

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Humanity and Sin

Session 12, Biblical Description of Sin Continued, The Fall, Christ and Sin

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson and his teaching on the doctrines of humanity and sin. This is session 12, Biblical Description of Sin Continued, The Fall, Christ and Sin.

We continue our study of the doctrine of sin.

Let us ask the Lord's help. Gracious Father, thank you for your word, your holy word. In studying these topics, we are confronted by our own unholiness. Give us grace to walk with you, to love you more, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

We're finishing up John Mahoney's very helpful biblical description of sin. We just said sin is deceitful. We saw it in both Testaments. The last description of sin for Mahoney is this.

Sin had a definite beginning in human history and will finally be defeated. The biblical story arises out of three historical events: the creation of the universe, the intrusion of sin, and the redemption accomplished by Christ. It's a drama in three parts: the happy beginning, the tragic rebellion, and the spectacular finish.

The story begins with a plan to create a world that reflects the wonder and majesty of the Creator, Revelation 4:11, where praise is offered to God. Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will, they existed and were created. Everything he creates is good.

The crown of that creation bears his exclusive image and is declared very good, Genesis 1:31. In this idyllic world, God communes with his creation in perfect harmony. With the first appearance of sin, first among spirit beings who have been created to serve God, and then among his personal image bearers, it seems that the Creator has lost control of his creation. With the sin of the first couple in Eden, however, he immediately begins a retrieval project.

Instead of destroying all he has created, he begins the slow, tedious process of recovering the world and the people he created. Each new step toward final reclamation reflects his personal involvement. In an amazing act of personal sacrifice and love, he sends his son into the fallen world of sinners.

Through his death and resurrection, the Creator triumphs over all his enemies. His glory is brilliantly displayed, and his people are freed from terrible enslavement to the flesh, the world, and the devil. Finally, the victorious Lord returns as a triumphant king and, in a final display of awe- from his creation.

What an incredible story it is. The entire sweep of human history is his story. John writes in Revelation 21:1 to 4, Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there's no longer any sea.

And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and he will dwell among them, and they shall be his people. And God himself will be among them, and he will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

And there will no longer be any death, there will no longer be any mourning or crying or pain, for the first things have passed away. That concludes Mahoney's description of sin. I want to continue with his introduction to the doctrine of sin because it is, I find it so helpful.

The pre-fall paradigm, he calls it. Traditionally, the strategy to uncover the essence of sin involves projecting what we know about sin from the scriptures, as well as our own post-fall experience, upon pre-fall Adam. For us, all sin originates in an unbelieving, proud heart.

Other options adopted by theologians beyond pride and unbelief include anxiety, selfishness, sexuality, sloth, and falsehood. But is unbelief or pride the root of Adam's sin? We are certainly not disputing that unbelief and pride played a role in the temptation, but to raise questions, reflect human doubt, and lead toward going one's own way, human pride, were not a sin for Adam until he acted upon them by taking the fruit. Adam's sin was coterminous with the intrusion of death as God's judgment, Genesis 2:17. On the day you eat of it, the forbidden fruit, you will die.

During the temptation in Eden, Augustine supposed, for example, that Adam became proud and yielded to his unbelief, which resulted in taking the forbidden fruit. The implication is that Adam entered the post-fall state of unbelief, which is sinful and was corrupted before he actually ate the fruit. But for Adam, unbelief was a choice.

He chose not to continue believing by disobeying a direct command of the creator. Adam's rebellious act is the root of all sin, not his pride. Adam's context is clarified when viewed from the perspective of Christ's sinless human character.

In this regard, Jesus is the expression of pre-fall humanity and grants us insight into the moral uprightness of pre-fall Adam. Jesus' motives and attitudes throughout his earthly life lined up with his sinless nature. The same is true of Adam.

It is clear that Adam remained sinless, even as he contemplated eating the fruit. He became a sinner only when he chose to defy the command of the covenant Lord. The temptation he encountered sought to lead him to act independently of the sovereign creator, but not because he was already corrupted by pride and unbelief.

If so, he would have been a sinner before he actually sinned. The issue raised is the goodness of the original creation, as well as Adam's original righteousness. If Adam were created immature, as Irenaeus held, or was morally neutral, as Arminians contend, his original righteousness is challenged.

