

(Rocky - Lesson 2 – 08/04/2024 - Handout) ADAM’S SIN, ATONEMENT, AND IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS:
The Doctrine of Original Sin

(Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-6; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:45; Hebrews 7:8-10; Philemon 1:18)

In today’s handout, as a precursor to the lesson itself, I am summarizing for you an important doctrine we studied a few years ago. It is a doctrine that is the backdrop for all that takes place in God’s plan for **(1) Resolving the great, angelic revolt that took place in heaven before the creation of mankind, (2) Putting into place His gospel-plan for delivering mankind from the fallen-state that came about through Adam’s transgression (the topic of today’s lesson), and (3) A doctrine that answers the age-old question, ‘why are we here’?** We call this **ANGELIC REVOLT, THE DOCTRINE OF THE ANGELIC CONFLICT.**

Prologue to the Study of The Angelic Conflict

Before the creation of the universe¹ (and thus before the creation of the human race), God created an innumerable company of sinless, spiritual beings, known as angels. One of these, ‘**LUCIFER, THE BRIGHT AND SHINING ONE**’— the highest in rank — sinned through pride, thereby taking on the immoral-character we now know as **SATAN (meaning: THE ACCUSER)**. A great number of the angels followed **LUCIFER** in his moral fall. In the Bible, many of these ‘*rebel angels*’ are called ‘*demons*,’ and some are presently active as **LUCIFER’S AGENTS AND ASSOCIATES** in the prosecution of his unholy purposes, while others who fell are ‘*reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day*’ (Isaiah 14:12–17; Ezekiel 28:11–19; 1 Timothy 3:6; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6).

SATAN, not **ADAM** (and certainly not God), is the originator of sin, and under the permission of God, **SATAN – subtlety** – led **ADAM** into transgression², thereby accomplishing the moral fall of the human race and subjecting **ADAM** and his posterity to his own power³. He is the enemy of God and the enemy of the people of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, and it is he, who in the beginning said, ‘*I will be like the Most High.*’ In his role as **THE GREAT DECEIVER**, he often appears as an angel of light, even *counterfeiting* the works of God by fostering false religious movements and systems of doctrine that in every case are characterized by a denial of the efficacy of the Blood of Christ, and salvation by grace-alone (Genesis 3:1–19; Romans 5:12–19; 2 Corinthians 4:3–4; 11:13–15; Ephesians 6:10–12; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 Timothy 4:1–3).

SATAN was judged at the Cross, though that judgment has not yet been executed, such that he now rules as ‘*the god of this world,*’ and he will so rule until the Second Coming of Christ, after which he will be bound for 1,000-years. Then at the end of the Millennium, **SATAN** will be

¹ Job 38:4 asks the rhetorical question, “where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me if you have understanding.” Then in verse 7, the text reads, ‘when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.’ The reference to ‘laying the foundation of the earth’ refers to the original creation of the universe, then in verse 7, the phrases, ‘the morning stars,’ and ‘the sons of God,’ both refer to angels. Angels witnessed the original creation and rejoiced at its perfection.

² To ‘transgress’ means, ‘to break a divine commandment.’ The single commandment God set before Adam was: ‘from all of the trees in the garden you may eat freely, but in the day you eat of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, you will surely die’ (Genesis 2:16-17).

³ 1 Corinthians 15:22 says, ‘For in Adam all die, but all who are in Christ will be made alive.’ Every human being born of Adam is born under a death sentence (‘for in Adam all die’). This is the condition – the starting point – for the human race. But by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, ‘all (who believe in Him) will be made alive.’ The question then becomes, how do we get ‘out of Adam’ and ‘into Jesus Christ’? We get out of Adam and into Christ when we believe the gospel, and God imputes to unworthy sinners the very righteousness of Christ (see 2 Corinthians 5:21).

'loosed for a little season,' then 'cast into the lake of fire,' where ultimately 'he will be tormented day and night for ever and ever' (Colossians. 2:15; Revelation 20:1–3, 10).

