

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 17, Original Sin, Plagianism and Arminianism

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on the Doctrines of Humanity and Sin. This is session 17, Original Sin, Plagianism and Arminianism.

We continue our study on the doctrine of sin with Original Sin, and let us ask for the Lord's help.

Gracious Father, we do ask you to help us as we study these difficult matters. We thank you for being a good God who created a good world. We don't fully understand the intrusion of sin and death into it, but we know those are realities. Bless us as we seek to understand the origin of sin even in our own lives. We give you praise through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Romans 5:12 through 21 is justly regarded as the classical text on sin. Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, Adam, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned, my voice is up because Paul gives an if-clause without the following then-clause. He does not complete the comparison.

His mind goes to how Adam's sin, which brought sin and death into the world, affected humankind. He says, for, because, verse 13, sin indeed was in the world before the law was given. From the next verse, we know that it means the law of Moses.

But sin is not counted where there is no law. We saw five views of that, which was a very difficult construction. My understanding is sin was in the law, in the world, before the law was given.

But sin is not counted where there's no law as it is where there is a law because the law makes sin obvious, distinct, and blameworthy. Yet, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam. There is a similarity between Adam's sin and that of the Israelites after the giving of the law on Mount Sinai because God gave in the garden a prohibition.

You may eat from every tree in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The day you eat of it, you shall die, a distinct prohibition. There was nothing quite like that from Eden until Sinai, after Sinai.

Oh, my word. Eight thou shalt nots and two thou shalt. It's just as does everybody in.

But in between, apparently, 13 and 14, there's no doubt they further explain 12 because of the word for that starts 13. How they explain is debated. But Paul himself says the people in between that time did not sin in the same way Adam did by breaking a definite command of God.

Specifically, a negative command, a prohibition. You could account, we could account for the presence of sin in that period. However, what Paul apparently ascribes to Adam's sin is not really the presence of sin because the wages of sin are death.

That accounts for it. But it is the domination of sin, the reign of sin and death. Very importantly, at the end of 14, we read Adam was a type of the one who was to come.

Adam is a type of Christ. This is the key to Paul's finishing the unfinished conditional clause from verse 12, which he only finishes in verses 18 and 19. As soon as he says that Adam and Christ are similar, Adam is an Old Testament prefiguration of Christ.

Right away, he feels he must put a distance between them, lest he tarnish Jesus' reputation, is my understanding. Because the next three verses, 15, 16, and 17, do not show how they are alike, but how they are dissimilar. 15, but the free gift of righteousness and eternal life is not like the trespass of Adam.

For if many died through one man's trespass, Adam's, of course, much more have the grace of God, and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for many. 16 again shows that Adam and Christ and their results are not alike. The free gift is not the result of one man's sin.

For the judgment following one transgression of Adam in the Garden of Eden brought condemnation. But the free gift following many trespasses, he distinguishes one sin of Adam, bringing condemnation to all, with many sins for which Christ atoned. The parallelism is not perfect because the one sin and the many sins operate differently in their clauses, but it's plainly a comparison of the one and the many.

But the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. This again shows Adam and Christ are dissimilar.

This time in the reigns that they institute. Adam brought a reign of sin and here specifically, death. Adam brought a reign, Christ, excuse me, the second and last Adam Christ brought the reign of life, but it doesn't say life reigns.

It says those who believe in Christ reign. Those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. That verse is significant for another reason.

The passage is entirely objective, except for the second part of the first 17. What do you mean? The whole passage talks about the two Adams and their deeds and the results that come from them. But here, the only time it speaks of subjectivity, it says those who receive the abundance of grace and justification, the free gift of righteousness, will reign.

So, here's the flow of thought one more time. In verse 12, Paul begins a comparison and does not finish it. In some way, verses 13 and 14, further the fact that Adam's sin affected others, the human race.

The end of 14 says Adam is a type of Christ. And that is the key to finishing the unfinished comparative clause from verse 12. However, Paul does not immediately zero in on the similarity between Adam and Christ, but he feels a need to put a distance between them.

So, in 15, 16, and 17, he says they are not alike. In 18, he returns to the thesis of 12 and, this time finishes the comparison. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness led to justification and life for all men.

19 repeats this thought with some variation of vocabulary and imagery, for by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners. So, by the one man's obedience, the many will be made righteous. Here we have Paul finishing off his unfinished conclusion from 12.

