ^ *John MacArthur. The MacArthur Study Bible: English Standard Version. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2010). p. 1657.*
4. ^ *John Gill. Exposition of the Entire Bible. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
5. a, b *Philip Schaff. A Popular Commentary on the New Testament. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
6. ^ *David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, S. Lance Quinn. The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented. (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publications. 2004). pp. 5-6.*
7. a, b *John Gill. Exposition of the Entire Bible. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
8. ^ *Charles J. Ellicott. Commentary For English Readers. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
9. a, b *Matthew Poole. English Annotations on the Holy Bible. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
10. ^ *Joseph Henry Thayer's Greek Definitions. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. See reference for the Strong's number.*
11. a, b *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. Edited by J. J. S. Perowne. Taken from the TheWord Bible Software. In loc.*
12. ^ *The Free Dictionary. Slave.*
13. ^ *John Piper. A Baptist Catechism*
14. ^ *Robert Robinson, Come Thou Fount Of Every Blessing.*