In addition to this, a great company of holy angels that *'kept their first (or primary) estate,' i.e., who did not follow Satan in his rebellion,* now stand before the throne of God, from where they are sent forth as ministering spirits to serve believers, who shall be the heirs of salvation (*Luke 15:10; Ephesians 1:21; Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 7:12*).

As a testimony to angels that God's condemnation of **LUCIFER** is just, man (*the human race*) was created lower than these angels as an example to all creation that – (*based on the principle of 'to whom much is given, much shall be required'*) – a creature made lower than the angels can respond with positive volition in obedience to the Word of God. And though **ADAM** failed in this mission, **JESUS CHRIST**, by means of His incarnation, took on for a time a position lower than the angels that He might lift the believer to His own sphere above the angels (*Philippians 2:5-11; Psalm 8:5-6, and Hebrews 2:6–10*).

THE INCARNATION IS CRITICAL to the resolution of *The Angelic Conflict*. The *Philippians 2:5-11* passage mentioned above is considered by many to be the greatest doctrinal statement in the Bible relative to the person of Christ. It is called *the kenosis passage*⁴ because of the phrase used in verse 7, *'He emptied himself.'* If only we could grasp how high He was and how low He became, but there's no way we can. But there is much we can know, even with our limited, finite minds. The plain truth of Scripture is that **JESUS**, who always was and is co-equal with God, took on human flesh to die for us on the cross (*see John 1:14*). And it is precisely because the incarnation is essential to our faith and to the resolution of *The Angelic Conflict* that it has been in the crosshairs of heretics from the third century.

ARIUS proposed in **320 A.D.** that only God the Father was eternal, and that He *created* **JESUS CHRIST** out of nothing as *'His first great creation.'* This **HERESY** was refuted by **THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA** that produced **THE NICENE CREED**, and which states in part:

'We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.'

The heresy of **ARIANISM** lives on today with people who practice the Unitarian, Mormon, and Jehovah's Witness religions, among others who deny that **JESUS** was and is co-eternal with God. Why is this important? *Because the incarnation of Christ is essential both to our salvation and to the resolution of The Angelic Conflict.* **JESUS** is equal with God, but *'He did not count equality with God a thing to be held on to.'* He laid aside the independent exercise of His divine attributes to be born in a manger." And it is this that uniquely qualifies Him to resolve *The Angelic Conflict*.

An Overview of The Doctrine of Original Sin: The Fall of Mankind Through Adam

OPENING SCRIPTURE (From Genesis Chapters Two and Three):

THE LORD GOD took the man and put him into THE GARDEN OF EDEN to cultivate it and keep it.

⁴ *Philippians 2:5-11 is known as "the kenosis." 'Kenosis' is a Greek word that means, 'emptying.' It appears in Philippians 2:7 in the phrase, "He emptied Himself." The theological significance of this is, "Jesus, being equal to God in every way, and as a full-member of the Trinity ('God the Son'), at His incarnation, 'emptied Himself,' not of His deity, but of the privileges of His deity, and He Himself became, 'a little lower than the angels,' by taking on flesh" (See John 1:1-5 and 14). Thus, Jesus stepped in where Adam had failed, defeated Satan, and resolved the Angelic Conflict at the Cross.*

And THE LORD GOD commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely, but from THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL YOU SHALL NOT EAT, FOR IN THE DAY YOU EAT FROM IT YOU WILL SURELY DIE” – Genesis 2:15-17.

Now the serpent was craftier than any beast of the field which THE LORD GOD had made. And he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?”

The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, but from the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT EAT FROM IT OR TOUCH IT, OR YOU WILL DIE.’”

The serpent said to the woman, “YOU SURELY WILL NOT DIE! For God knows in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw the tree was good for food, and it was a delight to the eyes, and the tree was desirable to make one wise, SHE TOOK FROM ITS FRUIT AND ATE, AND SHE GAVE ALSO TO HER HUSBAND WITH HER, AND HE ATE – Genesis 3:1-6.

