

## **B. ANTHROPOLOGY**

**In this part of dogmatics we treat of**

- 1. Man's present abode.**
- 2. Man's nature.**
- 3. Image of God.**
- 4. Fall of man.**
- 5. Sin.**

### **1. Man's Present Abode**

**I. The universe was created by God in the beginning to be the home of man.**

**1. The Creator is God, particularly the Father.**

**a) God, the Triune God, is the Creator. Gn 1:1-2:3**

Note: Gn 2:4-25 is not a second account of creation but a chapter of the world's history following creation. References in it to creation must be understood in the light of chapter 1.

Phillip Hefner: A number of scholars have classified the myths of creation in the world's religions. Charles Long, for example, has provided five different categories of such myths: emergence myths, world-parent myths, myths of creation from chaos and from the cosmic egg, creation from nothing, and earth-diver myths. Within the creation-from-nothing classification, he gathers the following: the Australian myth of the Great Father, Hesiod, Rig Veda, the ancient Maya myth from the Popol Vuh, and myths from Polynesia, the Maori, the Tuamotua, the Egyptians, and the Zuni- in addition to the Hebrew myth from Genesis.... Scholars are nearly unanimous that Genesis 1-11 is put together from several literary accounts. The one called "J" begins with Gen 2:4 and continues off and on through chapter 11. The other called "P" begins with the first chapter (Braaten/Jenson, *Christian Dogmatics*, I, p 277-278, 280).

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2 Kings 19:15 Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: "O LORD, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth."

Nehemiah 9:6 You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

Psalms 102:25 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

Proverbs 3:19 By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations, by understanding he set the heavens in place; etc.

Job 38 and 39

**b) Creation is preeminently ascribed to the Father.**

**1) Scripture teaches this truth.**

1 Corinthians 8:6 Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

**2) The Son and Spirit “cooperated” – external works are indivisible (*opera ad extra sunt indivisa aut communia*).**

John 1:3 Through [Christ] all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Hebrews 1:2 But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

Genesis 1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Psalms 33:6 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.

Hollaz: The work of creation is ascribed particularly to God the Father in Holy Writ and the Apostles' Creed: a) because of the order of operation; because the Father has it from himself that he acts and creates, the Son of God and the Holy Spirit have it from the Father; b) because God the Father manifested his omnipotence by his most efficacious word of command in the work of creation (Gn 1:3); c) creation is the first divine *opus ad extra* [work outside the Godhead], and therefore it is ascribed to the first person of the Deity through a certain appropriateness. [N.B. This is not mentioned in Scripture.]—The three persons of the Deity are not three associate causes, not three authors of creation, but one cause, one author of creation, one Creator.—Although there are three distinct persons, nevertheless they enter into the work of creation with one force. If they entered into it with different working forces, they would be associate causes (*Examen*, p 352).

**2. The existence of the world is due exclusively to a creative act of God.**

**a) Creation was an absolutely free act of God.**

Psalm 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Ephesians 1:11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

Revelation 4:11 You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

Psalm 50:9-12: I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens,<sup>10</sup> for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.<sup>11</sup> I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine.<sup>12</sup> If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

Hollaz: Creation is a free divine act because God established this universe without being moved by any necessity, as if he actually needed the service of creatures, since he is absolutely self-sufficient, but freely, so that he would have been able to create or not create, to create either sooner or later, in this way or some other way (*Examen*, p 357).

R. Preus: The free act of creation was willed and decreed by God in eternity and carried out in time. This means that God created time and in his freedom took time to create (*The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, II, p 169).

**b) The plan of creation is entirely God's own.**

Isaiah 40:12-14 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?<sup>13</sup> Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor?<sup>14</sup> Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge or showed him the path of understanding?

Job 28:20-28 Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell?<sup>21</sup> It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing, concealed even from the birds of the air.<sup>22</sup> Destruction and Death say, "Only a rumor of it has reached our ears."<sup>23</sup> God understands the way to it and he alone knows where it dwells,<sup>24</sup> for he views the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.<sup>25</sup> When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters,<sup>26</sup> when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm,<sup>27</sup> then he looked at wisdom and appraised it; he confirmed it and tested it.<sup>28</sup> And he said to man, "The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding."

Job 38:4-6 Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand.<sup>5</sup> Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it?<sup>6</sup> On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone?

c) **Previous to the creation there existed no material out of which God might have formed the world.**

1) **The world was created out of nothing.**

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

Compare Romans 4:17: As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were (τὰ μὴ ὄντα ὡς ὄντα).

2) **This was an absolute nothing: *Nihil negativum***

**Not a relative nothing: *Nihil privativum* (ὕλη ἀμορφος)**

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Quenstedt: There is no *materia ex qua* [a philosophical term meaning the material which is used in making something] of creation with reference to the things created on the first day. For the things that were created on the first day were not made from pre-existent or previously created material, but they were made from purely negative nothing [i.e., God used absolutely nothing to begin his work of creation].—When it is said that the works of the first day were created out of nothing, the particle *ex* does not designate the *materia ex qua*, but excludes it. For nothing else is meant by the term *ex nihilo* than the *terminus a quo* [a philosophical term meaning the starting point]; that is, the "nothing" from which all things are said to have been made does not define the material but only the *terminus a quo* and ought to be understood concerning the order of creation, and the particle *ex* could rightly be rendered with *post* (after), as Thomas observes, so that the sense is: after nothing as the *terminus a quo* something was made (TDP, I, p 417).

3) **This is shown also by the use of the verb אָבַרַךְ.**

**-a) It is applied to God's productive work.**

Genesis 1:1,27 In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth. <sup>27</sup> So God *created* man in his own image, in the image of God he *created* him; male and female he *created* them.

Genesis 5:1,2 This is the written account of Adam's line. When God *created* man, he made him in the likeness of God. <sup>2</sup> He *created* them male and female and blessed them. And when they were *created*, he called them "man."

Genesis 6:7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe mankind, whom I have *created*, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures

that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them.”

Psalm 51:10 *Create* in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Isaiah 45:7 I form the light and *create* darkness, I bring prosperity and *create* disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.

Jeremiah 31:22 How long will you wander, O unfaithful daughter? The LORD will *create* a new thing on earth—a woman will surround a man” (נִקְבָּה תִסְוֵבב גְּבֵר).

Amos 4:13 He who forms the mountains, *creates* the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth—the LORD God Almighty is his name.

**-b) It signifies to produce by divine power either out of nothing or out of unsuitable material.**

Psalm 33:6,9 By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. <sup>9</sup>For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

Psalm 104:29,30 When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. <sup>30</sup>When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

Isaiah 65:17,18 “Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. <sup>18</sup>But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy.

Compare Psalm 51:10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Calov: Creation does not consist in an emanation from the essence of God, nor in generation, nor even in a movement or natural change ... but in an external action by which things were produced from nothing by an infinite power (*Systema Locorum Theologicorum*, III, p 899).

**d) The “instrument” of creation was the word of God.**

Genesis 1:1,3,6,9,11,14,20,24 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>3</sup>And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>6</sup>And God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water.” <sup>9</sup>And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. <sup>11</sup>Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in

it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so.<sup>14</sup> And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years,<sup>20</sup> And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.”<sup>24</sup> And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so.

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

John 1:1,3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.<sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Chemnitz: One must not dispute, however, with too much curiosity about the difference of the persons in the work of creation, but let us be content with that revelation of the Holy Spirit (Ro 11:36: For *from* him and *through* him and *to* him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.). These facts must not be adduced for an inequality of persons, however, as the Arians blasphemously claim that the Son was merely an instrument of God in creation, as a carpenter uses an ax. For these prepositions (ἐκ, διά, εἰς) do not divide the nature, but express the peculiarities of the one unconfused nature (*Loci Theologici*, I, p 115).

e) **To this Scripture doctrine of creation is opposed**

1) **Pantheism: God becomes part of his creation and creation becomes part of God.**

Hollaz: God did not create this visible world from his own essence, nor did he pour it (i.e., his essence) out into parts as it were, so that any creature might be called a part of the Deity. (*Examen*, p 356).

Paul Harrison: Scientific pantheism is proud to recognize the Greek and Roman materialism of the Miletans, Heraklitus, Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius as its predecessors. We believe that everything is made up of matter ⇔ energy, and that there is no separate and distinct substance of spirit. But we also have a deep reverence for the cosmos and for nature, which the early materialists shared. Scientific pantheism reveres the universe as the only real divinity. It fuses religion and science, and concern for humans with concern for nature (World Pantheist Movement website).

2) **Dualism: Matter is co-eternal with God.**

Gerhard: Away with the silly dreams of the Stoics, who imagine that there are two eternal principles, νοῦν and ὕλην, mind or God and matter, which they dream existed in eternal times as a confused chaos and at a certain time was finally given form by the mind (*Loci Theologici*, IV, p 7).

3) **Evolution: The world is the result of a process of gradual development by resident forces.**

Phillip Hefner: The challenges and contributions of modern science to our theme of creation are enormous. . . . Scientific discovery in the past 150 years has opened up breathtaking vistas for a new understanding of nature (physical, biological, social). The concepts of the creator God and of creation must be related to this new understanding of nature if they are to be credible (Braaten and Jenson, *Christian Dogmatics*, I, p 318).

### 3. The world was created in the beginning of time.

#### a) Creation was the first act in time.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ

Note: Such translations as “in the beginning of God’s creating the world, the earth was without form and empty,” are influenced by the Akkadian *Enuma Elish* myth. But such translations are not supported by any ancient versions nor by the echo of Genesis 1:1 in John 1:1.

Psalm 90:2 Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Psalm 102:25 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

Augustine: Without any doubt the world was not made in time but together with time (*De Civit. Dei*, XI, p 6).

Calov: The creation of things was not made from eternity, but in that beginning in which all time began to flow (*Systema Locorum Theologicorum*, III, p 901).

#### b) Creation itself occupied a space of time (six days, *hexameron*).

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Exodus 31:17 It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested.

Luther: Hilary and Augustine, almost the two greatest lights of the church, hold that the world was created instantaneously and all at the same time, not successively in the course of six days. Moreover, Augustine resorts to extraordinary trifling in his treatment of the six days, which he makes out to be mystical days of knowledge among the angels, not natural ones.... We assert that Moses spoke in the literal sense, not allegorically or figuratively (*LW* 1:4,5).

#### c) The six days of creation were normal solar (24-hour) days.

Genesis 1:5,8,13,19,23,31 God called the light “day,” and the darkness he

called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.  
<sup>8</sup>God called the expanse “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. <sup>13</sup>And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day. <sup>19</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day. <sup>23</sup> And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day. <sup>31</sup> God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

**1) Note how the word “day” is used in various ways in Genesis 1 & 2:**

Daytime: Genesis 1:5 God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.”

24-hour period of time: Genesis 1:5 And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

Unspecified period of time: Genesis 2:4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven (NASB).

**2) The length of the creation days must be determined in a purely exegetical manner. In the context of Genesis 1, the word “day” means a normal solar day when referring to the six days of creation.**

See Genesis 1:5,8, 13, 19, 23, 31 above.

**3) It is faulty exegesis to refer to passages like Psalm 90:4 or 2 Peter 3:8 to support the view that the six days of creation could have been longer periods of time. These passages speak of God’s attribute of eternity.**

Psalm 90:4 For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night.

2 Peter 3:8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

**4) Note how even some conservative Evangelicals confess uncertainty regarding the days of creation.**

Grudem: What shall we conclude about the length of days in Genesis 1? It does not seem at all easy to decide with the information we now have. It is not simply a question of “believing the Bible” or “not believing the Bible,” nor is it a question of “giving in to modern science” or “rejecting the clear conclusions of modern science.” Even for those who believe in the complete truthfulness of Scripture (such as the present author), and who retain some doubt about the exceptionally long periods of time scientists propose for the age of the earth (such as the present author), the question does not seem to be easy to decide. At present, considerations of the power of God’s creative word and the immediacy with which it seems to bring



response, the fact that “evening and morning” and the numbering of days still suggest twenty-four-hour days, and the fact that God would seem to have no purpose for delaying creation of man for thousands or even millions of years, seem to me to be strong considerations in favor of the twenty-four-hour day position. But even here there are good arguments on the other side: To the one who lives forever, for whom “one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3:8), who delights in gradually working out all his purposes over time, perhaps 15 billion years is just the right amount of time to take in preparing the universe for man’s arrival and 4.5 billion years in preparing the earth. The evidence of incredible antiquity in the universe would then serve as a vivid reminder of the even more amazing nature of God’s eternity, just as the incredible size of the universe causes us to wonder at God’s even greater omnipresence and omnipotence. Therefore, with respect to the length of days in Genesis 1, the possibility must be left open that God has chosen not to give us enough information to come to a clear decision on this question, and the real test of faithfulness to him may be the degree to which we can act charitably toward those who in good conscience and full belief in God’s Word hold to a different position on this matter (*Systematic Theology*, p 297).

H. Orton Wiley: The Hebrew word *yom* which is translated “day” occurs no less than 1,480 times in the Old Testament, and is translated by something over fifty different words, including such terms as *time, today, age, forever, continually, and perpetually*. With such a flexible use of the original term, it is impossible to either dogmatize or to demand unswerving restriction to only one of those meanings (*Christian Theology*, p 455).

**d) There was only one creation in the beginning of time.**

**1) The present world is not one rebuilt on the ruins of a previous one as dispensationalists suggest on the basis of such passages as Ezekiel 28:13-18.**

Genesis 1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

Compare 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

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Contra: Scofield Reference Bible (commentary on Isaiah 45:18-- For this is what the LORD says— he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited): This is one of the Scripture passages that suggest the Divine Judgment interpretation of Gen. 1:1-2. This interpretation views the earth as having been created perfect. After an indefinite period of time, possibly in connection with Satan’s sin of rebellion against the Most High, judgment fell upon the earth and “it was [became] without form and void.” Another indefinite interval elapsed after

which “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2) in a re-creation of the earth. Some of the arguments from this viewpoint are: (1) Only the earth, not the universe, is said to have been “without form and void.” (2) The face of the earth bears the marks of a catastrophe. (3) The word rendered “was” may also be translated “became,” as indicated above—”*became* without form and void.” (4) The Hebrew expression for “without form and void” (*tohu wabohu*) is used to describe a condition produced by divine judgment in the only other two texts where the two words appear in conjunction (Isa. 34:11; Jer. 4:23). (5) Such a prehistoric divine judgment would throw some light on Satan’s fall and the peculiar relation he seems to sustain to the earth. And (6) this interpretation leaves room for an undetermined period of time between the original creation and divine judgment. Adam, created after the events of Gen. 1:1-2, was the first man.

