

February 11, 2020

The Fall of the Angels

Sin originated previous to the fall of men in the fall of angels. The Genesis narrative describes when the origin of sin occurred in the life of the human race. Adam and Eve were tempted in the Garden of Eden by a serpent (Gen. 3:1). The serpent was a spokesperson for Satan. In Revelations 12:9 and 20:2, the devil or Satan is identified with that ancient serpent. Since the serpent tempted our first parents to sin against God, and since the serpent was a tool of Satan, we conclude that sin was present in the angelic world before it began in the human world.

Satan fell and took a host of angels that sinned (2 Pet. 2:4). Paul by way of contrast, speaks of elect angels (1 Tim 5:21). Angels were created by God and this is taught in Colossians 1:16. This fact is also implied in scriptures that speak of God's creation of all things (Ps 33:6, Neh. 9:6; John 1:3; Rom 11:36; Eph. 3:9).

Jude 1:6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. (NIV)

It appears these angels were not satisfied with the place that God had put them, but desired a position of higher authority. The root of their sin would therefore appear to be pride, which led to rebellion against God. That the root sin of Satan and the angels was pride is further alluded to in 1 Timothy 3:6

He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.

Sin did not originate in the world of human beings but in the world of spirits. These spirits were not tempted to sin by some force or power outside themselves; they fell in and by themselves. Jesus says that when the devil lies, he speaks "according to his own nature." The devil as the leader of the fallen angels brought the lie out of himself.

John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (RSV)

In Genesis 3:10, Adam's consciousness of guilt brought fear – fear of what God may do to them as punishment for their sin. With fear came *evasion of responsibility*. Adam should have said that he was afraid because he knew he had done wrong; instead he attempted to cover up his guilt. Adam continued this evasion by blaming Eve (Gen. 3:12) who in turn blamed the serpent (Gen. 3:13).
Matthew 5:21-28; Luke 10:25-37

Original sin includes both guilt and pollution. Guilt is a judicial or legal concept describing one's relationship to the law-in this case, specifically to God's law. Guilt is the state of deserving condemnation or of being liable to punishment because the law has been violated. Pollution, in distinction from guilt, is a moral concept; it has to do with our moral

condition rather than with our status before the law. We can define *original* pollution as the corruption of our nature that is the result of sin and produces sin.

Two aspects of this pollution are *pervasive depravity* and *spiritual inability*. Pervasive depravity means that (1) the corruption of original sin extends to every aspect of human nature: to one's reason and will as well as to one's appetites and impulses. Also, (2) there is not present in man by nature love to God as the motivating principle of his life (Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; John 5:42; Eph. 4:17-19; Titus 1:15-16; Eph. 2:1-3).

Spiritual inability includes: (1) the unregenerate person *cannot* do, say, or think that which totally meets with God's approval, and therefore cannot totally fulfill God's law; and (2) the unregenerate person is unable apart from special working of the Holy Spirit to change the basic direction of his or her life from sinful self-love to love for God (John 6:44; John 15:4-5; Rom 7:18-19; 8:7-8; 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 3:4-5; Eph. 2:4-5).

The Inability of the Flesh (Romans 7:14-25)

This passage describes the fleshly nature of Paul or any other individual when viewed alone—it describes what even a born-again person is like if he attempts to live for God by human effort alone (Rom 7:25).

Romans chapters 7-8 discuss four spiritual laws (principles):

- *Law of God* (7:22, 25)—God's moral commandments; God's moral law. It is holy, just, and good, but it does not give man power over the law of sin (7:14; 7:16; 8:3).
- *(2) Law of the mind* (7:22-23)—the inner self; the conscience. It can accept and desire to follow the law of God, but it does not have power over the law of sin (7:18, 25).
- *(3) Law of sin* (7:23)—the sinful nature; the dominion of sin; the compulsion to break God's law. It controls man and his actions. It overpowers the law of the mind, and the law of God alone cannot conquer it (7:20-21).
- *(4) Law of the Spirit* (8:2)—the Holy Spirit within the believer; the principle of walking after the Spirit. Only this law gives power over the law of sin and over death (the result of sin) (8:1-4).