One trespass resulted in the condemnation of the human race. One act of righteousness, a reference to Christ's death on the cross, leads to justification. And the ledger is imbalanced.

If he had just said justification, that would have balanced with condemnation, but he tilts it this way by saying justification and life for all men. The fact that he says all men twice is a problem, and we will return very soon because the next verse says many twice. For as by the one man's disobedience, Adam's in the garden, the many were made sinners.

So, by the one man's obedience, Jesus' obedience unto death, Philippians 2, even death of the cross. So, by the one man's obedience, the many will be made righteous. What do we do with this all, all in 18, many, many in 19? We do not absolutize any of them.

We cannot pick and choose. We cannot have our cake and eat it too. For example, if we say, look at that.

Adam's trespass brought condemnation to all men. That's what it says in 18 and 19. By Christ's obedience, many will be made righteous.

That fits our theology beautifully, and Paul's not contradicting it, but that's not what he's doing. If we read those like that, I'll tell you how universalists read 18, which is one of their favorite proof texts. By one act of righteousness, all men will be justified.

That's what they say. That's what it says. And I don't know anybody that says this one.

In 19, because of Adam's sin, only many were made sinners. Do you mean some human beings are not tainted by the fall? Yikes. So, here's the deal.

Paul is not contradicting himself in the space of two verses. He's not contrasting when he says all. It is not all against many.

And when he says many, he's not correcting himself. It is not many as opposed to all. In each case, it's the one man, Adam, and all who belong to him.

The one second is Adam Christ and all of his people. It is Adam and the many who constitute his people. It is Christ and the many.

That is, it compares the two Adams and demonstrates with beautiful words and beautiful prose the catastrophic effects of their one single action. Eve sinned first. Original sin does not come from Eve.

Christ did many wonderful things, including rising from the dead. But this focuses on his one act of righteousness, his one act of obedience, which all commentators agree speaks of his death on the cross. Of course, his resurrection saves, and that is to be implied.

But it's simply not the focus of those words. One more thing to say is we ordinarily think of justification as present, and indeed it is, but in its most technical and proper sense, like every other aspect of salvation, it belongs to the last day. We find it here.

So, by the one man's obedience, the many will be made righteous. There's a reference to righteousness in Galatians 6 that fits this same pattern. See Doug Moore's commentary on Galatians and Jesus' words in the gospel that says, by your words, you'll be condemned; by your words, you'll be justified.

Justified, vindicated, acquitted, it's all the same. And in that context, last day, condemnation, justification, it's speaking of future justification. So, are we justified now or not? Yes, we are.

But here's the wonderful part of it. As John 3:16, 17, and 18 show, without using the word justify, God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him. Everyone who does not believe has been condemned already.

Everyone who believes is not condemned. Everyone who believes in the Son of God is not condemned. Everyone who does not believe has been condemned already.

The verdicts of the last day are made plain in the gospel. And if we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God has declared us righteous now, in the prospect of the verdict of the last day. That is a too brief summary, down through verse 19.

20, now the law came in to increase the trespass. Sometimes Paul presents the law as an instigator of sin. But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

Contrasting sin and grace, and their increase, so that as sin reigned in death, there's that idea again, grace also might reign through righteousness, leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. This chart that we introduced last time, I wanted to just summarize that exegesis because it's complicated, and you can get lost real easily. The chart compares the Adam Christ contrast from Romans 5:12 through 21.

There are the two Adams on the far left, and the headings up above are their acts, their respective acts. God's verdict vis-a-vis their acts and the results obtained from God's verdict being pronounced on their singular acts. Paul uses three different words for Adam's act.

He calls it sin, trespass, or transgression. They seem to be; the translations vary, but they're synonymous. Sin, trespass, and disobedience.

I just use sin as a summary. Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, not Eve's. Adam is the head, and she's not the head.

Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden is the original sin. Not only the first sin, overlooking Eve's right now, but the sin that causes all the rest of humankind, Jesus accepted because of the virginal conception, to be born sinners, and consequently to sin, and to be described in all those ways John Mahoney's essay did, as far as what sin is. The mess, the tangle, the heinousness of sin comes from the first man.

What is the verdict of a just and holy God concerning Adam's sin? There's no question. There's only one verdict. Guilty, condemned, damnable, condemnation is a good theological word.

There's no other verdict possible. God would deny himself if he looked the other way or said, well, boys will be boys. He cannot do it.