Note. The object of assuming a double creation is to gain the time believed necessary for the many geological changes (volcanic and Neptunian) which evidently have taken place on earth. Uniformitarianism vs catastrophism.

On this gap theory, restitution theory, or restoration theory see *WLQ*, July, 1962, p 193f.

## 2) We may distinguish two or three stages.

### -a) *Creatio prima*: the creation of matter.

Genesis 1:1,2 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.<sup>2</sup> Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

### -b) *Creatio secunda*: the arrangement of the world in detail.

Genesis 1:3ff And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

Hafenreffer: From these things it appears that in the creation of the world there was a threefold operation of the Maker: 1) First, to be sure, when no material existed beforehand, he created, that is, he produced from nothing, that crude and shapeless corporeal mass which Moses designated by the names of heaven and earth and water. 2) Then, in the first three days he separated these three bodies. 3) Finally, in the next three days he perfected everything with its own decoration (*Compendium Doctrinae Coelestis*, p 72).

#### Note the following distinctions:

- *Nihil negativum* – absolute nothing
- *Nihil privativum* – relative nothing

These terms are used to indicate that God did not create the world out of any previously existing material (i.e. he created from *nihil negativum*, he brought it into existence from non-existence).

- *Creatio prima*
- *Creatio secunda*

These terms are used to indicate that in the beginning God created the matter (Gen 1:1 – *creatio prima*) and during the rest of creation he arranged it in order and gave it detail (Gen 1:2ff – *creatio secunda*).

**e) Objections to the time fixed by Scripture:**

**1) From astronomy.**

Millions of years were required for the light of the most distant galaxies to reach the earth.

Grudem: It is difficult to understand why the evidence of star life cycles and the expansion of the universe would make the universe appear to be 15 billion years old if it were not. It is possible, but it seems unlikely, almost as if God's only purpose in giving these uniform apparent ages was to mislead us rather than simply to have a mature, functioning universe in place. So the old earth advocates seem to me to have a greater weight of scientific evidence on their side, and it seems that the weight of evidence is increasing yearly (*Systematic Theology*, p 307). Although our conclusions are tentative, at this point in our understanding, Scripture seems to be more easily understood to *suggest* (but not to require) a young earth view, while the observable facts of creation seem increasingly to favor an old earth view. Both views are possible, but neither one is certain" (p. 308).

**2) From geology.**

The stages of development, traces of which are found in the earth's surface, each have required millions of years.

Millard Erickson: The age of the creation is one point where there is conflict between science and the Bible. On one hand, the biblical statement seems quite straightforward. God created the earth in six days. Since the word used in Genesis is the common term יום (*yom*), it is presumed that these were twenty-four-hour periods of time. Attempts have been made to calculate the time of creation by using the ages given in the biblical genealogies. Archbishop James Ussher arrived at a date of 4004 B.C. for the creation. On these terms the creation is no more than about six thousand years old. Ussher's conclusion was satisfactory before the development of modern geology, which is only a rather recent development. William Smith, the founder of stratigraphical geology, died in 1839; and Charles Lyell, the systematizer of geological learning, died in 1875. Thus, geology of the type that we know today came of age only in the nineteenth century. When it did, however, serious problems arose for the traditional dating of creation. A number of methods have been developed for dating the earth, many of them relating to the characteristics of radioactive materials. Out of these methods came a consensus that the earth is several billion years old, perhaps five or six billion or even more (*Christian Theology*, p 405, 406).

### 3) Response to the objections:

Was God, who fixed the laws of nature, which are gradual processes for the preservation of the world, bound by them in creation? Also remember the creation of the world with the appearance of age, the curse on the world, and the effects of the Flood.

## 4. What God created in the beginning is called:

### a) Heaven and earth.

Genesis 1:1; 2:4 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.  
<sup>2:4</sup> This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

### b) The world (κόσμος).

Matthew 13:35 So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.”

Matthew 24:21 For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.

Matthew 25:34 Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.”

John 17:5,24 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. <sup>24</sup> Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

### c) All things (τὰ πάντα: the universe; *das All*).

1 Corinthians 8:6 Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom *all things* came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Ephesians 3:9 And to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created *all things*.

Ephesians 4:10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill *the whole universe*.

Colossians 1:16 For by him *all things* were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; *all things* were created by him and for him.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining *all things* by his powerful word.

Hebrews 2:10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom *everything* exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Revelation 4:11 You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created *all things*, and by your will they were created and have their being.

**d) Creation (κτίσις).**

Mark 10:6 But at the beginning of creation God "made them male and female."

Mark 13:19 Because those will be days of distress unequalled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again.

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

2 Peter 3:4 They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation."

Revelation 3:14 To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.

**e) Worlds, universe (αἰῶνες) Note: This is a peculiar use of the author of Hebrews, apparently based on the late use of the Hebrew word עֲוֹן.**

Hebrews 1:2 But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

Hebrews 11:3 By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

**5. The world was created to be the home of man.**

**a) Scripture teaches this truth.**

Genesis 1:26,28,29 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." <sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." <sup>29</sup> Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food."

Psalms 115:16 The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has

given to man.

Isaiah 45:12,18 It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts. <sup>18</sup> For this is what the LORD says—he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited—he says: “I am the LORD, and there is no other.”

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

**b) The vast mechanism of the universe was called into being in order to serve the earth and man.**

Genesis 1:14-18 <sup>14</sup> And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, <sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. <sup>17</sup> God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, <sup>18</sup> to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.

Note. The astronomy of the Bible is anthropocentric in its purpose. It does not necessarily follow that the universe is geocentric in its physical arrangement.

**c) When the world left its Creator's hand it was perfect in every detail.**

**1) It was perfectly adapted for its purpose.**

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Genesis 2:1-3 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. <sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. <sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Psalms 104:31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works.

**2) The world proclaimed the glory of the loving God.**

Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Psalms 97:6 The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory.

Psalms 148:1-14 Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens,

praise him in the heights above.<sup>2</sup> Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts.<sup>3</sup> Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars.<sup>4</sup> Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies.<sup>5</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.<sup>6</sup> He set them in place for ever and ever; he gave a decree that will never pass away.<sup>7</sup> Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,<sup>8</sup> lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding,<sup>9</sup> you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars,<sup>10</sup> wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds,<sup>11</sup> kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth,<sup>12</sup> young men and maidens, old men and children.<sup>13</sup> Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.<sup>14</sup> He has raised up for his people a horn, the praise of all his saints, of Israel, the people close to his heart. Praise the LORD.

Romans 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Revelation 4:11 You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

**d) Being man's abode, the earth shares man's fate.**

Genesis 3:17-19 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.<sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Isaiah 34:4 All the stars of the heavens will be dissolved and the sky rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree.

Luke 21:25-26 There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea.<sup>26</sup> Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.

Romans 8:20,22,23 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope.<sup>22</sup> We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.<sup>23</sup> Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

2 Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and

everything in it will be laid bare.

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Isaiah 66:22 “As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me,” declares the LORD, “so will your name and descendants endure.”

2 Peter 3:13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

Revelation 21:1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.

## **6. For a summary definition of creation, note the following:**

Gerhard: Creation is an act of the one and only God, an undivided work of the three persons of the Deity, by which the Father through the co-eternal Son in the co-eternal Holy Spirit, of his free will on six distinct days created all things visible and invisible, not out of some material co-existing with them from eternity, but out of nothing, for the glory of his name and the use of man. And all things which God made are very good (*Loci Theologici*, IV, p 51).

## **II. Having created the abode of man, God provides also for its maintenance, and for man's subsistence (*providentia*).**

### **1. The Lutheran dogmatists often spoke about providence in a broad and a narrow sense. The broad sense included foreknowledge, decree, and execution. The narrow sense was just execution.**

Brochmand: God's providence is his activity of knowing and seeing all things. In this way he cares for the entire world and every single creature in the world, both great and small; and he attends their movements, actions, and passions, that he might effectively and mercifully advance all things which are good, strictly contain and severely punish all evil, and bring all things to his glory and the salvation of pious men (*Definitiones Articulorum Fidei*, p A4).

Calov: Divine government or providence follows the creation of created things, by which God preserves and rules the whole world. ... Divine providence is an activity of God by which according to his will he freely, wisely, and powerfully preserves and governs all things and the individual things to the praise of his glory. ... To explain the essence of providence three things are pertinent: 1) *πρόγνωσις* or foresight, or foreknowledge; 2) *πρόθεσις* or the arrangement, purpose, or decree of God; 3) *δίοκησις* or administration (*Systema*, III, art. VI, cap. 1, p 1127).

Baier: Opinions differ inasmuch as some contend that not so much the immanent acts of the divine mind and will as the outward acts themselves of preserving and governing are signified by the term “providence”; others indeed teach that the immanent act is denoted by this term. They believe, moreover, that it pertains to the intellect essentially, to the will consequently; others (believe) vice versa. Nevertheless, it is easily recognized that this whole controversy is not so much about the matter itself as about the terms (*Compendium*, II, caput V, p 161).

Heerbrand: Providence is an activity of God by which he not only discerns all things and foresees things that are in the future as far as we are concerned, but also preserves



and governs the whole nature of things which he has created and provides all necessary things for the human race, but especially for his church, and then also for the rest of the creatures (*Compendium. Theologiae*, p 87).

Hafenreffer: Providence is the activity of God who knows and sees all things by which without intermission he paternally preserves, cares for, fosters, governs, and controls all things created by him and the course of the whole universe, graciously promoting all good things, but severely checking evil things and wisely directing them to good ends (*Loci*, p 101).

**2. In contemporary usage the term “providence” refers only to execution, that is, to God’s governance of the world.**

**a) This governance presupposes foreknowledge (*πρόγνωσις, praescientia, praevision*).**

Isaiah 65:24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

Matthew 6:32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Ephesians 3:8,9 Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,<sup>9</sup> and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.

Hoffmann: And in reference to *πρόγνωσιν* it must be noted indeed partly that it is attributed to God only anthropopathically and with respect to us who live in time and measure things according to earlier and later; but God sees all things as present, as it were, and looks at them in a perpetual, stable, and immutable now (*νῦν*) (*Synopsis theol., de provid., II, ecthes., p 300*).

**b) An apparent clash between God's foreknowledge and human freedom of action has been noted above.**

Jerome: The foreknowledge of future things does not make immutable what God knows as future. For it is not God’s knowledge of future things that makes it necessary that we do that which he foreknew; but that which we are going to do of our own will he knows as future.... It is one thing when I say that with respect to divine foreknowledge something is immutable or will necessarily happen. But it is another thing when I say that a thing is immutable on account of the foreknowledge of God, or, which is the same, that (God's) foreknowledge makes the foreknown things necessary.... In this respect it is rightly said: foreknown things happen in the way they are foreknown, not casually with respect to foreknowledge, as if this makes the foreknown things happen in this way and no other; but only conditionally, in so far as God has foreknown things in no other way than as they will happen from their own proper causes and indeed freely. Now therefore when something happens in this way, it is rightly said that it could not happen in another way with respect to divine foreknowledge; according to the common rule: everything which is, when it is, must then necessarily be (Quoted in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, p 177-178).

c) **It presupposes also a decree (*πρόθεσις, decretum, propositum*).**

Isaiah 14:27 For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

Isaiah 19:12,17 Where are your wise men now? Let them show you and make known what the LORD Almighty has planned against Egypt. <sup>17</sup> And the land of Judah will bring terror to the Egyptians; everyone to whom Judah is mentioned will be terrified, because of what the LORD Almighty is planning against them.

Acts 17:31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.

Quenstedt: And so although divine providence presupposes *πρόγνωσις* or foreknowledge and *πρόθεσις* or the decree of providing made from eternity, nevertheless it itself properly and essentially consists in *διοικήσει* or the actual preservation and governing of created things (*TDP*, pars I, cap. XII, sect. I, thes. IV, p 527).

Note. The terms *πρόγνωσις* and *πρόθεσις* are used also with reference to God's decree of election.—These two acts, providence and predestination, must not be confused. (cf. Ro 8:28,29; 11:2; Eph 1:11; Am 3:2.)

Hoffmann: *Πρόθεσις*, decree, however, is taken here not in a special sense concerning God's purpose with respect to our salvation, as it is taken in Rom.8:28; Eph.1:11; for in this way it is considered in the chapter on predestination, but in a general sense, as it includes all things which are subject to God's providence (*Loci*, c., p 301)

Formula of Concord, Ep., XI, 2-5: For the foreknowledge of God is nothing else than that God knows all things before they happen, as it is written Dan 2:28: There is a God in heaven that reveals secrets and makes known to the king Nebuchadrezzar what shall be in the latter days. This foreknowledge extends alike over the godly and the wicked, but it is not the cause of evil, neither of sin, namely, of doing what is wrong, which originally arises from the devil and the wicked, perverse will of man, nor of their ruin that men perish, for which they themselves are responsible; but it only regulates it, and fixes a limit to it and how long it should last, and all this to the end that it should serve his elect for their salvation, notwithstanding that it is evil in itself. The predestination or eternal election of God, however, extends only over the godly, beloved children of God, being a cause of the salvation, which he also provides, as well as disposes what belongs thereto. Upon this predestination of God our salvation is founded so firmly that the gates of hell cannot overcome it. John 10:28; Matt. 16:18. This predestination of God is not to be investigated in the secret counsel of God, but to be sought in the Word of God, where it is also revealed.

3. **Providence is a work of the Triune God (*opus ad extra*).**

a) **It is ascribed to God in a general way.**

Psalms 36:6-9 Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice

like the great deep. O LORD, you preserve both man and beast. <sup>7</sup> How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. <sup>8</sup> They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. <sup>9</sup> For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

Jeremiah 10:10,13 But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. When he is angry, the earth trembles; the nations cannot endure his wrath. <sup>13</sup> When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

Acts 17:26-28 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. <sup>27</sup> God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. <sup>28</sup> 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

Psalms 103:20-22 Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. <sup>21</sup> Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. <sup>22</sup> Praise the LORD, all his works everywhere in his dominion. Praise the LORD, O my soul.

Psalms 145:18-21 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth. <sup>19</sup> He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them. <sup>20</sup> The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy. <sup>21</sup> My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

See also Ps 104:1-35.

**b) It is preeminently a work of the Father.**

Matthew 6:26,30,32 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? <sup>30</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? <sup>32</sup> For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

Matthew 10:29-31 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. <sup>30</sup> And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

John 5:17,20 Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." <sup>20</sup> For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.