[READ ROMANS 5:12-19] – The primary New Testament commentary on **Genesis 2:15-17** and **Genesis 3:1-6** is found in these verses. Here Paul outlines for us the first of three great imputations that form the foundation for the gospel.

To ‘impute’ means ‘to credit something to the account of another.’

There are three Greek terms that we need to consider in order to understand the concept of imputation. These terms are *λογίζομαι* (pronounced *logítsomai*), *λέγω* (pronounced *legō*), and *ἐλλογέω* (pronounced *ellogéō*). All three express the root meaning: ‘to count.’ In Philemon 1:18, *ellogéō* is used to signify ‘the crediting of something to the account of another.’ Paul says to Philemon: “If he [ONESIMUS] ... owes you anything, charge that to my account.” In other words, ‘transfer his debt to me.’

This act of ‘imputing’ or ‘crediting something to the account of another,’ can apply to money ... but in a theological or legal sense, it also can apply to sin and / or righteousness. A good example of this is found in Genesis 15:6: ‘*And Abram believed in Yahweh and Righteousness was imputed to him.*’

Now if you read Romans 5:12-19, you may have found it to be ambiguous. The reason for this is verses 13-17 are parenthetical to verses 12 and 18ff. One way to extract Paul’s big idea from this passage is to read **VERSE 12**, then skip to **VERSE 18^B**. This provides a better understanding of the passage ... So let’s do that:

Therefore, just as through ONE MAN (ADAM) sin entered into the world, and death spread to all men – (because all sinned) — (Romans 5:12) — Even so through ONE ACT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (Christ’s death on the cross) there resulted JUSTIFICATION OF LIFE for all men – (Romans 5:18^B).

In verse 12 we are told the result of this sin by one man is death ... and not only ADAM’S DEATH, but ... (the text goes on to say) ... ‘And so death passed to ALL MEN because ALL SINNED.’

There is some confusion about this verse due to a poor translation in the King James Bible, where the verb ‘sinned’ is translated ‘for all have sinned.’ This is incorrect and most of the modern translations have corrected the error. The phrase should not be translated, ‘for all have sinned’ but ‘for all sinned.’

The verb 'sinned' (ἁμαρτάνω ... pronounced hamartánō) is written in the Greek Aorist tense. . NOW THE AORIST TENSE depicts two things ... **WHEN A VERB IS WRITTEN IN THE AORIST TENSE – IT MEANS:**

- (1) The action of the verb took place in the past ... not in the present or the future ... the past; and ...
- (2) The action of the verb is 'punctiliar action' as opposed to 'linear action.' In other words, the action in question is like a photograph captured at a moment in time; *the action took place 'at a specific point in time,' not 'over a period of time.'*

What does this mean for our text? It means this sin (*the one being referenced*) – was **A SINGULAR ACT** that took place at **A SPECIFIC POINT IN TIME ... IN THE PAST ...** and therefore it **CANNOT** refer to personal sins that occur in a *linear fashion over time*. So the text does **NOT** mean, "for all **HAVE** sinned" or "all men **ARE** sinners," or anything similar to that ... it means, 'all men **SINNED** 'AT THE SAME MOMENT IN TIME and that sin is AN ALREADY COMPLETED ACT.'

In fact, both in verses 16 and 18 we are told, 'the judgment, viz., DEATH,' arose from **ONE TRANSGRESSION**. This cannot refer to anything other than JUDGMENT that results from **THE SINGLE TRANSGRESSION COMMITTED BY ADAM IN GENESIS 3:6**. **AND NOTICE:** (1) This JUDGMENT has NOTHING to do with EVE, (2) it has NOTHING to do with ANY OTHER PERSONAL SIN ADAM committed, and (3) it has NOTHING to do with ANY SIN YOU OR I have committed.

JUDGMENT came upon the human race as a result of one thing and one thing only: ADAM'S SINGLE TRANSGRESSION. At least ten times in VERSES 12-19 (*in various ways*) reference is made to ONE TRANSGRESSION COMMITTED BY ONE MAN. So the condemnation that passed to ALL MEN came about by ONE SIN committed by ONE MAN — ADAM.