And the result, consistently in this passage, is death. Physical scripture also would involve spiritual death: death and its various ramifications.

Christ is the second man, 1 Corinthians 15, the second man, the last Adam. Theologians use the terminology second Adam to speak of those ideas. He's only the second human being made right, and he is the head of a race of his people, the race of the redeemed.

Adam is the natural head of the human race, no question. I'm going to try to figure out how he is the head of the human race in terms of original sin. That's our task in this lecture and probably the next one.

Christ's act corresponding to Adam's sin, disobedience, and trespass is called righteousness. One act of righteousness through the obedience of the one man, verse 19: righteousness and obedience.

Here's perhaps the most important question because the passage really is about justification. What verdict must a holy and just God give in light of Jesus' obedience unto death, even death of the cross, in light of Jesus' righteous, one act of righteousness in his crucifixion? There's no question. A holy and just God, I speak reverently, must declare righteous everyone who believes in Jesus.

Here's the Reformation gospel. Here's the assurance of salvation. You mean to tell me some filthy sinner, a murderer, who believes in Jesus, that God must declare him righteous? That's exactly what I mean. Otherwise, the father would deny himself and would not respect the work of his son.

There's no question about it. Even as God must condemn Adam's sin, he must, I speak reverently, there's no external pressure or law on God. It is because God is holy and just.

It is because he is God. And he honors the work of his son, which he planned and sent him into the world to accomplish. And we don't want to leave the Holy Spirit out.

Hebrews says Christ offered himself up to God through the eternal spirit. The Trinity must be pronounced righteous for any sinner who looks to the cross and believes in Jesus. The result? Eternal life, of course.

That little chart speaks volumes vis-a-vis the doctrine of original sin. Before we look at the views of original sin, I would like us to have a little historical theological background with the help of the just brilliant and godly evangelical Anglican Gerald Bray.

It's my privilege to know him personally. What a man of God. A bachelor who uses his time.

Well, he's also a genius, and that helps. I cannot count his books. Oh, man.

He has a section in a chapter on sin in historical theology. In this wonderful book called *Fallen, A Theology of Sin*. I'm speaking with tongue in cheek because I co-edited the book with Christopher Morgan.

Sin in the Creator Order. It should, therefore, come as no surprise to discover that the biblical passage most frequently commented on in the early church was Genesis 1-3. Which is the account of the creation, fall, sin, and fall of mankind.

Virtually every church father wrote at length on this foundational text. And some did so more than once. Augustine of Hippo, St. Augustine, who did not write many commentaries on the Bible.

Psalms and John, Sermon on the Mount. Nevertheless, no fewer than four treatises on this subject were penned. Which gives us a good indication of how important it was to him.

He wrote two books against the Manichaeans, the former religious philosophy cult that he was in, an unfinished commentary on the literal sense of Genesis, the final books of his *Confessions*, and the twelve books of a literal commentary on Genesis, written between 401 and 403, just to put some kind of date on this. Those are his final writings on the matter. Despite their apparent differences, the general drift of these treatises is the same.

Augustine says that creation is good, that sin is a corruption or distortion of that original goodness, and that once sin has occurred, there's no way to get rid of it other than by divine intervention. However, however sorry we may be for it, however hard we may try to put it right, however much we may desire to be sinless, none of this is possible without the grace of God freely given to us in the person of his Son, Jesus Christ. Only by dying spiritually to the forces of this world and by being

born again in Christ can a human being overcome the power of sin in this life, in his life, and hope to inherit the kingdom of God.

As it was understood by the church fathers, sin is a condition we have inherited from our first parents, Adam and Eve, who disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden and were expelled from it for that reason. But if their sin was their own fault, it was not their own idea. Above and beyond the sin of the first human beings was a power of evil that had lured them into it by temptation.

This power was personified in Satan and his angels, who had rebelled against God at some point before the creation of the world. Why God did not immediately destroy them and why Satan was allowed to tempt mankind into following him in his rebellion were mysteries that no one could solve, although it was clear that they corresponded to human experience. To be cleansed from sin was, therefore, to enter into spiritual warfare with Satan, the prince of evil, who continues to do everything in his power to tempt us back into his kingdom.

In the end, Satan will be destroyed, but until he is, evil will be a reality with which we have to contend and against which we shall have to be protected. This does not make it inevitable that a Christian will sin, but it is a reminder that our innate sinfulness comes from the fact that we have been born into the kingdom of Satan and that sinfulness continues to expose us to the dangers inherent in the devil's temptations. Even though we have been set free from the power of sin, our natural inclinations continue to make it appear attractive to us and to serve as a reminder that we cannot do without the saving power of Christ.