**c) It is also a work of the Son and the Spirit.**

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

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Psalm 104:29,30 When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. <sup>30</sup> When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

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Matthew 12:28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

#### **4. According to the objects a threefold providence may be distinguished.**

##### **a) God provides for all of his creatures in general (*providentia universalis*).**

Job 12:9,10 Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? <sup>10</sup> In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

Job 38:41 Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?

Psalm 104:29,30 When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. <sup>30</sup> When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

Psalm 145:9,15,16 The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. <sup>15</sup> The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. <sup>16</sup> You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

Psalm 147:9 He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.

Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Matthew 10:29,30 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. <sup>30</sup> And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Luke 12:6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.

Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact

representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Cicero offers a contrary view: The gods take care of the big things, they neglect the little things (*De nat. Deor.*, II, 66; III, 35)

Jerome: It is an absurd detraction of the majesty of God to say that God knows every moment how many gnats are born and how many die; how many bedbugs, fleas, and flies there are on the earth, what number of fish live in the water (Quoted by Quenstedt in Baier, II, p 166).

Quenstedt's response: If it was not unworthy of and improper for God to create even the minutest creatures, much less can it be improper for him to rule what he has created (*TDP*, pars I.c.13.s.2.q.1.f.768).

**b) God provides for man in particular (*providentia specialis*).**

**1) God provides for all people.**

Job 10:8-12 “Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? <sup>9</sup> Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again? <sup>10</sup> Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, <sup>11</sup> clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? <sup>12</sup> You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.

Job 14:1,5 Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble. <sup>5</sup>Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.

Psalms 139:15,16 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, <sup>16</sup> your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

**2) God provides even for the wicked.**

Psalms 73:3-5 For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. <sup>4</sup>They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. <sup>5</sup> They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills.

Matthew 5:45 ...that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

**c) Above all, Christians may hope in a very special providence of their heavenly Father (*providentia specialissima*).**

Psalms 1:6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psalms 33:18,19 But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on

those whose hope is in his unfailing love,<sup>19</sup> to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

Psalm 37:25 I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

Psalm 145:18-21 The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.<sup>19</sup> He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.<sup>20</sup> The LORD watches over all who love him, but all the wicked he will destroy.<sup>21</sup> My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

See also Ps 91:1–16; Ps 121:1–8

**d) Observation is an insufficient source for the doctrine of providence.**

Note the Christian's cross.

Gerhard: Those very things which are preserved and ruled by nature are a witness of divine providence. If you wish to be a disciple of nature, you will find that the most vile and least things are taken care of no less than the most noble; that the things they need are given to all to the end of their life; that all things continue to exist in a definite and wonderful order; that those things which act without sense and thought nevertheless reach their goal; that those things which fight with one another are tempered in such a way that, by breaking their powers in turn, they benefit the world by their struggle.—But that knowledge of divine providence sought from the book of nature is weak and imperfect, not because of some fault of nature itself but of our mind. More certain and more perfect, however, is that knowledge of providence which is sought from the book of Scripture (*Loci Theologici*, IV, p 52).

**III. Providence is carried out in three acts:**

**Preservation – Cooperation – Government.**

**1. Preservation (*conservatio, providentia conservatrix*).  
God keeps and maintains his creatures in their original kind, properties, and virtues.**

**a) God continues to preserve the world.**

**1) This is stated positively.**

Acts 17:28 “For in him we live and move and have our being.” As some of your own poets have said, “We are his offspring.”

Nehemiah 9:6 You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

Joshua 24:17 It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled.

Psalm 104:27-28 These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time.<sup>28</sup> When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things.

**2) This is stated negatively.**

Psalm 104:29-30 When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.<sup>30</sup> When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

Matthew 5:36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black.

Matthew 6:26,27 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?<sup>27</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

**b) God's preservation pertains to the kind and the individual.**

**1) God preserves the kind.**

**-a) The creation of "kinds" was an important aspect of creation.**

Genesis 1:11,12,21,24,25 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so.<sup>12</sup> The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.<sup>21</sup> So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving thing with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.<sup>24</sup> And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so.<sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

**-b) God preserves the kind.**

Genesis 6:20 Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. Also Genesis 7:14.

Genesis 8:19 All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on the earth—came out of the ark, one kind after another.

Acts 17:26,28 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.<sup>28</sup> 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

## 2) **God preserves the individual.**

Psalm 73:23 Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand.

Psalm 139:1-5,7-10,13 O LORD, you have searched me and you know me.<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.<sup>3</sup> You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.<sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.<sup>5</sup> You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.<sup>7</sup> Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?<sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.<sup>9</sup> If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,<sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.<sup>13</sup> For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

Psalm 146:9 The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow, but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

Matthew 10:29,30 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.<sup>30</sup> And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Parallel Luke 21:18.

## c) **Preservation is not negative, a mere “letting” exist, but a positive act of God.**

### 1) **Preservation involves God's will.**

Psalm 33:9,11,18,19 For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.<sup>11</sup> But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.<sup>18</sup> But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,<sup>19</sup> to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine.

James 4:15 Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.”

### 2) **Preservation involves God's operation.**

John 5:17 Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”



### 3) **Preservation involves penetration of creation.**

Psalm 139:3,5,13 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.<sup>5</sup> You hem me in—behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me.<sup>13</sup> For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

Acts 17:28 “For in him we live and move and have our being.” As some of your own poets have said, “We are his offspring.”

Hoffmann: For just as God is everywhere by his essence and permeates all things, and intimately penetrates the individual essences of created things; so by this penetration and influx the individual things are sustained and preserved in their being. As the existence of the rays of the sun is dependent on the sun, so also the existence of the creatures is dependent on the preservation of God through a continuous, direct, and positive influx. If this were withdrawn even for a moment, they would not be able to exist. And indeed this influx is not only general but special, or rather particular, by which he preserves each and every thing, not only the classes and species of things, but also the individuals by touching them directly by his own action and not only through the power implanted by him or left in effect (*Synopsis theol.*, loc. X, II, p 302).

Hollaz: Divine preservation is not a merely negative or indirect act, for it does not consist only in this that God does not wish to destroy or annihilate the things he has created, but to leave them by their own strength, in so far as they are able to thrive and continue from the power given to them through creation; but it is a positive and direct act, by which God in the nature of an efficient cause by a true and real influx flows into the essence of the things which are to be preserved, so that they persist and remain in nature by their own properties and powers (*Examen*, p 441).

### d) **Ordinarily God carries out his preservation by natural means.**

#### 1) **God preserves according to natural laws.**

Genesis 1:11,14-18,22 Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so.<sup>14</sup> And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years,<sup>15</sup> and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so.<sup>16</sup> God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.<sup>17</sup> God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth,<sup>18</sup> to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.<sup>22</sup> God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.”

Genesis 8:22 As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.

## 2) **God preserves by means of natural causes.**

Genesis 1:29,30 Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.<sup>30</sup> And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

Genesis 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

Note also Genesis 3:17-19 To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.<sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

Psalms 104:13,14 He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work.<sup>14</sup> He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate— bringing forth food from the earth.

Psalms 145:15,16 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.<sup>16</sup> You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

Psalms 147:8,9 He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills.<sup>9</sup> He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.

Acts 14:17 Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.

## 3) **Both the laws and the secondary causes are established by God.**

### **-a) He establishes them.**

Job 28:25,26 When he established the force of the wind and measured out the waters,<sup>26</sup> when he made a decree for the rain and a path for the thunderstorm...

### **-b) He keeps them effective by his word and operative presence.**

Deuteronomy 8:3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

Matthew 4:4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

Exodus 4:10-12 Moses said to the LORD, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."<sup>11</sup> The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"<sup>12</sup> Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

1 Samuel 14:6 Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few."

Note: remember that what we call the "laws of nature" are simply human observations about how things work. They are changing, human constructions, not necessarily equal to the underlying principles God established.

e) **Preservation may be called "*creatio continuata*" or "*creatio continua*".**

1) **This term emphasizes the truth of God's ongoing providence over against the deistic error.**

Acts 17:25,28 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.<sup>28</sup> "For in him we live and move and have our being." As some of your own poets have said, "We are his offspring."

Psalms 104:29-30 When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust.<sup>30</sup> When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

Quenstedt: God preserves all things by a continuation of the action by which he produced things at first. For the preservation of a thing is properly nothing else than its continued production, nor do they differ except by a certain outward terminology (*TDP*, I, p 531).

Hoffmann: This preservation is nothing else than a continued creation (*Synopsis theol.*, I. c., p 302).

Gerhard: Preservation is the continuation of existence.... It is a continuous influx of divine power, as it were, which preserves all things, an influx into all existing things; if it were withdrawn even for a moment, they would not be able to act, indeed, not even to exist (*Loci*, tom. IV, loc. VII, cap. V, LXII, p 83).

Luther: We Christians know that with God creating and preserving are identical (*LW* 4:136).

**2) If improperly stressed, however, it might ultimately lead to pantheism or theistic evolution.**

Heraclitus (d. 475 BC): The universe flows along like a river (as quoted by Hoenecke, *Dogmatik*, II, p 252).

Ted Peters: In light of the big-bang cosmogony and its concept of finite time beginning at  $t = 0$ , there may be some consonance between natural science and this Christian commitment. In addition, however, non-equilibrium thermodynamics and the theory of evolution clearly indicate epigenetic or ongoing creative activity. Time means new things can appear. It makes sense, then, to speak as well of *creatio continua*. Therefore, we need not have to choose between creation out of nothing and continuing creation. We need both (*God, the World's Future*, p 134).

**2. Providence includes cooperation or concurrence (*concursum, providentia cooperatrix*), which can be described as follows: God directly influences and assists every creature in its functions and activities according to its unique nature.**

**a) All events in this world are ascribed to two causes.**

**1) Nothing takes place without the will and influence of God.**

Deuteronomy 8:10-11, 17-18: When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. <sup>11</sup> Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God.... <sup>17</sup> You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." <sup>18</sup> But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.

Joshua 24:17 It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled.

2 Samuel 8:6 [David] put garrisons in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to him and brought tribute. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.

Job 10:8 Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me?

Amos 3:6 When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the LORD caused it?

Acts 17:28 “For in him we live and move and have our being.” As some of your own poets have said, “We are his offspring.”

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Philippians 2:13 For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

**2) A relatively independent virtue and influence is ascribed to the so-called “secondary causes” (*causae secundae*).**

Genesis 1:22,28,29 God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.”<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”<sup>29</sup> Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.”

Proverbs 28:19 He who works his land will have abundant food, but the one who chases fantasies will have his fill of poverty. Parallel: Proverbs 12:1

Ecclesiastes 1:5-7 The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises.<sup>6</sup> The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course.<sup>7</sup> All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again.

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Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

**b) God through a general influence (*influxus generalis*) cooperates with his creatures to produce the result.**

**1) Scripture teaches this truth.**

Psalms 104:14-15 He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth:<sup>15</sup> wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.

Psalms 147:9-10 He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.<sup>10</sup> His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man.

Exodus 4:10-12 Moses said to the LORD, “O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.”<sup>11</sup> The LORD said to him, “Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?<sup>12</sup> Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”

1 Samuel 14:6 Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, “Come, let’s go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few.”

1 Samuel 17:40,46-50 Then [David] took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd’s bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.<sup>46</sup> This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.<sup>47</sup> All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.”<sup>48</sup> As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him.<sup>49</sup> Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.<sup>50</sup> So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

Psalms 135:7 He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

Psalms 148:8 Lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding.

Acts 17:25,26,28 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.<sup>26</sup> From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.<sup>28</sup> “For in him we live and move and have our being.” As some of your own poets have said, “We are his offspring.”

Quenstedt: The question here is not whether God gives the power of acting to secondary causes and preserves it, for this way of cooperating attributes no more to God than that he preserves the essence of things and their ability to act which he gave them in the beginning. But this is the question: whether God influences the action of secondary causes directly and along with the action the effect as such according to the need of each one. Divine omnipresence coincides with divine cooperation as far as the thing is concerned (*TDP*, pars I, cap. XIII, sect. II. qu. III, observ. V, p 544).

## 2) Such actions are joint actions.

-a) The action is produced not by God alone, nor by the creature alone.

-b) Not in part by God, in part by the creature.

**-c) But by a joint action of both.**

Quenstedt: Concerning the cooperation of the primary cause (i.e., God) with secondary causes it must be noted that God not only gives the power to act to secondary causes and preserves it (Durandus, Taurellus, certain papists and Arminians limit the whole cooperation of God to this alone), but that he influences the action and effect of the creature directly, in such a way that the same effect is produced not by God alone, nor by the creature alone, nor partly by God, partly by the creature, but with one and the same efficacy it is produced in its entirety at one and the same time by God and the creature, by God namely as the universal and first cause, by the creature as the particular and secondary cause. Therefore, if God should withdraw his cooperation, the action of the creature would cease, as was apparent in the Babylonian fire (Dn 3:27). ... The influence of God is not in fact one action, the work of the creature another, but the action is one and indivisible, in respect to both and dependent on both, on God as the universal cause, on the creature as the particular cause. ... Just as one and the same writing depends on the hand and the pen, not one part on the hand and another on the pen, but the whole depends on the hand and the whole on the pen, so the cooperation of God is not prior to the particular action of the creature by a priority of causality, since it is in reality entirely one and the same action. And therefore God produces the whole effect, just as the secondary cause also does, because it takes place through the outward action of God, which is intimately included in the action of the creature, yes, is one and the same with it (*TDP*, thes. XV, nota I, p 351).

**c) God cooperates with the creatures according to their peculiar nature.**

- 1) God cooperates with secondary causes according to their nature. With free ones he cooperates freely. With necessary ones he cooperates necessarily, with strong ones strongly, etc.**
- 2) God cooperates in the outward action (*ad materiale*), not in the essence ( i.e., the moral quality) of the action (*ad formale*). The gun works for the police officer and for the murderer, but God does not approve of the action of the murderer.**

**-a) Their individual natures were given to the creatures by God for this very purpose.**

Genesis 1:15,29,30 “And let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so.<sup>29</sup> Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.<sup>30</sup> And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

Genesis 9:3 Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

Exodus 4:11 The LORD said to him, “Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”

Psalm 94:9 Does he who implanted the ear not hear? Does he who formed the eye not see?

**-b) Sometimes God suspends such cooperation.**

Daniel 3:27 And the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Psalm 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.

Leviticus 26:26 When I cut off your supply of bread, ten women will be able to bake your bread in one oven, and they will dole out the bread by weight. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied.

Isaiah 9:20 On the right they will devour, but still be hungry; on the left they will eat, but not be satisfied. Each will feed on the flesh of his own offspring.

Hosea 4:10 They will eat but not have enough; they will engage in prostitution but not increase, because they have deserted the LORD to give themselves.

