

How did man become a sinner?

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Have you ever wondered what it would be like not to have a sin nature, no Adamic nature, with no propensity to do wrong? Are you tired of constantly being told you are a sinner! How did you and I get into this predicament?

Scripture teaches that sin first originated in heaven (Isa. 14:12-21; Ezek. 28:13-19), and entered earth by a man (Gen. 2:17, 3:1-24; Rom. 5:12). That sin is universal is accepted in Scripture (Gen. 6:5; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:23; 8:21) and it acts as a barrier between man and God, for no sinful man can exist in the presence of God's Holiness (Isa. 1:4ff.)

When meditating on Genesis 3 one is cognizant of man's independent and self-sufficient behavior against a dependency upon God. Man's free will is exercised, rationally or irrationally depending on your viewpoint.

Adam and Eve both departed from the order given by God concerning certain restrictions in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:17), and fell from a right relationship with God (Gen. 3:6-7). God calls this sin.

To humans it seems like such a "tiny bite" but to God it was disastrous. Through this sin, death came into being and from then on this succession was the rule for mankind (cf. Rom. 1:32; 6:16; 7:5ff; 8:13; I Cor. 15:56). Death is not only physical (Gen. 5), but spiritual (Eph. 2) and eternal (Rev. 20:11-15).

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

Presenting all men as sinners, how does it come about that all men, with no exceptions but Jesus Christ, are in fact sinners?

Scripture pictures sin and death as entering the world through one man; with the result that death permeated the whole of mankind (Gen. 3:1-7; Rom. 5:12). Had the writer stopped with the observation that death came to all men because all sinned, we would be left with the impression that all sinned and deserved death because they followed the example of Adam, committed the same sin he did, but this is impossible.

What, then, is the precise relation of Adam in his fall to those who come after him? Subsequent statements in the Romans 5:12-21 passage help to clear the connection of Adam's sin and death and what has befallen the human race. If the translation of Romans 5:12 is correct, **"because all sinned"**, why didn't the writer just state it plainly and say all sinned in the first man Adam? A clearer passage is Romans 5:19, "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous".

There is never any suggestion in the Scriptures that sin has by-passed anyone except Jesus Christ, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Nor is it a matter of the personal sins of the descendants of Adam but rather the one, fixed, first transgression that was the sin of all by virtue of the relationship to the first human, Adam.

That mankind could have sinned in Adam may seem strange and unnatural to the mind and rational reasoning of the Western man, yet it is congenial to Biblical teaching on the solidarity of man. Boldly put, Adam was the race. What he did, his descendants, who were still in him, did

also. This principle is utilized in Hebrews 7:9-10. “One might even say that Levi, who collected the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.” This would mean that humanity sinned **a priori in Adam**. Does God impute this sin to mankind because Adam is the head of the human race?

Sin is both an act and a principle, both guilt and pollution. The ideas come to the forefront, summarizing the whole of corruption of sin. First, **death**, the wages of sin is the most inclusive sense of the word (Rom. 6:23a); in the second the bondage of sin, moral impotence, in part to be characterized as inner discord (Rom. 7:15-25). Death is the fully developed fruit of sin. It is the just sentence of God (Gen. 2:17; cf. Rom. 5:12ff, 18), and at the same time the “natural” and inner consequence of sin; it is that at which sin, as it were, aims and in which it achieves its triumphs (Rom. 5:21). It is the fruit that one reaps when he sows to the flesh (cf. Rom. 7:5). Death therefore is the end of sin (Rom. 6:21) in the flesh. Sin like a parasitic pathogen destroys its host, resulting in the death of the host and of sin. Sin is self destructive (Rom. 9:22) in the active sense (cf. Rom. 2:8ff), the absolute antithesis of life that God intended and saved by Christ. Death at the physiological level is like unto a carcinoma, relentless in its destruction. Death works itself out in the sinful life of man (Rom. 7:9-10). Sin is a power that corrupts man before God in such a way that he can do nothing but sin (Rom. 7:15-24; 8:6-7).

The second general denotation of corruption of sin is that of bondage. To be under sin, is to be captive or shut up under sin which the sinner brings upon himself (Rom. 3:9). Sin is represented as a master or lord in whom man has been sold as a slave and henceforth required to live (Rom. 7:14). One not only becomes a slave chained to corruption but worse yet a host to the internal

destruction physically (Rom. 1:27) and mentally (Rom. 1:28), knowing all the while of God's righteous decree (Rom. 1:32). The committing of sin brings the slavery of sin along with it, in which one is obligated to place himself at the disposal of the demands of sin (Rom. 6:13, 17, 19, 20). In Short, the punishment of sin works itself out as a deprivation of human liberty (Rom. 6:11), and can only be remedied by God's gift (Rom. 6:23b). This universal sinfulness is not limited to acts of sin; it includes also the possession of a sinful nature.

It is because of Adam's sin that mankind comes into the world with a depraved nature and under God's condemnation (Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:3). The sin of Adam and Eve construed all their posterity sinners. The sin of Adam was imputed, reckoned, or charged to every member of the human race. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,..." (Rom. 5:19). Through the one sin of Adam, sin and death are imputed to all humanity because all humanity was represented in Adam in the beginning.

The close connection between sin and death (I Cor. 15:56) has some bearing, for death is seen as an adverse factor which has affected man's nature (Gen. 2:17). Since death has come through sin, the universality of death must be connected with Adam's sin (Gen. 2:17; Rom. 5:12).

It is known historically that Adam was the agency through whom sin first entered mankind, according to the Genesis account. A link between universal sin and Adam's sin seems that, as the whole race shares the disastrous results of Adam's sin, so the whole race shares in death. The only remedy for this sin is to believe in Jesus Christ; receive eternal life and the righteousness of Jesus Christ, by imputation, and escape eternal death (John 3:16; 6:47; II Cor. 5:21).