It appears to make God the real author of sin because Adam lacked the ability to pursue righteousness within the context of a righteous, sinless nature. Strategically, a pre-fall grid or Christological perspective clarifies for us Adam's perspective regarding temptation and sin. Understandably, Satan appealed to the first pair's areas of sinless human limitation, such as their desire to learn and experience new things.

Moral uprightness does not require omniscience, perhaps even their sense of entitlement, given their image-bearing position in creation and the exclusive capacity of choice between all options. Adam had a unique position in relation to the rest of creation. Satan's scheme then was to provoke them to question the creator, especially in the light of a forbidden fruit.

The creator had drawn a line. Thus, Satan's intent was to cause the pair to feel that the creator was withholding something good from them. The prospect was that this fruit contained the key to all knowledge, which they certainly were created to pursue, as well as a portal to their own divinity.

Adam faced a choice to obey the creator or to disregard God's prohibition and act upon his own initiative. Perhaps, as C.S. Lewis explains it, Adam and Eve wanted some corner in the universe of which they could say to God, this is our business, not yours, but there's no such corner. They wanted to be nouns, but they were and eternally must be mere adjectives.

C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 1962. All we can affirm with certainty is that sin for Adam was an act of rebellion, eating the fruit that God had commanded him not to eat. He chose a path not ordained by God, and that deviation in act produced total deviation in his nature.

He may have wanted some corner of the universe independently of God, but we have no certainty of that. We're still left to question why a sinless being chose sin.

Measuring Adam's pre-fall state by Christ's sinless life may make this approach appear odd initially.

The implementation of Christ as a grid does not substantially change what we already know about sin, but it certainly clarifies the inward state of Adam during the temptation. In this way, the essence of sin is given a needed objectivity. Here is the overview.

Adam's sin was an act of rebellion against the stated command of God, committed in a specific context in which an ultimate choice had to be made, a choice with devastating consequences. This choice was made by a righteous and, therefore, the qualified representative for whom disobedience was an act of his entire person and a total contradiction of his moral direction. Several critical features of this proposal need some comment.

First, all sinning began with an act of rebellion. Basic to this disobedience is the presence of a positive and a negative component. The positive component is the assertion of personal rights, and the negative component is the rejection or overthrow of the rights of the one who gave the command.

All disobedience carries these twin features. Another aspect of our proposed definition is the existence of a stated command. Obviously, the command has an authority figure who issued it.

Further, the one who was given the command understood it and had a clear choice to obey or disobey. The direction of his nature was toward righteousness. Third, the essence of sin can only be viewed in the move from righteousness to unrighteousness.

This requires a specific context for testing and an appointed representative who is entirely righteous. Finally, such as obedience has devastating effects. Intensively, total depravity.

Extensively, universal. And eternally, non-stop, endless punishment in hell. Covenantal context.

One of the most prominent features of the divine-human relationship is its covenantal context. God relates to all people through the instrument of a covenant. Biblical covenants were inaugurated through appointed mediators or representatives.

Noah, Abraham, Moses. In the instance of moral probation, the Lord appointed two representatives. Theologically speaking, the two Adams constitute the beginning and

the end of human society.” Marguerite Schuster, *The Fall and Sin*. What we have become as sinners.

Actually, Paul clearly indicates representation in Romans 5:12, and the following. I strongly agree. Reminders of Jesus' role as a representative occur throughout his ministry.

At his baptism, Jesus identified with the people he had come to redeem. Matthew 3:15. Jesus' moral test was to learn obedience.

Hebrews 5:8. In order to become an understanding high priest. Hebrews 2:17, 18. His complete obedience called active obedience, fulfilled all the moral law's demands.

Christ's substitutionary work on the cross, called passive obedience, is identified by Paul as representational. Romans 5:18, 19. Again, I agree.

Even his virtuous resurrection, even his, excuse me, victorious resurrection, is realized in believers because he represents us. 1 Corinthians 15:22. These two representatives were uniquely positioned and parallel each other in many ways.

They were image bearers in the highest sense of the expression. Both were perfectly perfect reflections of God's design for humanity. They also were righteous in character with no propensity to sin.

Second, Adam and Christ experienced humanness in total dependency upon the creator. They were alive spiritually and lived solely to serve the purposes of God. According to Paul, God's original design was the production of good works.