Haggai 1:6,10 You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops.

**-c) God cooperates in actions produced by the will of man.**

Hutter: “Contingent” is defined as that which, when it happens, is neither impossible nor necessary, but which has a cause which from its own nature could act otherwise, as is the case with the will of man. Or, as others define it, “contingent” is that which could be this way or that way, or which could happen or not happen, and before it happens can be prevented from happening; but when it happens, it has a cause which from its own nature was able to act otherwise and whose opposite would not have been impossible.—The betrayal of Judas with respect to divine providence is called necessary by a necessity of consequence, because God certainly foresaw from eternity that Judas with determined malice and a definite plan would betray Christ. But it was contingent in so far as he would have been able to resist the evil desires of his will and not betray Christ. Because God certainly



did not foresee those things otherwise than as they were going to happen from their own causes; therefore they also happen just as God has foreseen them (*Loci com. theol.*, loc. III, de providentia, qu. II, p 229).

Hollaz: Those who teach a “preceding cooperation” are guilty of a contradiction in terms. For if God *co-operates*, he does not operate in advance. If he works *with*, he does not work beforehand. A pre-motion is an antecedent act. But cooperation does not precede an action but takes place when the action itself is produced (*Examen*, pars I, cap. VI, qu. 18, prob. I, p 486).

**d) How does God cooperate to produce a sinful act?**

**1) God cooperates with his creatures in producing the purely natural (physical or mental) processes (*actiones et effectus quatales*).**

Deuteronomy 32:5,6 They have acted corruptly toward him; to their shame they are no longer his children, but a warped and crooked generation.<sup>6</sup> Is this the way you repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?

Deuteronomy 32:13-18 [The Lord] made him ride on the heights of the land and fed him with the fruit of the fields. He nourished him with honey from the rock, and with oil from the flinty crag,<sup>14</sup> with curds and milk from herd and flock and with fattened lambs and goats, with choice rams of Bashan and the finest kernels of wheat. You drank the foaming blood of the grape.<sup>15</sup> Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; filled with food, he became heavy and sleek. He abandoned the God who made him and rejected the Rock his Savior.<sup>16</sup> They made him jealous with their foreign gods and angered him with their detestable idols.<sup>17</sup> They sacrificed to demons, which are not God—gods they had not known, gods that recently appeared, gods your fathers did not fear.<sup>18</sup> You deserted the Rock, who fathered you; you forgot the God who gave you birth.

Hosea 8:14 Israel has forgotten his Maker and built palaces; Judah has fortified many towns. But I will send fire upon their cities that will consume their fortresses.

Hosea 13:4-9 But I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt. You shall acknowledge no God but me, no Savior except me.<sup>5</sup> I cared for you in the desert, in the land of burning heat.<sup>6</sup> When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me.<sup>7</sup> So I will come upon them like a lion, like a leopard I will lurk by the path.<sup>8</sup> Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open. Like a lion I will devour them; a wild animal will tear them apart.<sup>9</sup> You are destroyed, O Israel, because you are against me, against your helper.

Isaiah 7:18-20 In that day the LORD will whistle for flies from the distant streams of Egypt and for bees from the land of Assyria.<sup>19</sup> They will all come and settle in the steep ravines and in the crevices in the rocks, on all the thornbushes and at all the water holes.<sup>20</sup> In that day the Lord will use a razor hired from beyond the River—the king of Assyria—to shave your head and the hair of your legs, and to take off your beards also.

Isaiah 10:5-15 Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath!<sup>6</sup> I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets.<sup>7</sup> But this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind; his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to many nations.<sup>8</sup> “Are not my commanders all kings?” he says.<sup>9</sup> “Has not Calno fared like Carchemish? Is not Hamath like Arpad, and Samaria like Damascus?”<sup>10</sup> As my hand seized the kingdoms of the idols, kingdoms whose images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria—<sup>11</sup> shall I not deal with Jerusalem and her images as I dealt with Samaria and her idols?”<sup>12</sup> When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, “I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes.”<sup>13</sup> For he says: “By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding. I removed the boundaries of nations, I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings.<sup>14</sup> As one reaches into a nest, so my hand reached for the wealth of the nations; as men gather abandoned eggs, so I gathered all the countries; not one flapped a wing, or opened its mouth to chirp.”<sup>15</sup> Does the ax raise itself above him who swings it, or the saw boast against him who uses it? As if a rod were to wield him who lifts it up, or a club brandish him who is not wood!

**2) God cooperates with respect to the outward act (*ad materiale*), not with respect to the essence (*ad formale*) of an evil action.**

Psalm 50:16-22 But to the wicked, God says: “What right have you to recite my laws or take my covenant on your lips?<sup>17</sup> You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you.<sup>18</sup> When you see a thief, you join with him; you throw in your lot with adulterers.<sup>19</sup> You use your mouth for evil and harness your tongue to deceit.<sup>20</sup> You speak continually against your brother and slander your own mother’s son.<sup>21</sup> These things you have done and I kept silent; you thought I was altogether like you. But I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face.<sup>22</sup> Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with none to rescue.

**3) God cooperates with the effect, not the defect of an action.**

1 John 3:4-8 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.<sup>5</sup> But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.<sup>6</sup> No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.<sup>7</sup> Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.<sup>8</sup> He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.

Formula of Concord, Ep., XI 4, 3: This foreknowledge extends alike over the godly and the wicked, but it is not the cause of evil, neither of sin, namely, of doing what is wrong (which originally arises from the devil and the wicked, perverse will of man), nor of their ruin, for which they themselves are responsible; but it only regulates it, and fixes a limit to it how long it should last, and all this to the end that it should serve His elect for their salvation, notwithstanding that it is evil in itself.

Augsburg Confession, XIX: Of the cause of sin they teach that, although God does create and preserve nature, yet the cause of sin is the will of the wicked, that is, of the devil and ungodly men, which will, unaided of God, turns itself from God, as Christ says John 8,44: When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own.

e) **God's cooperation is denied by:**

- 1) **Atheism, denying the very existence of God, reduces the universe to a mere mechanism.**
- 2) **Occasionalism (Descartes d. 1650) denies the reciprocal action of mind and matter. This philosophy maintains that God moves the creatures, which simply provide him with an occasion to exercise his power. God takes an act of the will as an occasion to produce a corresponding movement in the body or a given state of the body as an occasion to produce a corresponding mental attitude.**

Described by Quenstedt: The effects of secondary causes are not properly produced by the secondary causes (i.e., by the will of man as such), but they are brought about by God alone in the presence of the secondary things, which themselves do nothing (*TDP*, pars I, cap. XIII, sect. 2, qu. III, antithesis V, p 546).

- 3) **Deism claims that the world is a nicely constructed mechanism, like a clock that has been wound up and now runs on its own. In a general way God keeps it in condition. The individual processes admit of no intervention or alteration.**

S. J. Baumgarten (d. 1842): The general cooperation of God in all actions of created things consists in this that God maintains their powers (*Glaubenslehre*, B. I, Art. 4, Thes. 2, S. 807).

- 4) **Determinism (fatalism) annuls the relative independence of the creature.**

Leyden Synopsis: It follows that there is no freedom of will in creatures which does not have its origin in the first proper cause of all freedom (Hoenecke, *Dogmatik*, II, p 261).

Johann Heinrich Hottinger (1667): God does not cooperate with the human will only with a general and unspecific influence, but with a special and determining influence (*Cursus theolog.*, p 135).

Calvin: He foresees the things that are future for no other reason than that he has decreed that they happen (*Institutes* III, C23, S6).

Quran 6:39: Those who reject our songs are deaf and dumb,— in the midst of darkness profound: whom Allah wills, He leaves to wander; whom he wills, He places on the way that is straight.

**f) Theistic evolution claims *concursum* leaves room for evolution.**

Philip Hefner: It is this notion of *concursum* which enables us to give scholastic foundation to the possibility of God working in and through the evolutionary process—whether it be biological evolution or the psychosocial evolution we call history (Braaten and Jenson, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. I, p 345, 346).

**3. Providence includes government (*gubernatio, providentia gubernatrix*).  
God controls and directs all events, particularly human actions, so that they serve his purpose, the salvation of man.**

**a) God is Ruler and Governor of the world.**

**1) God is the Ruler.**

Exodus 15:18 The LORD will reign for ever and ever.

Job 38:33 Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you set up God's dominion over the earth?

Psalms 29:10 The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever.

Psalms 93:1-2 The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed in majesty and is armed with strength. The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved.<sup>2</sup> Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity.

Psalms 96:10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns." The world is firmly established, it cannot be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity.

Psalms 97:1 The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice.

Psalms 99:1 The LORD reigns, let the nations tremble; he sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake.

Psalms 145:10-13 All you have made will praise you, O LORD; your saints will extol you.<sup>11</sup> They will tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,<sup>12</sup> so that all men may know of your mighty acts and

the glorious splendor of your kingdom.<sup>13</sup> Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he has made.

Daniel 2:20-22 Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever; wisdom and power are his.<sup>21</sup> He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.<sup>22</sup> He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him.

## **2) God's government pertains to the world as a whole.**

Deuteronomy 4:39 Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.

1 Chronicles 29:12 Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all.

Psalms 47:2 How awesome is the LORD Most High, the great King over all the earth!

Psalms 83:18 Let them know that you, whose name is the LORD—that you alone are the Most High over all the earth.

Psalms 135:6 The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.

Psalms 139:7-10 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?<sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.<sup>9</sup> If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea,<sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

Daniel 4:34-35 At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation.<sup>35</sup> All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"

Acts 17:24 The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.

## **3) God is concerned also with the most insignificant things and with the minutest details.**

Job 39:5,6 Who let the wild donkey go free? Who untied his ropes? <sup>6</sup>I gave him the wasteland as his home, the salt flats as his habitat.

Psalm 50:10,11 For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. <sup>11</sup> I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine.

Psalm 139:2-4 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. <sup>3</sup> You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. <sup>4</sup> Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.

Psalm 147:4,9 He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name. <sup>9</sup> He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.

Isaiah 40:12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

Matthew 10:29-31 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. <sup>30</sup> And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. <sup>31</sup> So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Quenstedt: If it was not unworthy of and improper for God to create even the minutest creatures, much less can it be improper for him to rule what he has created (*TDP*, p.I.c.13.s.2.q.1.f.768)

#### **4) God directs the course of nature.**

Psalm 135:7 He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

Jeremiah 10:12,13 But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. <sup>13</sup> When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

Matthew 5:45 He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

#### **5) God directs the destinies of:**

##### **-a) Nations.**

Deuteronomy 28:49 The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand.

Psalm 33:10 The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.

Isaiah 10:5,6,16 Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath!<sup>6</sup> I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets.<sup>13</sup> For he says: “By the strength of my hand I have done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding. I removed the boundaries of nations, I plundered their treasures; like a mighty one I subdued their kings.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will send a wasting disease upon his sturdy warriors; under his pomp a fire will be kindled like a blazing flame.

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

**-b) Individuals.**

1 Samuel 2:6,7 The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up.<sup>7</sup> The LORD sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts.

Psalms 33:13-16 From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind;<sup>14</sup> from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth—<sup>15</sup> he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.<sup>16</sup> No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength.

Psalms 139:15,16 My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,<sup>16</sup> your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Proverbs 16:1,9 To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the reply of the tongue.<sup>9</sup> In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.

**6) In the government of the world God is:**

**-a) Moved by his goodness (*causa movens* – “moving cause”).**

Psalms 33:5 The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.

Psalms 136:1-26 For his love endures forever.

Nahum 1:7 The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.

**-b) Guided by his wisdom (*causa dirigens* – “directing cause”).**

Psalms 73:24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.

Psalm 104:24 How many are your works, O LORD! In wisdom you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Proverbs 3:20 By his knowledge the deeps were divided, and the clouds let drop the dew.

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

Isaiah 40:13 Who has understood the mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor?

**b) God's government does not make man's freedom illusory.**

**1) Freedom is of two kinds.**

**-a) "Formal liberty" is the freedom of choice in external actions.**

Leviticus 22:18 Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: "If any of you—either an Israelite or an alien living in Israel—presents a gift for a burnt offering to the LORD, either to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering..."

1 Corinthians 7:37,39 But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing.<sup>39</sup> A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.

John 8:33 They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

**-b) "Real liberty" is the harmony with God's will.**

John 8:32,36 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.<sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Romans 6:18,22 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.<sup>22</sup> But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.



**2) Man's original liberty has been destroyed.**

**-a) Real liberty has been lost.**

John 8:34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

Romans 6:16,17,19,20 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?<sup>17</sup> But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted.<sup>19</sup> I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.<sup>20</sup> When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.

**-b) Formal liberty is limited to a choice between various possible evils and external things.**

2 Samuel 17:14 Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than that of Ahithophel." For the LORD had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom.

2 Samuel 24:12 Go and tell David, "This is what the LORD says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you."

Deuteronomy 30:19 This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

Augsburg Confession, XVIII: Of Free Will they teach that man's will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness and to work things subject to reason. But it has no power, without the Holy Spirit, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; since the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2, 14; but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Spirit is received through the Word.

Augsburg Confession, Ap., XVIII, 70–71: Nor, indeed, do we deny liberty to the human will. The human will has liberty in the choice of works and things which reason comprehends by itself. It can to a certain extent render civil righteousness or the righteousness of works; it can speak of God, offer to God a certain service by an outward work, obey magistrates, parents; in the choice of an outward work it can restrain the hands from murder, from adultery, from theft. Since there is left in human nature reason and judgment concerning objects subjected to the senses, choice between these things, the

liberty and power to render civil righteousness, are also left. For Scripture calls this the righteousness of the flesh which the carnal nature, *i.e.*, reason, renders by itself, without the Holy Spirit. Although the power of concupiscence is such that men more frequently obey evil dispositions than sound judgment. And the devil, who is efficacious in the godless, as Paul says, Eph. 2, 2, does not cease to incite this feeble nature to various offenses. These are the reasons why even civil righteousness is rare among men.

Formula of Concord, T. D., II, 53: This Word man can externally hear and read, even though he is not yet converted to God and regenerate; for in these external things, as said above, man even since the Fall has to a certain extent a free will, so that he can go to church and hear or not hear the sermon.

**-c) While real freedom is lost, man is still a willing sinner, and therefore is held responsible.**

Romans 1:32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

**3) God's government does not annul this remnant of freedom.**

**-a) Freedom as such is an attribute of the will.**

**-b) God's government restricts man in his actions, frustrates his ends and aims.**

**-c) When God influences man in his decisions, he does not employ force or coercion. Note God's commands, threats, and promises.**

Exodus 7:3,4 But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, <sup>4</sup> he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out my divisions, my people the Israelites. Compare Exodus 8:15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

2 Samuel 15:31 Now David had been told, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed, "O LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."