He's a clear writer, is he not? What exactly is sinfulness as opposed to the sinful acts we commit? Following the pagan Greek tendency to equate sinfulness with finitude and finiteness, many of the church fathers thought of it as a weakness inherent in our human constitution. To their minds, evil was a lack, an absence, or a deprivation of goodness that is the natural consequence of our separation from God. They reason that because God is a supreme good, to be cut off from him is to forfeit that goodness.

The result is sin, or more precisely, a condition of sinfulness. Evil thoughts and deeds, or what we would call actual sins, are the inevitable consequence of this separation from God and feed our natural inclination to go as far away from him and his goodness as we can. Those who refuse to submit to God's will are bent on self-destruction and will be destroyed because of it.

Whether this destruction is total annihilation or eternal punishment was less clear to the fathers, but the few who discussed the matter preferred eternal punishment because it was more consistent with the nature of God. The reason for this was that God hates nothing that he has made and, therefore, will preserve even the most

rebellious creatures in being, preserve them in being because he loves them as one of his creatures. But keeping such souls in being also prevents them from achieving their desire for self-destruction, which is therefore felt by those souls as a torment.

God is always kind and loving toward his creation, but those who have been blinded by their disobedience to him do not appreciate that and experience his love as punishment for their sinfulness. I do not know if I would say that exactly as he has said it. I give him credit for holding to eternal punishment in an Anglican church where even the liberals teach universalism, and Bray has told me that the evangelicals fight over annihilationism or eternal punishment.

The American situation is different. One cannot be a minister; you could be a church member but not a minister in good standing in the Southern Baptist Convention, Evangelical Free Church, or Presbyterian Church in America. If you did not hold to eternal conscious punishment for the lost, the historic doctrine of hell.

I would be stronger on that than Dr. Bray, for whom I have great respect. He's my teacher by his writings. As the Apostle Paul told the Corinthians quote, the natural person does not understand the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Corinthians 2:14.

The idea that sin was essentially a lack or deprivation of good was common in the early church and remained the dominant view in the East. A key element of the Eastern Orthodox view is that Adam's sin brought death into the world, and it is because of their mortality that all his descendants have sinned. They base this on their interpretation of Romans 5:12, which they read as, quote, sin came into the world through one man and death through sin.

And so death spread to all men because all sinned. The correctness of this translation depends on the meaning of the ambiguous Greek phrase, which is translated as for which reason by the East in churches but as because by most people in the West. Either meaning is theoretically possible, and therefore, which of them is preferable needs to be determined by other criteria.

For example, can we say that Adam was immortal before he fell and that sin brought mortality into the world? Everyone agrees that Adam died as a result of his sin, but that is not the same thing as saying that sin caused him to lose his original immortality. After all, Satan was immortal, but he did not lose that quality when he sinned. On the other hand, the man Jesus Christ was mortal, but that did not prevent him from being sinless as well.

The relationship between sin and death, therefore, seems to be more complex than the Eastern Orthodox churches, or at least what representative theologians have allowed. Adam was not created as an immortal being, but in the Garden of Eden he

was protected against death. When he fell, that protection was removed, and he suffered the consequences as his nature was allowed to take its course.

It is, therefore, preferable to say that sin is the cause of death and not the other way around, as most Eastern fathers apparently claimed. The main challenge of this viewpoint in ancient times, and here we're getting to the views of original sin, came from the pen of Augustine of Hippo, who was forced to turn his attention to it because of the teaching of Pelagius, a British monk who was making a name for himself in Rome around the year 418. Pelagius seems to have been teaching something very similar to the Eastern doctrine of sin outlined above.

Like his Eastern counterparts, Pelagius refused to accept the idea that there could be such a thing as inherited guilt. However, he seems to have gone further than they by denying that there is any inherited sinfulness at all. Insert gasp at this point.

He obviously could not deny the legacy of mortality, but he seems to have disassociated this from sinfulness to the point where it was possible for someone with good intentions to save himself by his own efforts. This is why Pelagianism has a bad name. Do not call your Arminian friend a Pelagian.

This is very unkind and inaccurate. In reaction to this, Augustine wrote a number of trenchant treatises in which he exalted the necessity of the grace of God for salvation and denied that anyone could get to God without it. Pelagianism was duly condemned by the Western Church, but its influence remained strong.