Now **ADAM** sinned more than one time ... (*POST-FALL-ADAM sinned thousands of times just as you and I do*) ... but none of the other sins of **ADAM** — NOT ONE OF THEM — affected you or me in any way. It was only the one ... *ADAM failed with regard to the one that counted* ... and when that happened, *God imputed the guilt of that single transgression to EVE AND THEN to ALL THEIR POSTERITY, and WE ALL CAME UNDER CONDEMNATION as a result of it.*

In the Gospel of John, in chapter three, *after* the famous John 3:16 verse, **JESUS** said:

*For God did not send **THE SON** into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already **BECAUSE** he has not believed in the Name of the Only Begotten Son of God – John 3:17-18 —*

Now I want you to think about this ...

The phrase, '*he who does not believe has been judged already*' does **not** mean 'an innocent man falls under condemnation at a point in time when he refuses to believe the gospel.' It means, 'an already guilty man remains in a state of condemnation because he refuses to believe the gospel in order to be delivered from the condemnation into which he was born.'

This is consistent with 1 Corinthians 15:22 that states: "for in Adam all die, so also all who are in Christ will be made alive." There are two facts every person needs to know: (1) *Every human being either is 'in Adam' or 'in Christ'* – there are no exceptions – and (2) *Every human being is born 'in Adam.'* The question then becomes, 'how does a person get 'out of Adam' and 'into Christ'?' The answer is: '*by believing in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.*'

The human race stands condemned before Almighty God, apart from any personal sins you or I have committed, because ... every human being is born under the condemnation of **ADAM'S** sin.

This is our starting point. we are born on death row. Nothing more needs to happen for a man to stand guilty at the Great White Throne Judgment and be condemned to the Lake of Fire ... This is our lot from the moment we come into the world – yea – from the moment of conception.

There is a term used by theologians to explain why this is the case. That term is **FEDERAL HEADSHIP**. **ADAM** ... not **ADAM** and **EVE** ... but **ADAM** alone ... stood by divine decree as the legal representative of the human race. When **ADAM** sinned – because he represented the human race legally before God – *His single transgression was imputed to Eve and then to all who came after her ... one man, one transgression, one moment in time.* ★This is original sin. and it is in this sense we read in verse 12: ‘because all sinned.’

Now we see **ADAM’S FEDERAL HEADSHIP** played out in another way in Romans 5:13-14. Verse 13 reads: “for until the law sin was in the world but sin is not imputed when there is no law.” So though sin existed before God gave the law to Moses, ‘sin is not imputed apart from law.’

The Mosaic Law was given to Moses mid-15th Century B.C., while the single commandment (also a law) was given to **ADAM** in the Garden of Eden ... so ... there was a time between **ADAM** and Moses when there was no specific divine law given to mankind as there had been to **ADAM**, and then subsequently to Moses. It was during this ‘in-between-period’ that ‘sin was not imputed apart from law,’ yet even though this was the case, still ... ‘sin was in the world’ – but that sin was not imputed apart from the Law.

Now look at Romans 5:14 – ‘Nevertheless, death reigned from **ADAM** to Moses (this is that ‘in between’ time frame) even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam.’

So during this period of time (from Adam to Moses) when there was no law, and when sin was not imputed because there was no Law, **STILL DEATH REIGNED**. Why? How? And what does, ‘those who had not sinned in the likeness of **ADAM**’ mean?

Well, in what way did **ADAM** sin? He sinned by breaking a law ... There was a law **ADAM** was commanded to obey and he transgressed by breaking that law. It is breaking a law that makes a sin a transgression for ‘transgressor’ is a legal term that means, ‘law-breaker.’

So ‘sinning in the likeness of Adam’ must mean ‘transgressing by breaking a divine law.’ Yet, between **ADAM** and Moses there was no such law to break, so men could not be legally guilty of sins they committed during a time of ‘no law.’ In other words, they could not sin after the manner and likeness of **ADAM**. Yet, the same penalty – death – reigned over all men, even those, who did not sin in the likeness of **ADAM**.