Compare 2 Samuel 17:14 Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than that of Ahithophel." For the LORD had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom.

1 Kings 22:20-28 Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. <sup>20</sup> And the

LORD said, “Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there? One suggested this, and another that. <sup>21</sup> Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will entice him.’ <sup>22</sup> ‘By what means?’ the LORD asked. ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said. ‘You will succeed in enticing him,’ said the LORD. ‘Go and do it.’” <sup>23</sup> So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you. <sup>24</sup> Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah went up and slapped Micaiah in the face. “Which way did the spirit from the LORD go when he went from me to speak to you?” he asked. <sup>25</sup> Micaiah replied, “You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inner room.” <sup>26</sup> The king of Israel then ordered, “Take Micaiah and send him back to Amon the ruler of the city and to Joash the king’s son <sup>27</sup> and say, ‘This is what the king says: Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely.’” <sup>28</sup> Micaiah declared, “If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me.” Then he added, “Mark my words, all you people!”

**4) When it comes to the evil decisions of man, God's government may assume any of the following aspects.**

**-a) God permits it (*permissio*).**

**-1) God does not prevent, as he well might, all evil decisions and actions by placing insurmountable obstacles in the way.**

Psalm 81:11,12 But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. <sup>12</sup> So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices.

Acts 7:42 But God turned away and gave them over to the worship of the heavenly bodies. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets: “Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the desert, O house of Israel?”

Acts 14:16 In the past, he let all nations go their own way.

Romans 1:24,25 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. <sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Hollaz: Divine permission ... is a negative act consisting in the withholding or suspension of an insurmountable obstacle. God could indeed restrain or coerce the sinner by placing in his way a powerful and invincible obstacle; but the most holy God has most just causes for permitting sin (*Examen*, p 449).

Quenstedt: God indeed permits but he does not will what he has

permitted. This happens, not indeed with God being absolutely unwilling, that is, restraining and hindering it from happening, but nevertheless not willing it. The not-hindering of God is not a willing, but a permitting, and at the same time also a not-willing, in so far as the things which he permits seriously displease him (*TDP*, I, p 533).

Gerhard: God does not will sin, and nevertheless he does not prevent it, which is permission itself. But although he permits (it) willingly, not unwillingly, nevertheless permission and will are directed toward different objects: permission refers to the sin itself, will to the useful end which he according to his own wisdom knows how to draw out of the sin (*Loci Theologici*, IV, p 88).

**-2) This *permissio* is not indifference.**

Psalm 5:4,5 You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell. <sup>5</sup>The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong.

Psalm 11:5 The LORD examines the righteous, but the wicked and those who love violence his soul hates.

Proverbs 6:16 There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him.

Zechariah 8:17 “Do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the LORD.

**-3) Nor is permission negligence or powerlessness.**

Psalm 50:21,22 These things you have done and I kept silent; you thought I was altogether like you. But I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face. <sup>22</sup> Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with none to rescue.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Hollaz: Divine permission is not a pleasant indulgence, as if God plainly does not care when men commit evil acts. Nor is it a relaxation of the law, as though he gives men license to sin; nor is it impotence in God or a lack of knowledge, as if he wills or approves of evil; nor a lack of power, as if he is unable to restrain sin. Nor does it make God an unconcerned spectator of sins (*Examen*, p 449).

**-4) Permission is a punishment, a judgment.**

Quenstedt: Permission is an act of governing providence by

which God does not restrain rational creatures which are inclined to sin by their own will from an evil forbidden by the law by imposing obstacles which the finite agent is not able to overcome or which he does not know how to overcome, but from just causes he allows them to plunge into sins (*TDP*, I, p 533).

**-b) God impedes evil actions. He prevents people from carrying them out (*impeditio*).**

Genesis 19:11 Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.

Genesis 20:6 Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know you did this with a clear conscience, and so I have kept you from sinning against me. That is why I did not let you touch her.”

Exodus 14:30 That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore.

Numbers 22:12 But God said to Balaam, “Do not go with them. You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed.”

1 Kings 13:4 When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, “Seize him!” But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back.

2 Kings 6:17,18 And Elisha prayed, “O LORD, open his eyes so he may see.” Then the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.<sup>18</sup> As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, “Strike these people with blindness.” So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked.

2 Kings 7:6 For the Lord had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses and a great army, so that they said to one another, “Look, the king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us!”

Psalms 2:4-5 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.<sup>5</sup> Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath.

Isaiah 37:36 Then the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies!

Quenstedt: God impedes evil by withdrawing his cooperation, by strengthening weaker things, but restraining stronger things with divine power. Impeding is an act of governing providence by which

God restrains the actions of creatures according to his will, so that they do not produce the result which they would otherwise produce either by the natural or free power of the agent (*TDP*, pars I, cap XIII, sect. I, thes. XXI, nota, p 534.)

**-c) God directs evil actions (*directio*). He controls and directs all human actions so that they serve his purposes.**

**-1) God prospers the good works of his children.**

Exodus 3:11,12 But Moses said to God, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”<sup>12</sup> And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

Leviticus 26:3-13 If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands,<sup>4</sup> I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees of the field their fruit.<sup>5</sup> Your threshing will continue until grape harvest and the grape harvest will continue until planting, and you will eat all the food you want and live in safety in your land.<sup>6</sup> I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid. I will remove savage beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country.<sup>7</sup> You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you.<sup>8</sup> Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you.<sup>9</sup> I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my covenant with you.<sup>10</sup> You will still be eating last year’s harvest when you will have to move it out to make room for the new.<sup>11</sup> I will put my dwelling place among you, and I will not abhor you.<sup>12</sup> I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.<sup>13</sup> I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high.

Deuteronomy 20:1 When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you.

1 Samuel 9:20 As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found. And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father’s family?

1 Samuel 10:7 Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.

**-2) He frustrates the purposes of the wicked, although permitting the deed.**

Genesis 50:20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Acts 4:28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Quenstedt: God has decreed not to hinder but to permit that evil deeds happen.... But he has not decreed that they should do the evil. A distinction must be made between the preparation and impulse of the ungodly, and the directing of even the worst crime to a salutary end. Not the former but the latter must be attributed to God. Direction is an act of governing providence by which God so controls the good actions of creatures that they lead to and are brought to the objective intended by God, but he directs evil actions to a certain end set by him but not seen by sinners and often contrary to their intention (*Loci*, thes. XXII, nota.).

**-3) This is a great consolation against our infirmities.**

Matthew 10:19,20 But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, <sup>20</sup> for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

Romans 8:26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

Ephesians 3:20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

**-d) He determines the limits (*determinatio*), that is, God fixes certain bounds of space, time, degree, etc., which the actions of the wicked may not exceed.**

Job 1:12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Job 2:6 The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”

Psalm 7:14-16 He who is pregnant with evil and conceives trouble gives birth to disillusionment.<sup>15</sup> He who digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit he has made.<sup>16</sup> The trouble he causes recoils on himself; his violence comes down on his own head.

Psalm 66:7 He rules forever by his power, his eyes watch the nations—let not the rebellious rise up against him.

Psalm 124:1-5 If the LORD had not been on our side—let Israel say—<sup>2</sup> if the LORD had not been on our side when men attacked us,<sup>3</sup> when their anger flared against us, they would have swallowed us alive;<sup>4</sup> the flood would have engulfed us, the torrent would have swept over us,<sup>5</sup> the raging waters would have swept us away.

Isaiah 8:10 Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand, for God is with us.

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

Quenstedt: Determination is an act of governing providence by which God sets certain limits for the powers, actions, and feelings of his creatures within which they are held both as to time as well as to magnitude and degree (*TDP*, I, p 534).

**-e) The Confessions deny that God is the cause of sin.**

Augsburg Confession, XIX: Of the Cause of Sin they teach that, although God does create and preserve nature, yet the cause of sin is the will of the wicked, that is, of the devil and ungodly men; which will, unaided of God, turns itself from God.

Smalcald Articles, Part III, Art. II, 44: For the Holy Spirit does not permit sin to have dominion, to gain the upper hand so as to be accomplished, but represses and restrains it so that it must not do what it wishes. But if it does what it wishes, the Holy Spirit and faith are [certainly] not present. For St. John says, 1 John 3, 9: Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin, ... and he cannot sin. And yet it is also the truth when the same St. John says, 1, 8: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Formula of Concord, T. D., XI, 6,7: The foreknowledge of God (*praescientia*) foresees and foreknows also that which is evil; however, not in such a manner as though it were God’s gracious will that it should happen; but all that the perverse, wicked will of the devil and of men wills and desires to undertake and do, God sees and



knows before; and His *praescientia*, that is, foreknowledge, observes its order also in wicked acts or works, inasmuch as a limit and measure is fixed by God to the evil which God does not will, how far it should go, and how long it should last, when and how He will hinder and punish it; for all of this God the Lord so overrules that it must redound to the glory of the divine name and to the salvation of His elect, and the godless, on that account, must be put to confusion. However, the beginning and cause of evil is not God's foreknowledge for God does not create and effect or work evil, neither does He help or promote it; but the wicked, perverse will of the devil and of men is the cause of evil, as it is written Hos. 13, 9: O Israel, you have destroyed yourself; but in Me is your help. Also: You are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness. Ps. 5, 4.

#### **IV. Two of the agencies instituted by God in his providence for man demand our special attention: the family and government.**

##### **A. Christian Marriage and the Family**

##### **1. When God created man and woman, he also instituted marriage as the basic unit of society.**

Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25 And God saw that it was *good*. Compare: Genesis 2:18-24<sup>18</sup> The LORD God said, "It is *not good* for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."<sup>19</sup> Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.<sup>20</sup> So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.<sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh.<sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.<sup>23</sup> The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."<sup>24</sup> For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

##### **a) God ordained marriage as the union of one man and one woman.**

Matthew 19:4-6 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'<sup>5</sup> and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?"<sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

##### **1) It is God's will that this union should last a lifetime.**

1 Corinthians 7:39 A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.

**2) Yet marriage is only for this life.**

Matthew 22:30 At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

**b) God ordained marriage for society and not exclusively for the church.**

**1) Marriage is not a sacrament like baptism or the Lord's Supper, which are means of grace.**

**-a) A sacramental view is held by the Roman Catholic Church.**

Catechism of the Catholic Church: The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament (Paragraph 1601).

**-b) A sacramental view is held by the Eastern Orthodox Church.**

Pomazansky: A mystery (sacrament) is a sacred act which under a visible aspect communicates to the soul of a believer the invisible grace of God. The name of "mystery" has become established in the church as referring to seven rites: Baptism, Chrismation, Communion (the Eucharist), Repentance, Priesthood, Matrimony, and Unction (*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, p 263).

**-c) Luther taught marriage was not a sacrament.**

Luther: Since marriage and the married estate are worldly matters, it behooves us pastors or ministers of the church not to attempt to order or govern anything connected with it, but to permit every city and land to continue its own use and custom in this connection. ("The Order of Marriage for Common Pastors," *LW* 53, 110-115).

**2) God encourages Christians to look for a marriage partner who shares a common faith.**

Proverbs 31:10,30 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. <sup>30</sup> Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

**3) Yet Scripture does not forbid the marriage of a believer and an unbeliever.**

1 Corinthians 7:39 A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, *but he must belong to the Lord.* NIV

1 Corinthians 7:39 A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, *but let it be in the Lord.* GWN

Greek: Γυνή δέδεταί ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῆ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς· ἐὰν δὲ κοιμηθῆ ὁ ἀνὴρ. ἐλευθέρα ἐστὶν ὃ θέλει γαμηθῆναι, μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ.

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

**-a) Scripture does show that the existing marriage of a believer and unbeliever should be maintained.**

1 Corinthians 7:12,13 To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her.<sup>13</sup> And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him.

**-b) Many Evangelicals believe it is sinful for a believer to marry an unbeliever.**

H. Norman Wright: When it comes to a believer and an unbeliever's seeking marriage, the Scriptures clearly forbid the uniting of such a couple (See 2 Cor. 6:14); this would be the standard for refusing to perform the ceremony (*The Premarital Counseling Handbook*, p 30).

Jay Adams: Christians must marry Christians. When they are free to marry, they are not free to marry any and every person; they may marry only believers (*Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage*, p 87).

R. C. Sproul: While all men and women may marry, the Christian is called to marry only "in the Lord," Scripture is clear in its prohibition against Christians marrying non-Christians (*Essential Truths of the Christian Faith*, p 266).

For an evaluation of this claim see "Exegetical Brief: Does 1 Corinthians 7:39 Forbid a Believer to Marry an Unbeliever?" David J. Valleskey. *WLQ*, Vol. 94, 4 (Fall 1997)

**2. God establishes marriage through the consent of the man and woman. (*Consensus facit matrimoniam.*)**

Luther: The estate of marriage consists essentially in consent having been freely and previously given to one another (*LW* 44, p 11).

**a) This truth is not explicitly stated in Scripture.**

**1) It is implicit in Genesis 2:24.**

Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

**2) Some point to the example of Rebekah.**

Genesis 24:5,58 The servant asked him, “What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?”<sup>58</sup> So they called Rebekah and asked her, “Will you go with this man?” “I will go,” she said.

**-a) This is a descriptive passage.**

**-b) Whether Rebekah is consenting to the marriage or to the time of travel is unclear.**

**b) The marriage consent consists of an unconditional commitment to love and faithfulness. (The word “unconditional” is not used in an absolute sense here. If one partner breaks the marriage bond, the other is no longer bound to the marriage.)**

Ephesians 5:22,24,25 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.<sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her

**c) Such consent is to be given freely and publicly.**

**1) Consent is to be given freely. It cannot be obtained by deception or force or given in drunkenness or insanity. It cannot validly be given by someone already married to another.**

Romans 7:2,3 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage.<sup>3</sup> So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

**2) Consent is to be given by those who are able to give a valid consent. There are certain restrictions about those who may give such consent, such as government restrictions based on age and relationship.**

- a) **Many Lutherans claim that the restrictions based on consanguinity and affinity in Leviticus 18 are based on the moral law, which is known, in part, through natural knowledge of the law. For a lengthy defense of this position see the German edition of Walther's *Pastorale*, p 204-215.**

Leviticus 18:24: Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled.

1 Corinthians 5:1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among

pagans: A man has his father's wife.