And even the Protestant reformers thought it was one of the chief obstacles they had to overcome in their preaching of the gospel. So Luther called his Catholic opponents Pelagians. This can be seen from the Augsburg Confession, a primary Lutheran symbol, which was drawn up in 1530 as the first major statement of Protestant doctrine.

It says, quote, We condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that the original flaw is sin and in order to dissipate the glory of the merit and the benefits of Christ, argue that man can be declared righteous before God by the strength of his own reason, close quote. The struggle against Pelagius gave a new edge to questions of sin and grace in the Western Church and forced it to reconsider what sin was and how it should be dealt with in the life of the Christian. In particular, it made subsequent Western Christian theologians, above all, almost all of whom, excuse me, saw themselves as latter-day exponents of Augustine, see that in some sense, at least, sin was a thing in its own right and not merely an absence of good as the Eastern churches taught.

Views of original sin, Pelagianism, Arminianism, and Calvinism have different subsets. Pelagianism, offended at the immorality, not immortality, offended at the immorality

of the late 4th and early 5th centuries, the British monk Pelagius exhorted professing Christians to live godly lives. To promote godliness, he strongly emphasized human beings' free will.

Man was created with freedom of will, and the fall of Adam has not changed that. Pelagius was a creationist, remember, you get your soul from your parents; creationism, God creates the soul at the time of conception of a human being in his or her mother's womb. Pelagius was a creationist who held that each human soul is a special creation of God, not tainted by corruption or guilt.

Adam's sin affected his descendants because the first man set a bad example. That is a weak view of sin indeed. Babies are not born sinners but may be inclined toward a sinful lifestyle by developing bad habits.

It is just amazing how those babies all follow bad examples. As a matter of fact, Pelagius cited certain biblical characters, especially those who have only a few verses concerning them, as examples of people who never sinned. Enoch? I wouldn't cite Noah but I believe he did.

Maybe Job? Not a wise move. It just seems that this following of bad examples is universal. How do you account for that? No special grace of God is necessary for man to be saved.

Didn't he see grace in the Bible? Oh, indeed, he did. And here's how he defined it. Grace was the law, the example of Jesus, and the free will of human beings.

My friends, those things are not grace. Yikes! Grace is the external love and power of God that changes us, saves us, and does for us what we cannot do for ourselves. No special grace of God is necessary for man to be saved.

Everybody has the law. Well, not everybody, but people who have the law, have the law, for example, Jesus, and everybody has free will, which he understood as libertarian freedom, including the moral freedom to choose God. Everyone is capable on his own of fulfilling God's commands and thereby maintaining his righteous standing before him.

I'm going to say in the end, although Adam was a bad example, this is no view of original sin at all because we get nothing from Adam besides his bad example. Yikes! Again, I'll say it, don't call your friends Pelagians. Luther was never known for tact.

He probably should have called them semi-Augustinians and not even semi-Pelagians, but that is another matter. As a matter of fact, it might be good to come around to that. Arminianism.

Here, we're not concerned with the details of James Arminius' doctrine of original sin. Rather, we want to know the views of his theological successors. A task force was commissioned by the Good News Movement, which was a conservative group of Methodists of the United Methodist Church, to prepare a statement of contemporary conservative Wesleyan theology.

The resulting statement of faith is known as the Junaluska Affirmation, after the lake by that name in North Carolina, Junaluska, where the statement was adopted in 1975. Paul A. Mickey, a well-known Methodist theologian, has written a commentary on the Junaluska Affirmation called *Essentials of Wesleyan Theology*, Zondervan, 1980. I will use the Junaluska Affirmation and Mickey's commentary as bases for setting forth the Arminian position fairly and accurately.

The conservative Arminian position affirms the corruption of humankind. "since the fall of Adam, the corruption of sin has pervaded every person and extended into social relationships, societal systems, and all creation."

Junaluska Affirmation. Furthermore, so they're not Pelagians, right? Adam's not merely a bad example. Corruption.

They didn't say guilt, but corruption. Furthermore, our Arminian brothers and sisters teach that this corruption, conservative Arminian brothers and sisters teach, corruption makes a sinner's position, positive response to God, impossible. "This corruption is so pervasive that we are not capable of positive response to God's offer of redemption." Inability. Wait a second.