Now **PAUL** is careful to explain that ‘sin, as a moral failure, was in the world even in the absence of law’ ... but that moral failure was *not imputed* apart from law. So in a time when there was no divinely ordained law. In a time when men *could not* sin after the likeness of **ADAM**. Yet in a world where the wage of sinning still is death. In that time when sin, though in the world, was not imputed ... how is it that even then men died? Why then did they die if sin is not imputed apart from law? If in a time when personal sins were not imputed because there was no law to break ... explain how it is that men died when sin is not imputed.

There is an answer ... though personal sins were not imputed when there was no law ... what was imputed was **ADAM’S ORIGINAL TRANSGRESSION**. Men died because **ADAM’S ORIGINAL SIN** had been imputed to the human race, so that death was able to reign over mankind, even though the guilt for personal sins was not imputed during the time before the Mosaic Law.

The Good News

After a lot of bad news there is some good news ... **[READ ROMANS 5:15-17]** – God has given us a gift that is greater than the judgment that came as a result of the imputation of Adam’s sin. Adam’s transgression resulted in death to all men, but God’s free gift results both in (1) *The cancellation of Adam’s sin, and (2) forgiveness of the personal sins committed by anyone who puts his faith in Christ alone as his savior.*

[NOW READ ROMANS 5:18-19] – This is the summation of **PAUL’S** major idea: *‘one transgression committed by one man resulted in death passing upon all men, but through the obedience of one man, the second Adam – Jesus Christ – many will be made righteous.’*

Just as **ADAM** was our Federal Head and brought judgment upon us because of disobedience, so also ... **JESUS CHRIST** also is our Federal Head, and through His obedience, we are declared righteous ... and both of these things are accomplished by **IMMEDIATE FEDERAL IMPUTATION**.

CONCLUSION: I want to close with a few words about fairness: The man who senses an unfairness at the idea that **ADAM** stood as his representative in the Garden of Eden, has but one alternative: he must stand for himself before God as his own representative, and he must plead his case on the basis of his own merit.

So if you are that man, let me ask you two questions: *‘Do you think you could have done better than **ADAM**’? Would you have been obedient in the same situation as **ADAM**’?*

The man, who believes God’s plan is unfair, has stepped away from the principle of substitution, and in so doing, he has chosen to stand for himself. And in that case, Christ no longer stands for him as his substitute in redemption. So that man who claims God’s plan is unfair must be prepared to stand alone in the battle against **EVIL** ... and under no circumstances can he afford to fail.

Now, God knew **ADAM** would fail. He knew it in eternity past before there was a world. And he already knew if man were to prevail against **SATAN**, He would have to become a man himself in order to defeat **SATAN** on our behalf.

You see, far from being unfair, God’s plan shows a degree of wisdom that is unfathomable to the natural man; a wisdom to which no man could ever attain. **ADAM** failed when he ate from the forbidden tree; **CHRIST** succeeded by dying on another tree at a place called calvary.

In **GOD’S INFINITE WISDOM**: **ADAM** stood as your representative ... **and failed**; but **JESUS** (**the Second Adam**) stands in victory as your representative ... and just as **ADAM’S** sin became your sin, the victory of **JESUS CHRIST** can become your victory.

Reflecting for a moment on last week’s lesson, how did God bridge the unbridgeable chasm caused by His transcendence? He bridged that gap through the incarnation – when the second person of the trinity became one of us in order to represent God to us and us to God.

And how did God bridge the unbridgeable chasm of God’s perfect moral character that must remain separate from sinful man? He bridged that gap through the cross when he imputed to Jesus the transgression of **ADAM**, as well as every personal sin you ever have or will commit.

Our topic next week is **THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE SATISFACTION: THE ATONEMENT**. We will see next Sunday the role of the Cross in God’s plan to bring salvation to His people.

For a closing scripture: **[READ ROMANS 5:20-21]** –