Fritz: Do the marriage laws of the Old Testament, Lev. 18, etc., still hold good in the New Testament? The marriage laws of the Old Testament were not a part of the Old Testament Political (judicial) Law, but of the Moral Law, that declaration of God's will which directs and binds all men of every age and place (*Pastoral Theology*, p 163). (See also Schaller's *Pastorale*, p 79)

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Schuetze and Habeck: To what extent does Scripture set up forbidden degrees of consanguinity? Leviticus 18 is most often adduced to determine the exact degrees of consanguinity or affinity that prohibit marriage in the eyes of God. The convenient rule taken from Leviticus 18:6 that relationships up to the second degree prohibits marriage is based on translating וְאִם בְּשָׂר׃ “flesh of his flesh” and interpreting that to mean the second degree of consanguinity. However the two Hebrew nouns are joined through the construct state and here have a superlative meaning, best translated simply “nearest of kin,” with no degree indicated. It is also to be noted that the New Testament in speaking of marriage nowhere refers to Leviticus 18. The Mosaic code, of which Leviticus 18 is a part, has no direct application to New Testament Christians (*The Shepherd Under Christ*, p 270).

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Schaller: The question whether marriage is permitted with the sister of a man's deceased wife (*Schwagerehe*), despite much discussion, seemingly cannot be answered with such conviction that one can bind consciences either to a positive or negative answer (*Pastorale*, p 79).

Leviticus 18:16, 18: Do not have sexual relations with your brother's wife; that would dishonor your brother.<sup>18</sup> Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living.

Leviticus 20:21: If a man marries his brother's wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonored his brother. They will be childless.

Deuteronomy 25:5: If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her.

**-b) The Christian will follow governmental laws that regulate consanguinity in marriage.**

Romans 13:1 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

**3) The nature of marriage as a public contract requires that the consent must be given publicly.**

Charles Sell: Marriage is a socially sanctioned commitment. The practice of living together without making a public declaration of marriage is neither biblically nor socially acceptable. The public nature of marriage is clearly seen in that the man is portrayed as leaving father and mother to marry (Gen. 2:24) (*Family Ministry*, p 80).

Note the confusion that Abraham and Isaac caused when they didn't acknowledge their marriages publicly: Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18; 26:1-11.

**d) The man and woman leave their former families to establish a new family.**

Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

**e) They will continue to love, honor, and care for their parents, even in old age.**

1 Timothy 5:4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.

Proverbs 23:22 Listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.

**3. Engagement is a social custom, which is neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture**

a) **Engagement, betrothal, and marriage customs may vary from culture to culture.**

Note: For purposes of this discussion, “engagement” is defined as an agreement to marry or to plan marriage; “betrothal” is an unconditional, witnessed commitment to marriage, and “marriage” is entering upon married life.

Matthew 1:18-21,24,25 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.<sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.<sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”  
24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.<sup>25</sup> But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Lenski: The Jewish betrothal was a solemn promise before witnesses, embodying the essentials of the marriage vow. No further promises followed. In later times it was ratified in writing. By virtue of the betrothal the bridegroom and the bride became husband and wife as is also shown in the next verse where Joseph is called Mary’s husband, and in v. 20 where she is called his wife. It is a mistake to regard “husband” and “wife” as proleptic terms denoting the husband and his wife to be. This is reading into the Jewish procedure our modern conception of an engagement. The Jewish betrothal was the marriage itself. But the Jewish custom placed an interval, longer or shorter, between the betrothal and the bringing home of the bride to her husband’s house. No religious ceremony and no vows of any kind accompanied this home-bringing although it was made a festive occasion with a procession and a feast following (*Commentary on St. Matthew’s Gospel*, p 40).

b) **Contemporary engagement is generally not tantamount to betrothal or marriage.**

1) **Because of its undefined status, engagement may or it may not fulfill the moral requirement for unconditional consent.**

Gerhard: Engagements (*sponsalia*) may be contracted with conditions; marriages may not (*Loci*, Book VII, Concerning Marriage, p 100).

2) **It does not fulfill the social, legal, or other practical requirements of marriage.**

3) **Scripture nowhere makes a distinction between being married in the eyes of God and being married in the eyes of man. Even though Christians are in God’s Church, they are**

**still in the world and are to fulfill the requirements of both realms. An engaged couple, which is not married in the eyes of the world, is not married in the eyes of God.**

2 Corinthians 8:21 For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men.

Note: Even Jesus fulfilled the requirements of governmental laws as Matthew 17:24-27 indicates.

Matthew 17:24-27 After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?”<sup>25</sup> “Yes, he does,” he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. “What do you think, Simon?” he asked. “From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own sons or from others?”<sup>26</sup> “From others,” Peter answered. “Then the sons are exempt,” Jesus said to him.<sup>27</sup> “But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.”

**4) Since engaged couples are not married, it is sinful for them to engage in sexual relations prior to marriage.**

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

1 Corinthians 6:12-20 “Everything is permissible for me”—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything.<sup>13</sup> “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food”—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.<sup>14</sup> By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.<sup>15</sup> Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.”<sup>17</sup> But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.<sup>18</sup> Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.<sup>19</sup> Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;<sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Ephesians 5:3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.



1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;<sup>4</sup> that each of you should learn to control his own body [or learn to acquire a wife] in a way that is holy and honorable,<sup>5</sup> not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God;<sup>6</sup> and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you.<sup>7</sup> For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

**c) God instructs us to take our promises seriously, including the promise to marry.**

Ephesians 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.

**d) Those who break an engagement promise are guilty of sin and should be called to repentance.**

Matthew 18:15 If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.

**4. God established different roles for man and woman at creation. Husband and wife are to reflect these roles in their marriage relationship.**

**a) Man and woman are equal in status before God.**

**1) Man and woman were both made in the image of God.**

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

**2) Man and woman both fell into sin and share the guilt of the fall.**

1 Timothy 2:14 It was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

Romans 5:12 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.

**3) Man and woman share equally in the spiritual blessings God gives through Christ.**

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

**b) God gave the husband the role of head and the wife the role of submission.**

Ephesians 5:22-24 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.<sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

**1) These roles were established at creation.**

Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

1 Corinthians 11:3,8,9 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.<sup>8</sup> For man did not come from woman, but woman from man;<sup>9</sup> neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

Timothy 2:13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve.

**2) The New Testament indicates that these roles are a part of God's moral law that applies to all people of all time.**

1 Corinthians 11:3 Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

Corinthians 14:34 Women . . . must be in submission, as the Law says.

**3) These roles were not simply a part of the curse that God pronounced at the fall into sin.**

See WELS Doctrinal Statement *Man and Woman in God's World*.

**-a) Some believe these roles were imposed after the fall and do not apply to Christians who are freed from the curse of the law.**

Gilbert Bilezikian: The fall had spawned the twin evils of woman's suffering in labor and man's laboring in suffering. As a result of Satan's work, man was now master over woman, just as the mother-ground was now master over man. For these reasons, it is proper to regard both male dominance and death as being antithetical to God's original intent in creation. Both are the result of sin, itself instigated by Satan. Their origin is satanic

*(Beyond Sex Roles: A Guide for the Study of Female Roles in the Bible, p 56).*

Gilbert Bilezikian: The ruler/subject relationship between Adam and Eve began after the fall. It was for Eve the application of the same death principle that made Adam slave to the soil. Because it resulted from the fall, the rule of Adam over Eve is viewed as satanic in origin, no less than death itself (*Beyond Sex Roles: A Guide for the Study of Female Roles in the Bible, p 58*).

**-b) Luther can be quoted on both sides of the issue.**

Luther: Thus she differs only in sex from the head of the household, inasmuch as she was taken from the flesh of the man. Although this can be said only of Eve, who was created in this manner, nevertheless in Matt. 19:5 Christ applies it to all wives when He says that husband and wife are one flesh. In this way, although your wife has not been made from your bones, nevertheless, because she is your wife, she is the mistress of the house just as you are its master, except that the wife was made subject to the man by the Law which was given after sin (*LW, Vol. 1, p 137, 138*).

Commenting on 1 Timothy 2:13-14: Paul skillfully arranged this example that he might not appear to be speaking of the top of his head. This is the way God has ordained it. The principle role belongs to the man. "Adam was first," etc. The role of greater authority lies in the man rather than in the woman. "Then Eve" that she should be, etc. Secondarily, this situation stands, not only because of what God intended, but also from the history of Adam and Eve (*LW, Vol. 28, p 277*).

**4) As a result of the fall, God indicated that rebellion against these roles would now be a source of pain and conflict.**

Genesis 3:16-19 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."<sup>17</sup> To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.<sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

**5) God applies these roles that were established at creation to marriage when he states that the husband is the head of his wife and the wife is to submit to her husband.**

Ephesians 5:22-24 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.  
<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

**c) Both husband and wife are to use their different roles to serve each other.**

**1) Scripture teaches the broad principle that Christians are to use their roles to serve each others. This broad principle would include the relationship between husband and wife.**

Philippians 2:5-8 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup>Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup>And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Matthew 20:28 Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

**-a) Some use Ephesians 5:21 to deny that Scripture establishes roles for husband and wife in marriage.**

Craig Keener: I am not saying that it is necessarily wrong for the man to lead in a household; I am suggesting that it is wrong for him to demand the position of leadership without his wife's consent. Given the educational and vocational status of women in our culture, an egalitarian marriage must be permitted as a viable option (*Paul, Women, and Wives*, p 135).

**-b) Some claim Ephesians 5:21 supports a mutual submission between husbands and wives.**

Ephesians 5:21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

George W. Knight: In the admonition “submit to one another,” the verb (*ὑποτάσσω*) has as its basic meaning “to subject or subordinate.” Here Paul’s use of the middle voice focuses on what one does to oneself: one submits oneself to others. The Bauer-Arnt-Gringrich-Danker *Greek-English Lexicon* rightly describes this as “submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love.” This voluntary yielding to others is a characteristic of the Christian community and is urged elsewhere in the New Testament. Compare, e.g., “In humility consider others [*ἀλλήλους*, the same word as in Ephesians] better than yourselves: (Philippians 2:3). This admonition is based on the example of Jesus (Philippians 2:5), who insisted on a servant mentality in imitation of him: “. . . whoever wants to become

great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” (Matthew 20:26-28).

Furthermore, the Apostle Peter, like the Apostle Paul, both urges particular people (younger men) to submit to particular people (elders) and all to submit to one another: “Young men . . . be submissive to (ὕποτάγητε) those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another (ἀλλήλοις again) . . .” (1 Peter 5:4-5). Similarly, Paul urges masters to “Treat your slaves *in the same way*” (τὰ αὐτά, Ephesians 6:9) as their slaves were to treat them, i.e., “with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart (verse 5). This implies reciprocity between masters and slaves. The exhortation to Christians in Ephesians 5:21 is thus, like these other passages, a general exhortation of mutual submission to “one another” (*Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, p 166).

**-c) Others question whether such a usage of ὑποτάσσω can be supported.**

Grudem: This is not a legitimate meaning for the term ὑποτάσσω, which always implies a relationship of submission to an authority (*Systematic Theology*, p 465).

Peter O’Brien: The pronoun “one another” is not always fully reciprocal. Although advocates of the mutual submission interpretation assume that the relationships expressed by the Greek pronoun are always symmetrical (and so must mean “everyone to everyone”), this depends entirely on the context. On occasion, the pronoun does have a fully reciprocal significance. But in other contexts a symmetrical relationship cannot be in view. For example, Revelation 6:4, “so that men should slay *one another*”, cannot mean that each killed the other at precisely the same time as he or she was killed. Likewise, Galatians 6:2, “Bear *one another’s* burdens”, does not signify that “*everyone*” should exchange burdens of *others* who are less able (*The Letter to the Ephesians*, p 403).

**2) As the servant leader, the husband is responsible for providing for his wife and family and protecting them from harm, both in a physical and spiritual sense. He is to do this in a spirit of love.**

Ephesians 5:25-28 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her<sup>26</sup> to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,<sup>27</sup> and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.<sup>28</sup> In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

**-a) This does not mean that the husband must be the sole provider for his wife and family. The wife will assist in providing for the needs of the family.**

1 Timothy 5:8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Proverbs 31:11-31 Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.<sup>12</sup> She brings him good, not harm, all the days

of her life.<sup>13</sup> She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.

<sup>14</sup> She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.<sup>15</sup> She

gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and

portions for her servant girls.<sup>16</sup> She considers a field and buys it; out

of her earnings she plants a vineyard.<sup>17</sup> She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.<sup>18</sup> She sees that

her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.<sup>19</sup> In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her

fingers.<sup>20</sup> She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.<sup>21</sup> When it snows, she has no fear for her

household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.<sup>22</sup> She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.<sup>23</sup>

Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.<sup>24</sup> She makes linen garments and

sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.<sup>25</sup> She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to

come.<sup>26</sup> She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.<sup>27</sup> She watches over the affairs of her household and

does not eat the bread of idleness.<sup>28</sup> Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:<sup>29</sup> “Many

women do noble things, but you surpass them all.”<sup>30</sup> Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the

LORD is to be praised.<sup>31</sup> Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

**-b) The husband’s leadership role does not give him the right to dominate his wife and children in a cold, cruel, or careless manner. Nor does he have the right to abdicate his role as head—either actively or passively through laziness and apathy—to his wife.**

1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

**3) As the servant helper, the wife will respect, support, and submit to her husband's leadership role.**

Ephesians 5:22,24 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord.  
<sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

1 Peter 3:1-6 Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives,<sup>2</sup> when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.<sup>3</sup> Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes.<sup>4</sup> Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.<sup>5</sup> For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful. They were submissive to their own husbands,<sup>6</sup> like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

Colossians 3:18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Note: A wife steps out of her role in marriage when she refuses to respect her husband as the God-given leader of the family or when she sets herself up as a rival.

**4) The wife's role is one of subordination (ὕποτασσω).**

Stephen B. Clark: In terms of the way in which subordination and governance are conducted, it is helpful to notice three main types: 1) Oppression. Oppressive subordination occurs in a relationship that works for the benefit of the ruler and the harm of the subordinate. Conquest normally leads to oppression as the conqueror exploits the conquered. 2) Care-subordination. Care-subordination characterizes a relationship in which the head is dedicated to the care of the subordinate and engages in the relationship for the benefit of the subordinate. The parent-child relationship is the most obvious example of such care-subordination (where parents rear their children well). The master-disciple relationship is also an example of such subordination. 3) Unity-subordination. Unity-subordination occurs in a relationship that is carried on for the sake of a unity or higher cause. This is the kind of subordination that is integral to genuine

community. Care-subordination and unity-subordination can often occur in the same relationship. Genesis is primarily concerned with unity-subordination (in this case, unity-subordination which is voluntary). The goal of the marriage relationship as presented in Genesis is oneness, the oneness described as “one flesh.” The woman is voluntarily subordinate to the man so that the two might be one and thus be in a position to fulfill the call the Lord gave the human race. This kind of subordination is also the key to the unity which God intended for the whole human race and for the new human race which is the Christian people (*Man and Woman in Christ*, p 41,42).