Methodists teach inability? Hold on to your seatbelts. You'll see. Because of that, the convicting work of the Holy Spirit is necessary for people to be saved. Quote, except by the prevenient or preparing grace of God.

Close quote. Mickey goes on to explain that only the Spirit's work enables people to be saved. Traditionally, Arminians have held that this preparing grace of God is universal.

It affords all people alike the possibility of salvation. This is the best evangelical Arminianism. This notion of universal prevenient grace actually goes back to Arminius.

He didn't call it that. And Wesley, who did call it that, is actually a brilliant stroke.

Because from Adam, sinners are born sinners and unable to save themselves. Except for the universal prevenient, which is coming beforehand, preparing the grace of God, which comes to all people, presumably babies at birth, enabling them to believe. It ameliorates the effects of original sin in one area.

They're stillborn sinners, but it enables them to believe. This is not a work theology. It is a grace faith theology.

The question comes, is this what the Bible teaches when it speaks of grace? With great respect, including from my former student, Brian, who wrote the book on prevenient grace in the Wesleyan tradition. Brian Shelton. Thank you, Lord.

Brian Shelton was a sweet man of God. He is. He was my student at a reformed evangelical seminary.

Give him credit. He took an independent study with me on predestination and still wasn't convinced. We love each other.

As a matter of fact, I told him he ought to write a book on prevenient grace, and he did. And in his dedication he dedicated it to two people, and I was one of them. To my professor, former Ira Peterson, who cared for me, taught me, and disagreed with me.

And supported me in writing this book. Something like that. He is a sweet brother.

He's a Bible-believing Christian who loves the Lord. And his book did need to be written. It also has some real strengths besides clarity of writing and organization.

It's strong in historical theology. Where I find it weak is in Bible. Is in exegetical underpinnings of this notion of universal prevenient grace.

I do not believe the Bible teaches it. By the way, many of my Calvinist friends don't understand that John Wesley didn't invent the term prevenient grace. Saint Augustine did, or I don't know where he got it from.

But Saint Augustine used it. And for Saint Augustine, God's grace definitely comes before salvation. But it is not universal.

And it does not merely put us back to a situation, to a place where we can choose God. For Saint Augustine, it is efficacious and particular. God only gives it to his elect, whom he draws to himself by the Spirit.

So, although Arminianism has a technical teaching of inability, practically, they don't. Now again, this is the best. The worst doesn't see the effects of sin so bad.

The lesser Arminianisms don't hold to universal prevenient grace. I don't seem to see a need for it. I was just chagrined to see both Clark Pinnock and the famous Christian apologist, who wrote the book, Chosen But.

Norm Geisler. These are men of God. I respect them.

Norm Geisler and Clark Pinnock do not teach this universal prevenient grace. Geisler, in the book *Chosen But Free*, see James White's response book, *The Potter's Freedom*, says, yes, we're crippled by sin, but we're not spiritually dead. Or that's what spiritual death means in Ephesians 2, 1-3.

Oh, my word. I love the man, respect his apologetics ministry, but boy, do I disagree with that business. Traditionally, Arminians have held this prevenient grace.

Grace that comes before, preparing grace. Grace that nullifies the effects of original sin in one area, the human will. It was bound, now it's free.

Wesley himself wrote one theological treatise. He wrote a lot. And that was on original sin.

That's how important it was to his system of theology. Universal prevenient grace is a genius move. It is the glue that holds evangelical Arminian soteriology together.

But I am sorry, it is not biblical. At first glance, the Arminian position of inherited corruption seems to be close to the Calvinist view of immediate imputation, which I haven't defined yet. It is similar at the beginning, yet the Arminian and Calvinist doctrines of original sin arrive at different conclusions.

Erickson says that Arminians hold that whatever culpability and condemnation may have accrued to us through Adam's sin have been removed through prevenient grace. He quotes Orton Wiley, one of their famous theologians. "Man is not now condemned for the depravity of his own nature, although that depravity is of the essence of sin. Its culpability, we maintain, was removed by the free gift of Christ." Erickson then summarizes Wiley's thoughts.

Quote: this prevenient grace is extended to everyone and, in effect, neutralizes the corruption received from Adam. I would counter it, I would qualify that, especially it frees the will. From Wiley's *Christian Theology*, volume 2, pages 121 to 128.

In our next lecture, we will take up the matter of Calvinist views, Pelagianism, Arminianism, and Calvinist views, and after that, we'll evaluate them one at a time.

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