



Martin Luther

Therefore when we speak about that image, we are speaking about something unknown. Not only have we had no experience of it, but we continually experience the opposite; and so we hear nothing except bare words. In Adam there was an enlightened reason, a true knowledge of God, and a most sincere desire to love God and his neighbor, so that Adam embraced Eve and at once acknowledged her to be his own flesh. Added to these were other lesser but exceedingly important gifts—if you draw a comparison with our weakness—namely, a perfect knowledge of the nature of the animals, the herbs, the fruits, the trees, and the remaining creatures. But this condition is the fault of original sin, and from it all the remaining creatures derive their shortcomings. I hold that before sin the sun was brighter, the water purer, the trees more fruitful, and the fields more fertile. But through sin and that awful fall not only our flesh is disfigured by the leprosy of sin, but everything we use in this life has become corrupt.

First Things – In the Beginning:

- Created in the Image of God.
 - **Gen 1:26-31**
- *The image of God in man consisted in much more than in his possession of intellect and will, in his personality; it consisted in the right disposition of his intellect and will, in his knowledge of God and the will to do only God's will.*
- *Man knew God and was endowed with a holy disposition. This truth is corroborated in the New Testament. Col. 3:10 describes the new man as "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him," and Eph. 4:24 as "created after God in righteousness and true holiness."*
- *"If we wish to follow Moses, we can say that the original righteousness consisted in this, that man was righteous, true, and upright, not only in his body and externally, but, above all, inwardly in his soul, and that he knew God, was obedient to Him with the utmost pleasure, understood the works of God without any instruction concerning them.... The original righteousness also consisted in Adam's loving God and God's work with all his heart, in a pure spirit (Pieper, Vol 1, p. 517-518)."*
 - **Col 3:10**
 - **Eph 4:22-24**

Introduction – Original Sin:

- The old sinful man is a vicious beast. It continues to bite, kick, and scratch in a brutal attempt to drag us in the direction of hell. Christians are at the same time saint and sinner. We feel the sinner more often than the saint. We face a never ending battle in our broken flesh. As soon as we think we've made a little progress in this Christian walk, we trip and fall. God have mercy on me a sinner! To rightly understand our condition we must not see just our individual sins and weaknesses as they manifest themselves daily, but we must see the very core of who we are in our flesh on this side of paradise. It's only in understanding the situation we face that we can begin to look outside of ourselves for hope, peace, and comfort.
- Original sin doesn't care about your feeble attempts to live righteous or your misguided hope for Christian progress. Original sin doesn't care how you feel or what you desire, it only wants to distort your perception of truth, pervert your good feelings, and direct your desires into the path of eternal destruction.
- Original sin is an unstoppable force if we battle alone. The deeds of the flesh that flow from our corruption from original sin must be mortified, put to death (**Rom 8:13; Col 3:5**). Where is the hope and force that delivers us from this body of death that we might not die eternally?
- *"When Luther wanted to expose the magnitude of original sin and human weakness, he taught that the remnants of original sin in the human being are not in their essence neutral, but need both the grace of Christ, so that they might not be held [against us], and also the Holy Spirit, so that they might be put to death (Apology of the Augsburg Confession, art. ii, para 45, p. 119)."*
- **"Original sin is universal**, inherited by 'all men begotten in the natural way' (A.C., Art. II). The only human being, untainted by original sin is the Virgin's Son, Jesus Christ, who was immaculately conceived through the power of the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:35; Hebr. 7:26; 2 Cor. 5:21)."
- **Original sin clings to us through life.** —It is not eradicated in Baptism, as the Roman Catholic Church teaches. By faith in Christ we are freed from its guilt and punishment; but the corruption itself, concupiscence, remains, as Paul experienced (Rom. 7:14–25), and as every Christian still experiences. (Apol., Art. II). By faith Christians will with the aid of the Holy Ghost constantly strive to suppress this old Adam (Eph. 4:22; Gal. 5:24); in this life they will never succeed in totally destroying him. (Cf., F.C., Th. D., Art. I).

➤ **Augsburg Confession, Article I:** ¹ *Our churches teach that since the fall of Adam [Romans 5:12], all who are naturally born are born with sin [Psalm 51:5], that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with the inclination to sin, called concupiscence.* ² *Concupiscence is a disease and original vice that is truly sin. It damns and brings eternal death on those who are not born anew through Baptism and the Holy Spirit [John 3:5].* ³ *Our churches condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, thus obscuring the glory of Christ's merit and benefits. Pelagians argue that a person can be justified before God by his own strength and reason (Concordia: Lutheran Confessions. p. 31-32).*

- **Rom 5:12**
- **Psalm 51:5**
- **John 3:5**

Small Catechism:

- Read pages 56-57 (questions 22-23)

The Formula of Concord: Epitome

THE CHIEF QUESTIONS IN THIS CONTROVERSY

¹ *Is original sin really, without any distinction, a person's corrupt nature, substance, and essence? Is it the chief and greater part of his essence (i.e., the rational soul itself in its highest state and powers)? Or even after the fall, **is there a distinction between original sin and a person's substance, nature, essence, body, and soul**, so that the nature itself is one thing and original sin is another, which belongs to the corrupt nature and corrupts the nature?*

- ****QUESTION: Why would the answers to such questions matter?**