George W. Knight: The meaning of *ὑποτάσσω*, used consistently in the charge to wives, is the same as its meaning in verse 21, that is, “submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love.” This is not abandonment of the great New Testament truth also taught by the Apostle Paul that “there is neither . . . male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). Rather, it is an appeal to one who is equal by creation and redemption to submit to the authority God has ordained (*Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, p 168).

**d) These roles complement each other.**

Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

לֹא-טוֹב הָיְתָה הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה-לּוֹ עֵזֶר כְּגֹדֶדוֹ

Genesis 2:22,23 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.<sup>23</sup> The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

Quenstedt (via Augustine and Aquinas): The wife was not formed from the head lest she aspire to dominion or be superior as a lord; nor was she made from the feet that she should be a slave or a footstool of man; but she was made from the side that she should be a helper (*TDP*, pars II, cap. I, sec. I, th. IV, p 512).

**e) The egalitarian view denies that God gave different roles to husband and wife in marriage.**

Note: In contemporary Christian circles the biblical view which recognizes that husband and wife are equal in status before God but have different roles is called the *complementarian* view. The view that husband and wife have no distinct roles is called the *egalitarian* view.

Craig Keener: I am not saying that it is necessarily wrong for the man to lead in a household; I am suggesting that it is wrong for him to demand the position of leadership without his wife’s consent. Given the educational and vocational status of women in our culture, an egalitarian marriage must be permitted as a viable option. . . . This book is written not to tell any couple which partner, if either, should lead in the home; it is written to



argue that those who think they know which partner should always lead on the basis of Scripture have not read Scripture as clearly as they should have (*Paul, Women, and Wives*, p 135, 136).

**f) The egalitarian view argues that Ephesians 5:21 cancels out the roles that Paul teaches in Ephesians 5:22-31.**

Keener: It is clear that the submission of verse 22 cannot be other than the submission of verse 21 from the simple fact that the word “submitting” does not even appear in the Greek text of verse 22: it has to be borrowed from verse 21. It is perfectly legitimate to read verse 22: “Wives, submitting to your husbands,” as long as we understand that we must take verse 22 as an example of verse 21’s mutual submission. Indeed, one commentator points out that verse 22 might be translated, “for example, wives to your husbands,” and this is no doubt its force. Wives should submit to their husbands because Christians should submit to each other (*Paul, Women, and Wives*, p 169).

Keener: As has often been pointed out, Ephesians 5:22-33 advocates mutual submission. The only explicit definition of the wife’s submission in the text is that she respect her husband (*Paul, Women, and Wives*, p 174).

**g) Some egalitarians argue that κεφαλή means “source” rather than “head.” They use this meaning to deny that God gave different roles to husband and wife. However, this meaning for κεφαλή is not found in classical or koine Greek.**

Grudem: If you ever meet an egalitarian claiming that the word “head” in the Bible doesn’t mean “authority” but means “source,” you may wonder how to answer. Their purpose in this discussion is to eliminate the idea of authority from verses like, “The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church” (Eph. 5:23). So they claim that the word “head” (the Greek word *kephale*) meant “source” rather than “authority” in the ancient world. Sometimes they quote some ambiguous ancient Greek texts which, they say, show Zeus to be the “source” of all things, or Esau to be the “source” of his clan, or which mention the “head” of a river. For a verse about husbands and wives, even this idea makes no sense (I am not the source of my wife!), but they will usually then suggest a more specific meaning like “source of encouragement” (“The Meaning of “Head” in the Bible,” *CBMW News*, Vol 1, No 3, p 8).

**h) As noted above, other egalitarians believe that since these roles were imposed after the fall they do not apply to Christian couples who are freed from the curse God pronounced on man and woman in Eden.**

**5. God blesses the marriage relationship.**

**a) God blesses husband and wife with companionship.**

Genesis 2:18 The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

**b) God blesses husband and wife with sexual happiness.**

Song of Solomon 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth— for your *love* (אֶהָבָה - “lovemaking, passionate love”) is more delightful than wine.

**1) God created man and woman as sexual beings with sexual desires.**

Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Augsburg Confession, XXIII, 7: Gen. 1:28 teaches that men were created to be fruitful, and that one sex in a proper way should desire the other. For we are speaking not of concupiscence, which is sin, but of that appetite which was to have been in nature in its integrity, which would have existed in nature even if it had remained uncorrupted, which they call physical love. And this love of one sex for the other is truly a divine ordinance.

Augsburg Confession, XXIII, 12: The natural desire of sex for sex is truly a divine right, because it is an ordinance divinely impressed upon nature.

**2) God gave sexual happiness as a blessing to husband and wife at the institution of marriage.**

Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

**3) Chastity is a purpose for marriage after the fall.**

1 Corinthians 7:2-5 But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.<sup>3</sup> The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.<sup>4</sup> The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.<sup>5</sup> Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

**c) God blesses husband and wife with children.**

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.”

Genesis 30:1,2 When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I’ll die!”<sup>2</sup> Jacob became angry with her and said, “Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?”

**1) God may bless a husband and wife with children.**

Psalm 127:3 Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him.

Psalm 139:13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

**2) God may delay or withhold this blessing as he sees fit.**

1 Samuel 1:5,19,20 But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb.<sup>19</sup> Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah lay with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her.<sup>20</sup> So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

**d) Not all these blessings will be found in every marriage in equal measure.**

**6. God blesses the husband-wife relationship with the ability to bring children into the world.**

Genesis 9:1 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth."

**a) A purpose of the sexual union is procreation.**

Genesis 4:1,2 Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man."<sup>2</sup> Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

**b) A purpose of the sexual union is also the consummation of marriage.**

Matthew 19:4,5 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'<sup>5</sup> and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?"

**1) Sexual union does not establish marriage.**

1 Corinthians 6:16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her *in body*? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."

**2) The sexual union is an expression of the marital union.**

Schuetze and Habeck: In marriage a man and woman forsake the previous intimacy of family life with father and mother, are united or cleave to one another, and thus set up a new family. This cleaving,

according to Jesus, is to continue so long as both live. Where this permanent relationship has been established, the two become one flesh through the sexual act. The latter does not establish the marriage bond but is the practice of it (*The Shepherd Under Christ*, p 280).

**c) According to Scripture, family planning and birth control are adiaphora.**

Note: The Roman Catholic Church and, historically, many Lutherans have regarded all birth control as wrong. Yet there are other scriptural principles to consider in this area.

See "Birth Control as Ethical and Pastoral Problem., by H Kirsten, *Our Great Heritage*, II, p 106-124. Originally in *WLQ*, Vol. 65-1, Jan. 1968, p 24-44.

**d) When it comes to family planning, God wants Christian couples to pursue motives that are pleasing to God.**

Proverbs 16:2 All a man's ways seem innocent to him, but motives are weighed by the LORD.

**1) As with all things, their motives are to glorify God.**

1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

**2) The Christian couple will remember that children are a blessing from God and be ready to receive them as such.**

Genesis 33:5 Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. "Who are these with you?" he asked. Jacob answered, "They are the children God has graciously given your servant."

Psalms 127:3 Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him.

Psalms 128:1-6 Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways.<sup>2</sup> You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours.<sup>3</sup> Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table.<sup>4</sup> Thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD.<sup>5</sup> May the LORD bless you from Zion all the days of your life; may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem,<sup>6</sup> and may you live to see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel.

**3) The husband is to be concerned about the emotional and physical health of his wife.**

1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner

(σκεύει) and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 Thessalonians 4:4 That each of you should learn to control his own body (σκεῦος) in a way that is holy and honorable,

**4) The Christian couple will recognize that they will need to care and provide for their children.**

1 Timothy 5:8 If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

**5) The Christian couple will not let selfishness or greedy desires for a higher standard of living or personal advancement enter into family planning.**

Hebrews 13:5,6 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”<sup>6</sup> So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

1 Timothy 6:6-10 But godliness with contentment is great gain.<sup>7</sup> For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.<sup>8</sup> But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that.<sup>9</sup> People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.<sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Luke 12:21-31 “This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”<sup>22</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.<sup>23</sup> Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.<sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!<sup>25</sup> Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?<sup>26</sup> Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?<sup>27</sup> “Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.<sup>28</sup> If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!<sup>29</sup> And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.<sup>30</sup> For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.<sup>31</sup> But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

**6) The Christian couple will realize that they cannot control the future but will let it in God's caring hands.**

James 4:13-15 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money."<sup>14</sup> Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.<sup>15</sup> Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

**e) When it comes to family planning, God wants Christian couples to pursue methods that are pleasing to God.**

**1) They will recognize that human life begins at conception.**

Note: See the section of dogmatics notes on the origin of the soul.

Psalm 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Psalm 139:13-18 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.<sup>14</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,<sup>16</sup> your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.<sup>17</sup> How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!<sup>18</sup> Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand. When I awake, I am still with you.

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

**2) They will recognize that abortion is the taking of a human life.**

Exodus 20:13 "You shall not murder."

**3) They will pursue methods of birth control that are contraceptive and not abortifacient in nature.**

Note: By "contraceptive" we mean a method that prevents fertilization and not a method that allows fertilization but interferes with implantation.

**7. The Christian couple will be guided by God's Word when considering reproductive technologies.**

**a) Like other forms of medicine, reproductive technology must be evaluated in the light of God's Word and used to his glory.**

Matthew 25:36 I was sick and you looked after me.

Matthew 25:40 The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

**b) Children are a blessing from God.**

Psalms 127:3 Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him.

**c) While parenting can be burdensome, children are not to be viewed as a burden.**

Genesis 3:16,19 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."

**d) Children are not a right of marriage. A Christian couple will recognize that sometimes God withholds the blessing children from a marriage.**

Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

1 Samuel 1:5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb.

**e) Children are not merely a product of medical technology. A Christian couple will recognize that life begins at conception and treat all embryos as living human beings.**

Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me.  
I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

Psalms 139:13,14 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.<sup>14</sup> I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

**f) A Christian couple will seek to manage their financial resources wisely recognizing that they are only managers of all that God places into their care.**

Psalms 24:1 The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

Matthew 25:14 Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.

1 Corinthians 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

- g) **A Christian couple will come before the Lord in prayer, asking his help in applying the principles of Scripture and seeking his direction in matters that are not clearly addressed in his Word.**

**8. God regulates marriage as a lifelong union.**

- a) **God reserves the right to end a marriage through death. Even though spouses are able to break the marriage bond, such action is sinful.**

Matthew 19:6 Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.

1 Corinthians 7:39 A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.

Romans 7:2,3 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage.<sup>3</sup> So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.

- b) **God condemns divorce as sin.**

Malachi 2:16 “I hate divorce,” says the LORD God of Israel, “and I hate a man’s covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,” says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.

Matthew 19:3-8 Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”<sup>4</sup> “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’<sup>5</sup> and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’?<sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”<sup>7</sup> “Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?”<sup>8</sup> Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.

- c) **Scripture reveals that marital unfaithfulness (*πορνεία*) breaks the marriage bond.**



Matthew 19:9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness (*πορνεία*), and marries another woman commits adultery.

Matthew 5:31,32 “It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’<sup>32</sup> But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness (*πορνεία*), causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

**d) Scripture reveals that malicious desertion breaks the marriage bond.**

1 Corinthians 7:15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

Armin Schuetze: Saint Paul makes mention of desertion in 1 Corinthians 7:15: “But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances.” To desert a spouse is an act of unbelief. It is sin. It breaks the marriage bond; the deserted person is no longer bound to the marriage. The one who deserts may or may not be involved in an adulterous relationship with another person. That is not the concern when speaking of desertion. Desertion by itself breaks a marriage. It would take us too far afield here to attempt a full scale study of all questions about desertion. Suffice it to say that not only geographical separation is desertion (*The Counseling Shepherd*, p 232).

Note: For desertion to be malicious it must be 1) unilateral, 2) willful, and 3) permanent.

**e) In the case of marital unfaithfulness and malicious desertion, the innocent partner may obtain a divorce, which simply recognizes that the marriage bond has already been broken.**

Matthew 19:9 except for marital unfaithfulness

1 Corinthians 7:15 A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances.

**f) The penitent sinner finds forgiveness also for the sin of divorce through Jesus who died for all sins.**

2 Samuel 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan replied, “The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.”

Psalms 32:3-5 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.<sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.<sup>5</sup> Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”— and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Psalm 51:1-12 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.<sup>2</sup> Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.<sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.<sup>4</sup> Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.<sup>5</sup> Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.<sup>6</sup> Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.<sup>7</sup> Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.<sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.<sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity.<sup>10</sup> Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

**g) The penitent sinner will also seek to apply appropriate fruits of repentance.**

Luke 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

John 8:11 Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Armin Schuetze: The term "fruit" implies willingness and a degree of spontaneity. Fruit is produced without legal compulsion. Hence we find that Scripture has not set up a code book that specifies the exact form which fruit of repentance must take in the case of every sin. But broad principles can be recognized.

- Fruit of repentance is to desist from the sin for which one repents.
- Fruit of repentance is to restore, if possible, what sin has ruined.
- Fruit of repentance is to amend one's sinful life, to replace evil with good.
- Fruit of repentance is to do all to the glory of God, whether we eat or drink, or work or play (*The Counseling Shepherd*, p 238).

**h) Annulment is a judgment that there never was a valid marriage, because there was no valid consent. It should not be used as a loophole to try to evade the Scripture's teaching on divorce.**

Kevin Quirk, Judicial Vicar: The Roman Catholic Church presumes that a marriage entered by two baptized persons is a sacrament, and as a sacrament it is indissoluble. This presumption can only be overturned by certain evidence produced by the couple and witnesses in a judicial process. However, the Church does not recognize the authority of civil courts in this matter, since it regards marriage as a sacrament. A civil decree of divorce is, in the mind of the Church, equivalent to a permanent separation from the common life but does not affect the validity or continued existence of the marriage. Since marriage is a sacrament, it is left to the Church to decide whether it is a valid sacrament or not. ... You cannot marry again without an annulment. This is because, following the teaching of Jesus Christ, the Church does not recognize a civil divorce. ...