Verse 14. God's law pertains to, is caused by, and is filled with the Spirit. The law cannot make man spiritual, however, for he has a sinful nature and cannot fulfill the law. Not only has man sinned, but he is also dominated by sinful lusts (Romans 3:9; 5:12, 19). The law itself is good, but human efforts to become spiritual by works of law—is vain.

Verse 15 begins with a paradox. "For that which I do I allow not" (*KJV*). The Greek word translated "allow" means "I know, I understand, or I acknowledge." Hence, while the sentence may mean, "I do not approve of my own actions," more probably it means, "I do not understand my own actions." The baffling puzzle is that even though man desires to do good, he finds himself performing evil, which he hates. He acts contrary to his own inner desires.

Verse 16. By acknowledging that the things he does are evil, man gives assent to God's moral law. The mind (conscience) thus supports the law of God.

Verse 17. The law of the mind and the law of God together still cannot stop man from sinning. The sinful nature dominates man, causing him to violate his own conscience. This does not excuse or justify sin, but simply expresses the human experience.

Verse 18. The flesh (sinful nature) contains nothing good. While the mind of man can acknowledge good things and while the unregenerate man can have many honorable characteristics, ultimately there is nothing in man that can overcome sin. There is nothing in man that merits salvation. Man can desire to do good, but he does not have the power to perform it. (By contrast, *the Spirit-filled person does have power to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law* -Romans 8:4-because God gives him both the desire and the power to fulfill God's will—Philippians 2:13.)

Verse 19 restates verse 15. Man wants to do good but ends up doing evil.

Verse 20 reiterates verse 17, explaining that the sinful nature is the cause of this situation. Again, this does not deny man's responsibility for his own acts of sin, but describes his sinful nature.

Verse 21 sets forth the law of sin: Evil is present even in the life of the man who wants to do good.

Romans 7:14-25 does not describe the conflict of the two natures—flesh and Spirit—in the believer. If it did, the flesh would be the victor! Rather, it describes the struggle between the flesh (sinful nature) and the mind of a man who tries to obey the law of God by his own efforts.

As such, it applies either to the unregenerate man or to the regenerate man who is not walking after the Spirit. (There *is* a conflict between flesh and Spirit in the believer—described in Romans 8:5-14 and Galatians 5:16-26—but in that conflict the Spirit can always be victorious.)

Flesh versus Spirit (Romans 8:5-7)

(5) For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. (6) For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (7) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Verse 5. There are two principles of living, two mind sets, two roads to follow: we can walk after the flesh or after the Spirit. Paul wrote this to Christians. In that context, he was not merely contrasting the unregenerate life with the regenerate life, but he was presenting a choice still open to the regenerated man.

February 11, 2020

The first option is to live according to the flesh (sinful nature). This means obeying the flesh and letting it take control. Those who make this choice put their priorities on the flesh. They cater primarily to the needs and desires of the physical man, and they seek to gratify sinful lusts. They adopt the value system of the world and vie for worldly success, fame, wealth, material possessions, and power, to the detriment of spiritual growth.

The second option is to live according to the Spirit. This means following the leading of the Spirit and letting the Spirit take control. Those who make this choice put their priorities on the will of God. They are sensitive to the Spirit. They seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. They are faithful in prayer, Bible study, church attendance, and support of the work of God.

How can we tell which option we are choosing? We must evaluate our priorities, use of time, use of money, thoughts, attitudes, dress, actions, and amusements. In all things we must compare our lives to the Word of God.

Verse 6. The word *carnal* means fleshly, so to be carnally minded means to have the mind of the flesh. If we choose the first option—carnality—the result will be death (verse 6) and enmity against God (verse 7). Clearly, the Christian cannot continue to live in unrepented sin and still inherit eternal life. If we choose the second option—spirituality—the result will be life and peace with God.

Verse 7 elaborates on the outcome of carnality. The carnal mind is totally contrary to God. It does not obey God's law. In fact, as Romans 7:14-25 has shown, the flesh cannot do so.