Ephesians 2, 10. Actually, I think that may not speak of the creation but of the new recreation, as I said earlier, and yet the point stands. Surely, God wanted Adam and Eve to produce good works.

Next, the covenant representatives were both *pose non peccare*, able not to sin, and *pose peccare*, able to sin. They are the only humans who stood in that unique position with regard to sin. Able not to sin, able to sin.

The language comes from Saint Augustine, of course. Finally, both representatives experienced testing called probation. The agent, goal, and substance of the tests were the same.

Agent, the devil, goal, and substance of the test were the same. The outcomes of the test were very different, however. In this regard, Adam failed the test by disobeying God's command.

He made a single wrong choice. On the other hand, Christ maintained obedience throughout his life. He perpetually chose righteousness.

There are other differences. For example, Adam's physical context was pristine. Christ came into a very fallen world.

Adam had no religious tradition or history to influence his decisions. Christ came during a time of severe religious scrutiny. Adam possessed an untested, righteous character.

Christ also possessed an untested righteous character as a human, but had the righteous character of God, non posse peccare, not able to sin, as well as will. Jesus was, after all, God in the flesh. He was holy, and God was even beyond temptation, but he was tempted because he was completely human.

I agree. The two natures of Christ granted him the capacity to face real temptation as well as an infinite capacity to experience it. He is our primary reason for exploring the essence of sin.

Here is our primary reason for exploring the essence of sin. Through the lens of Christ. Application of the lens.

Three matters are clear from scripture. Christ was fully human. He was completely sinless, and he was God incarnate.

These three features of the lens qualify him for testing and permit him to experience the full measure of testing. He encountered sin just as Adam did, yet with a great deal more at stake and with a great deal more intensity. Failure would have jeopardized his mission to glorify the Father and redeem sinners, thus unleashing the wrath of God upon all humans with no hope of redemption for them.

Christ was completely human by choice. He was also sinless by nature and by choice. The perpetual submission of his will to the sacrifice of his human life is the basis of our redemption.

Hebrews 10:10. First of all, Christ's humanity granted him the capacity to be tested. Through the incarnation, Christ experienced all the limitations of human experience. He was limited physically by time and space, by the simple process of maturation, Hebrews 2:40, by human dependence upon the physical world around him, hunger, thirst, weariness, anxiety, fear, weeping, and the threat of disease or injury from the common cold to tooth decay to blisters from working with his hands.

Jesus was limited mentally. He had to learn, Luke 2:40 and 52 and often asked for information, John 11:34. Although he had great clarity about end-time events, he

admitted he did not know the time of his return, Matthew 24:36. Jesus was also limited psychologically. He endured emotions generated by his enemy's hatred and rejection, as well as the unbelief and helpless condition of the people he came to save.

Finally, he was limited within his human spirituality. He spent many nights in prayer and worship, Mark 1:35, Matthew 14:23, and lamented he was unable to share some deep spiritual truths with the disciples, John 16:12. Each of these areas came into play during his many tests. Christ was also the fullest and clearest expression of the image of God.

When viewed dimensionally, the original image has three components. First, the structural aspect is composed of rationality, morality, volition, emotion, creativity, and spirituality. Phil Hughes, the true image.

Jesus reflected each of these components and kept them in perfect balance. In structure, we parallel Christ, though we are falling. Next is the functional capacity of the image.

This is the operational hub. Sinners are spiritually dead, which is reflected in our trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2:1. The original capacity to desire God and pursue him in righteousness was lost in the fall. We have no contingent righteousness through which the image of God in us is directed.

Jesus, however, was righteous, and the operation of the image in him was motivated and even compelled by hatred of sin and a love for holiness. Dimensionally, then, this was the God-orientation of the image. Third, the image granted humankind dominion over the created order.

Jesus exercised this domain in stopping a raging storm, walking on water, and multiplying bread and fish. Eugene Merrill also notes the interesting account of Jesus' temple tax in the mouth of a fish, Matthew 17:27. He observes, quote, though again one might plead miracle here, it could equally as well be explained as the natural consequence of the sinless man, capital M, invoking the privilege of the original creation covenant in which he was to have dominion over the fish of the sea, close quote. I'll vote for miracle, but it's an interesting concept.

Eugene Merrill, a theology of the Pentateuch in a biblical theology of the Old Testament. Jesus was not only fully human but was also sinless and, therefore, completely unique. In all of his thoughts, attitudes, motives, words, and actions, he was without fault before a holy God, quote, and he who sent me is with me.

He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him, John 8:29. He challenged the religious elite of his day, "which of you convicts me of sin?"

John 8:46. I have told my students and myself, do not say that to your opponents. A very bad idea. Even in the context of human limitations and challenges, Jesus lived fully to honor and magnify the Father.

His followers clearly asserted his righteous character. Peter, who knew him best, declared that Jesus, quote, committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth, 1 Peter 2:22. As sinless, as incredible as that sounds for a human, Jesus is called an example, a tracing model used in writing or drawing is the word, hapogrammatos, quote, for you've been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps, because there was not any deceit found in his mouth, and while being reviled, he did not revile in return. While suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to him who judges righteously, 1 Peter 2:21-23. Jesus' sinless life then became a paradigm for all humans, defining what it is to be fully human.

Paul and John also affirmed his sinless character: "he made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him," 2 Corinthians 5:21, and, quote, in him there is no sin, 1 John 3:5. The third feature of the Christological lens was Christ's divine nature. Jesus was a human with two distinct natures. Every act or thought of the person of Christ involved a human nature and a divine nature.

Both were apparent throughout his human existence and remained intact for eternity. Possessing both natures uniquely qualified him as our high priest, who offered himself as a propitiation for sins. Human nature granted him the capacity to die for us, and divine nature made sacrifices effective on our behalf.

Other facets of his earthly ministry required the two natures. His teaching ministry as a unique and final revelation of the Father was contingent on the human context and the divine authorization. His assertions of authority and kingship in relation to the kingdom of God as a son of man hinge upon both natures.

In the context of his temptation, we are hesitant to introduce the deity of Christ. On the one hand, there are scriptural declarations that God is not tempted by sin, James 1:13. On the other hand, we know that the temptations that Jesus faced throughout his life were real. So, did he simply experience his challenges as a human? It seems more comfortable to limit the temptation to human nature.

But that's impossible because he's one person with two natures. But the reality is that through the incarnation, God united himself to our humanity, even in its fallen nature. The incarnation granted the divine nature the vehicle through which he experienced certain things, such as suffering, death, and even temptation.

The human nature matures morally and in every other way. Moral maturity for a human is contingent upon moral testing. Christ's divine and human nature has cooperated at each step in the process.

In fact, throughout his entire life, Jesus faced the intensification of this testing, culminating at the cross. Thus, he was perpetually being confronted with choices that fueled growth. But as God, these choices took on a much deeper meaning.

Ultimacy became a feature of every choice he made. Obedience to the Father's will was his option, and the Father's honor was his goal. Facing the moral chasm.

Mahoney talks about being at the Grand Canyon and seeing an amazing chasm. Perhaps a new perspective will help. Excuse me.

After talking about the Grand Canyon, but what about our sin and the chasm that it creates between God and us? What is it about the nature of sin that creates such a distance? Is it the infinite moral perfection of the one offended? Or is it in the contradiction that sin is before him? Perhaps a new perspective will help. We will approach the issue using Christ's humanity as our grid. Since Jesus possessed a sinless human nature that was united to an absolutely holy divine nature, what would have constituted sin to him? I realize the immediate reaction to this approach may be skepticism.

Clearly, Christ Jesus did not sin, but he was confronted with it on a regular basis. What if he had caved into the devil? It appears the chasm is best seen as a son of God in the flesh, facing the lure and possibility of disobeying the Father's will and choosing to do it anyway. His failure to obey at any point would have been incomprehensible and catastrophic.

But so is sin. We are confronted with the ultimacy of sin. From the wilderness to the long days of ministry with no place to lay his head, from Gethsemane to the cross, his human will, desires, and purposes were brought into perpetual conformity with the Father's.

Jesus, as a divine son quote, learned obedience from the things he suffered and was made perfect in the process, Hebrews 5:8. John Brown asserts that this process was not reforming as if Christ needed the discipline. Further, it was not primarily educational in the sense he needed to learn how painful human suffering is, especially in regard to obedience. Rather, the expression learned obedience refers to his gaining experiential knowledge of suffering and the consequent fullness of obedience that he offered to the Father on the cross.

John Brown, an exposition of the epistle of the apostle Paul to the Hebrews, a Puritan writer who said many good things, including some of those things, although

Paul did not write Hebrews. What can we learn from Christ's continual probation that will help us in our search for the essence of sin? The first factor is the covenant in which he operated. The covenant of grace or redemption is a helpful format for interpreting the eternal arrangement between the Father and the Son through which God's people are redeemed.

The Son embraced this covenant completely and lived to fulfill every stipulation that the Father imposed. The cross is at the heart of it, but his perpetual obedience that led to the cross qualified him to enter the office of our great high priest and present himself as the sacrifice for sin. An analogy might be helpful.

In virtually all human endeavors, rules define the activity. It's true in relationships. Marriage is built upon love, trust, and loyalty.

Rules are required to provide structure and definition. Love as a motive for action requires more than a mere feeling to give direction and purpose. For a husband to declare his love for his wife while he physically abuses her is not love at all.

Jesus tied love to rules. "he who has my commandments and keeps them, it is the one who loves me," John 14 21.

And "if anyone loves me, he'll keep my word," John 14:23. Many other areas can be listed where relational rules apply.

One's job, ministry, school, citizenship, even sports. Rules define relationships. But Jesus was obviously doing more than playing a game.

He was conforming himself to a specific covenantal relationship. Thus, in this ultimate context in which the majesty of God and the future state of sinners were in view, the stakes were high and the consequences eternal. From this perspective, any violation of the covenant nullified it.

Sin, then, in any covenant-voiding act. Sin, then, is any covenant-voiding act. The second factor in Jesus' probation is the temptation itself.

According to Mark's gospel, immediately after Jesus was baptized by John, he heard the Father's affirmation and was compelled by the spirit to go away into the wilderness. Mark 1:9 to 12. Matthew and Luke fill in the details for us.

Through the three tests, the devil apparently questioned Jesus' identity, played upon a confusion of his desires, and challenged his future. Compare Russell Moore, *Tempted and Tried, Temptation and the Triumph of Christ*, Crossway, 2011. Certainly, Jesus was prompted to exercise his prerogative to choose a path different from the one laid out for him by the father.

But in each case, bread, pinnacle, nations, and alternate choice was a violation of the covenant of grace and a violation of his covenant with his father. At the heart of each challenge was the prospect of violating God's will and breaking the covenant with him. In the case of the bread, he was challenged to yield to his human hunger, thereby placing himself under its control instead of trusting the provision of the father.

In the second test, he was taken to the pinnacle of the temple and challenged to jump in order to demonstrate his true identity to the crowd below. The lure was the basic human need for personal affirmation or self-worth. Satan even quoted a biblical promise, but had Jesus given in, he would have been placing his personal vindication above his father's designed path of humiliation.

Finally, Satan gave him a glimpse of all the nations and offered them to him for a simple act of worship. In this case, the devil played to Jesus' desire to be the deliverer. In a not so subtle way, Satan was seeking to receive honor from the son of God and to defeat the purpose of redemption that Jesus was sent to accomplish.

In each case, sin for Christ would have been the free exercise of his will against the father's will expressed through an act. A third factor is Jesus' personal freedom to act. Jesus possessed actual freedom of alternate choice.

Consequently, Jesus had the capacity to act in accord with his sinless human nature or to act in contradiction of it. Only two individuals possessed that exclusive capacity: Christ and Adam. Both are unique in human history.

Both acted within the context of a specific divine covenant, and both acted as representatives. This is the reason that the element of human will is crucial in the redemption of sinners. Hebrews 10:10 asserts that it is by, quote, this will, Christ's willing obedience within the covenant, that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

It is by this will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Heart of the matter. Several matters become clear about the nature of sin from an incarnational perspective.

With this, we close. Another couple pages. First, the perspective supports our initial contention that the absence of sin is the violation of a specific command of God.

Sin's essential features appear in the choice to disobey God. The movement by Adam or Christ from obedience to disobedience possessed two separate and distinct dimensions. First is the rejection of the command and the one who issued it.

In this regard, sin is a perpetual declaration of human freedom from God. The other dimension is the assertion of personal rights in setting an independent moral course. Any act of disobedience by Jesus would have possessed these two features.

Sin then is both disregard and defiance. It disregards the rights and position of the creator and defies the creator by crossing a boundary he has set. The scene is much like the clay rising up against the potter and usurping the potter's right over it.

Romans 9.21. In the cross of Jesus, in the case of Jesus, sin would only have occurred had he acted upon his own authority in defiance of the father's purpose. In the context of temptation, it was not sin for him to desire to satisfy his hunger. When Satan proposed turning the stones to bread, or any of the other invitations for that matter, would he be truly human and not desire the bread? Or the same for self-worth? Or the deliverance of those he came to save? It is only in the act that sin is found and defined for us.

Second, from a post-fall perspective, sin has many expressions. Attitudes, motives, thoughts, words, and deeds, done and undone, are all called sins in the Bible. But from the perspective of Jesus in the fall of Adam, the root from which all sins emerge is a historical act of rebellion against God.

Thus, Adam's covenant violation makes all expressions of sin covenant violations. My son works at a local college as the intramural director. Among his responsibilities is overseeing the students' use of facilities for basketball and other activities.

Recently he closed down the sports facility because of another activity on campus. A few students decided to play basketball and became, because the facilities were locked, broke in. When my son arrived, the students were well-behaved, treating the faculty facility respectfully, as if he had been there the whole time.

One problem remained. They violated the rules by breaking in. Thus, everything they did after that was a violation.

They were on the wrong side of the rules. So are we in Adam. We're on the wrong side of a broken covenant, and therefore, everything we do, think, or feel is a continuing violation of that covenant.

And every covenant violation is sin. Finally, sin is essentially a contradiction. Viewed from a pre-fall grid, Jesus faced the ultimate incongruity.

He had no desire to disobey his father. Rather, he loved him and desired only to honor him. Imagine facing the person you love the most and holding in your hand a loaded pistol.

Then someone tells you to shoot him. The very thought of that is repulsive to you, but you still have the choice. Sin is choosing to follow the contradiction.

Further, there was no rational basis to sin for Jesus. With nothing to gain from it and everything to lose, it was still an option. Jesus had no weak point in his will or moral direction that created a propensity toward sin.

John 8, the prince of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me. I think it speaks of that very thing. Yet, Jesus possessed a prerogative to choose.

That wrong choice is a sin. Thankfully, the apostle Paul offers us good news. Even so, through one act of righteousness, there resulted justification of life to all men.

And through the obedience of the one, the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:18 and 19. Conclusion.

Moral failures have a point of no return. The word that haunts me at times is don't. With every bad decision, I can hear the words ringing in my mind.

Just don't do it. Sin is like that. A word is spoken in haste, impossible to retrieve.

One click of the mouse and one enters the world of porn or online gambling or illegal prescription drugs. Just don't do it. Some decisions have more devastating consequences.

Pulling the trigger, leaving your spouse, giving away your virginity, or perhaps pushing the button to launch a nuclear weapon. There's a point of no return. In the matter of sin, Christ makes this perfectly clear.

Christ left heaven and entered the before-after historical context of humankind. Every decision he made on earth had a before and after. Christ is the image of God.

He was righteous. Righteousness was a constituent feature of his nature. Not because he was the incarnate God but because he was fully human as God intended us to be.

His righteousness granted him a special relationship with God. It also offered him the freedom to act morally that we as sinners do not have. Christ had the capacity to change his basic disposition toward God.

All he needed to do was assert his personal right to act independently of God and refuse to submit to his will. We are proposing that Adam possessed the same freedom to act. He was righteous and enjoyed a transparent relationship with the

creator, yet he had the capacity to turn from that relationship by an act of rebellion, and he did.

We also know by studying the life of Christ that Adam was no moral wimp. He was not deceived as Eve was, 1 Timothy 2:9 to 15. He acted deliberately and maliciously.

He did not cave to a weakness in his nature or his motives. We may never fully understand the reason for his action, but the fact of it is beyond dispute. He crossed the line.

Crossing God's moral barrier is sin. Adam passed the ultimate point of no return. His treacherous act is subsequently replicated in every sinful attitude and treasonous motive we possess and every godless thought, word, and action we commit.

The root of all sin and the essence of sin itself is the act of turning from God in rebellion, an uprising that continues to the present moment. Thanks be to God that the uprising will be defeated and the rebellion will be judged and appropriately punished. That concludes our introduction to the doctrine of sin, essays by both D. A. Carson and John Mahoney.

In our next lecture, we will work with the Bible, especially dealing with the matter of the neglected matter, I might say, of original sin.

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