In a nutshell: a civil divorce says you were really and truly married and it didn't work out, so that State lets you out of the contract and out of your promises. An annulment says that on the day you married either you were incapable of marriage or your consent to marry was defective for one of a number of reasons; therefore, the marriage is invalid and did not sacramentally exist, though you both thought that it did. Until you receive an annulment, the Church assumes you and your former spouse meant your vows and that your marriage continues to exist, no matter what the State says. This is because marriage existed in the Garden (i.e., was created by God) and preexisted the State. And the State then does not have the right to divide what God has joined (Web site of the Diocese of Wheeling).

**9. God ordained marriage as the basic unit for society. All human alternatives for marriage are contrary to his will.**

**a) Scripture reveals God's original intention for marriage—one man and one woman in a one-flesh relationship. The Bible never explicitly forbids polygamy.**

**1) God tolerated polygamy in the Old Testament, even among his people.**

Examples: Jacob (Genesis 29); Esau (Genesis 28); Elkanah (1 Samuel 1); David (2 Samuel 3); Solomon (1 Kings 11)

**2) God regulated polygamy in Old Testament Israel.**

Deuteronomy 21:15-17 If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love,<sup>16</sup> when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love.<sup>17</sup> He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.

**3) Yet God did not condone polygamy.**

Note: God also allowed other sins among his people to go unpunished. Moses murdered a man (Exodus 2:11,12); Abraham and Isaac lied about their wives (Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18; 26:1-11). See Acts 17:30.

**4) Scripture presents Lamech, the first polygamist mentioned in history, as a godless man.**

Genesis 4:19-24 Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah.<sup>20</sup> Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock.<sup>21</sup> His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute.<sup>22</sup> Zillah

also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah.<sup>23</sup> Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me."<sup>24</sup> If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times."

John Jeske: Lamech, the fifth generation after Cain, introduced polygamy into the human race. By doing so he showed contempt for God's stated purpose for marriage, that a man and a woman glorify God and serve each other by an unconditional commitment of love (*Genesis People's Bible*, p 65).

**5) The examples of polygamy in the Old Testament illustrate the problems that such a relationship causes.**

Genesis 30:1-3,9,14,15 When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!"<sup>2</sup> Jacob became angry with her and said, "Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?"<sup>3</sup> Then she said, "Here is Bilhah, my maidservant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and that through her I too can build a family."<sup>9</sup> When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her maidservant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. <sup>14</sup> During wheat harvest, Reuben went out into the fields and found some mandrake plants, which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."<sup>15</sup> But she said to her, "Wasn't it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son's mandrakes too?" "Very well," Rachel said, "he can sleep with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes."

1 Samuel 1:4-6 Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters.<sup>5</sup> But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb.<sup>6</sup> And because the LORD had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her.

**6) Scripture teaches that marriage is to be a monogamous relationship with mutual responsibilities.**

Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

1 Corinthians 7:2-4 But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.<sup>3</sup> The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.<sup>4</sup> The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her

husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.

Schuetze and Habeck: Marriage as instituted by God at the time of creation was to be a lifelong union of one man and one woman. God created a monogamous relationship. That the original institution is to be understood in this manner becomes evident when Jesus, referring to Genesis 2:24, concludes with the words, "and the two will become one flesh" (Mt 19:5). The marriage relationship involves two people. The fact that God-fearing men like Jacob and David were involved in polygamous marriages and divine disapproval in their cases is not directly evident does not change God's original institution, reaffirmed in the New Testament (*The Shepherd Under Christ*, p 270).

**b) Homosexuality is contrary to God's will.**

**1) Homosexuality violates natural law.**

Romans 1:26,27 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.<sup>27</sup> In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

**2) Homosexuality violates God's inscribed law.**

1 Corinthians 6:9,10 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders (*μαλακοὶ οὔτε ἀρσενικοῖται*)<sup>10</sup> nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Genesis 18:20,21 Then the LORD said, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous<sup>21</sup> that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know."

Genesis 19:24 Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens.

**3) God ordained marriage as a heterosexual relationship.**

Genesis 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

**4) The homosexual finds forgiveness for his sin in Christ who died for all sins.**

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders<sup>10</sup> nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>11</sup> And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

**5) The homosexual finds strength to avoid such sin in Christ who lives in him by faith and strengthens him by the gospel.**

John 8:34,36 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.<sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

Philippians 4:13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

Romans 7:21-25 So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.<sup>22</sup> For in my inner being I delight in God’s law;<sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.<sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?<sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

1 Corinthians 6:19,20 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;<sup>20</sup> you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Romans 6:4 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

**c) The “live-in” arrangement is contrary to God’s will.**

John 4:16-18 He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”<sup>17</sup> “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband.<sup>18</sup> The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

- 1) The “live-in” arrangement violates the scriptural principles of marriage because it is not designed to be a lifelong union.**
- 2) The “live-in” arrangement sets aside the scriptural purposes of marriage because it partakes of the blessings of marriage without assuming its responsibilities.**

**3) The “live-in” arrangement violates the scriptural principle of obedience to the government because it fails to fulfill both the legal and social requirements for marriage.**

Gerhard: The blessing of the church is necessary for entering marriage rightly, not because of any special divine precept, nor on account of the nature of marriage (as is if it would not be whole without the blessing of the church), but it is necessary because of requirements of the church and state introduced for the sake of public utility and honesty. The blessing of the church is not necessary for the thing itself (that is, for the essence of marriage) but as a public testimony to all that the marriage was legitimately and honestly contracted (*Loci*, XV, 396).

**4) The Christian will not conform to the ways of the unbelieving world but will seek to be the salt and light that he is.**

Romans 12:2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Matthew 5:13-16 You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.<sup>14</sup> You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.<sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.<sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Cf. “Scriptural Principles as They Pertain to Live-in Arrangements,” *WLQ*, 96:4, Fall 1999.

**10. God gave man and woman marriage as a blessing.**

Large Catechism, The Sixth Commandment, 208: Therefore God has also most richly blessed this estate above all others, and, in addition, has bestowed on it and wrapped up in it everything in the world, to the end that this estate might be well and richly provided for. Married life is therefore no jest or presumption; but it is an excellent thing and a matter of divine seriousness. For it is of the highest importance to Him that persons be raised who may serve the world and promote the knowledge of God, godly living, and all virtues, to fight against wickedness and the devil.

**a) Family life promotes the happiness of husband and wife.**

Genesis 2:18,22,23 The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”<sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought

her to the man.<sup>23</sup> The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

Proverbs 17:6 Children’s children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.

Proverbs 31:10-31 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.<sup>11</sup> Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.<sup>12</sup> She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.<sup>13</sup> She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.<sup>14</sup> She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.<sup>15</sup> She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.<sup>16</sup> She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.<sup>17</sup> She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.<sup>18</sup> She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.<sup>19</sup> In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.<sup>20</sup> She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.<sup>21</sup> When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.<sup>22</sup> She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.<sup>23</sup> Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.<sup>24</sup> She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.<sup>25</sup> She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.<sup>26</sup> She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.<sup>27</sup> She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.<sup>28</sup> Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:<sup>29</sup> “Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all.”<sup>30</sup> Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.<sup>31</sup> Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

**b) Family life provides a positive environment for parents to raise their children in the training and instruction of the Lord.**

Deuteronomy 6:7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

**c) Family life provides a positive environment where parents can apply loving Christian discipline.**

Proverbs 13:24 He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.

Proverbs 19:8 He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who cherishes understanding prospers.



Proverbs 22:15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.

Proverbs 23:13,14 Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die.<sup>14</sup> Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.

**d) Family life promotes peace and stability in society.**

1 Corinthians 7:2-5 But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.<sup>3</sup> The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.<sup>4</sup> The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.<sup>5</sup> Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

**11. It is not God's will that every man or woman gets married.**

**a) The single state has the blessing and approval of God.**

1 Corinthians 7:1,2,7-9,25-28 - Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry.<sup>2</sup> But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.<sup>7</sup> I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.<sup>8</sup> Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am.<sup>9</sup> But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.<sup>25</sup> Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.<sup>26</sup> Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are.<sup>27</sup> Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife.<sup>28</sup> But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

**b) In this life we all stand before God as singles.**

Galatians 3:26-28 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,<sup>27</sup> for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

**c) In the next life we will all stand before God as singles.**

Matthew 22:30 At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven.

**d) The single state is a spiritual gift that can be used to glorify God and serve his church.**

1 Corinthians 7:7 I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift (*χάρισμα*) from God; one has this gift, another has that.

Matthew 19:12 For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.

- e) **The single state is not a higher state. Scripture does not hold out virginity as the ultimate purity or abstinence as the ultimate act of devotion to God.**

Proverbs 18:22 He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.

1 Timothy 4:3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.

Matthew 19:12 For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.

- f) **Singles have gifts that can be used to glorify God and serve his church.**

1 Corinthians 7:7 I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift (*χάρισμα*) from God; one has this gift, another has that.

Matthew 19:12 For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.

- g) **God wants his church to address the spiritual needs of all members of the body of Christ, including the single members.**

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

- h) **God reminds all of us, whether single or married, that our main concern in this life is not to be our earthly relationships with each other but our spiritual status with Christ, our heavenly bridegroom.**

Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matthew 12:46-50 While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him.<sup>47</sup> Someone

told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.”<sup>48</sup> He replied to him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?”<sup>49</sup> Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers.”<sup>50</sup> For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

## **B. Civil Government.**

### **1. Governmental authority is of divine institution.**

Romans 13:1-7 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.<sup>3</sup> For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.<sup>4</sup> For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.<sup>6</sup> This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing.<sup>7</sup> Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Daniel 2:21,37 He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.<sup>37</sup> You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory;

Daniel 4:17,25,32 The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.<sup>25</sup> You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.

John 19:11 Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

### **2. The form of government is a matter of historical development.**

1 Peter 2:13,14 Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men (*πάση ἀνθρωπίνῃ κτίσει*): whether to the king, as the supreme authority,<sup>14</sup> or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

### **3. The object of government is to make the sin-infested world a comparatively safe and comfortable place in which to live.**

a) **The government's responsibility is to reward good and punish evil.**

Romans 13:4,6 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

1 Peter 2:14 [Submit yourselves to] governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

1 Timothy 2:2 [Pray] for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

b) **In particular the following affairs are mentioned as subject to government regulation.**

1) **The government is to promote civic righteousness.**

Deuteronomy 1:16,17 And I charged your judges at that time: Hear the disputes between your brothers and judge fairly, whether the case is between brother Israelites or between one of them and an alien.

<sup>17</sup>Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of any man, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard for you, and I will hear it.

Romans 13:3,4 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. <sup>4</sup>For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

2) **The government has the right to regulate marriage and divorce.**

Matthew 19:7,8 "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"

<sup>8</sup>Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning."

Smalcald Articles, Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 77: There remains the jurisdiction in those cases which, according to canonical law, pertain to the ecclesiastical court, as they call it, and especially in cases of matrimony. This, too, the bishops have only by human right, and that, not a very old one, as appears from the Codex and Novellae of Justinian that decisions concerning marriage at that time belongs to the magistrates.

3) **The government has the right to assess taxes and judge in financial and property matters.**

Matthew 22:19-21 "Show me the coin used for paying the tax."

They brought him a denarius,<sup>20</sup> and he asked them, “Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?”<sup>21</sup> “Caesar’s,” they replied. Then he said to them, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

Romans 13:7 Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Acts 19:24,38 A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen.<sup>38</sup> If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges.

Augsburg Confession, Ap., XVI, 59: The gospel forbids private redress in order that no one should interfere with the office of the magistrate, and Christ inculcates this so frequently with the design that the apostles should not think that they ought to seize the governments from those who held otherwise, just as the Jews dreamed concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, but that they might know they ought to teach concerning the spiritual kingdom that it does not change the civil state. Therefore private redress is prohibited not by advice, but by a command, Matt. 5, 39; Rom. 12, 19. Public redress, which is made through the office of the magistrate, is not advised against, but is commanded, and is a work of God, according to Paul, Rom. 13, 1 sqq.

Formula of Concord, Ep., XII, 14: [We reject] that a Christian cannot without injury to conscience use the office of the magistracy against the wicked in matters matters so requiring, nor that subjects may invoke for their protection and defense the power which the magistrates possess and have received from God. Parallel Formula of Concord, T.D., XII, 19

#### **4) The government also a responsibility to protect body and life.**

Genesis 9:6 “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

Exodus 21:22-25 If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows.<sup>23</sup> But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life,<sup>24</sup> eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,<sup>25</sup> burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

Formula of Concord, Ep., XII, 16: [We reject] that under the New Testament magistrates cannot, without injury to conscience, inflict capital punishment upon malefactors. Also F.C., T.D., XII, 21

**5) The government enforces law and order through means such as fines, imprisonment, and capital punishment.**

Exodus 21:22,30 If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows.<sup>30</sup> However, if payment is demanded of him, he may redeem his life by paying whatever is demanded.

Matthew 5:25 Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.

Genesis 9:6 Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

Romans 13:4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

**6) The government has the right to wage war and the responsibility to maintain peace and stability in society. The traditional criteria of a just war (or perhaps better, a justified war) are 1) a war waged by a legal authority, 2) for a just cause, 3) as a last resort, 4) with a reasonable probability of success, 5) with proportionate means, 6) with regard for the innocent.**

Psalms 144:1: Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.<sup>2</sup> He is my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.

Deuteronomy 20:1-4: When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and an army greater than yours, do not be afraid of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you.<sup>2</sup> When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army.<sup>3</sup> He shall say: "Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them.<sup>4</sup> For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

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1 Timothy 2:2 [Pray] for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

**4. Promoting religion has not been committed to civil government.**

a) **Government officials may, indeed, use their personal influence in the interest of the church (confession).**

Isaiah 49:23 Kings will be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers. They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground; they will lick the dust at your feet. Then you will know that I am the LORD; those who hope in me will not be disappointed.

2 Chronicles 9:7,8 How happy your men must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! <sup>8</sup> Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on his throne as king to rule for the LORD your God. Because of the love of your God for Israel and his desire to uphold them forever, he has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness.

Smalcald Articles, Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 54: But especially the chief members of the church, kings and princes, ought to guard the interests of the church, and to see to it that errors be removed and consciences be healed, as God expressly exhorts kings, Ps. 2, 10: Be wise, now, therefore, O kings; be instructed, judges of the earth. For it should be the first care of kings and great lords to advance the glory of God. Therefore it would be very shameful for them to lend their influence and power to confirm idolatry and infinite other crimes, and to slaughter saints.

b) **Government may recognize and use the positive influence of the church to promote peace and stability in society.**

Confer Daniel in Babylon, Cyrus' restoration of the temple, roles of Ezra and Nehemiah.

5. **While there are no explicit passages that deal with the subject in depth, the Bible does teach a distinction between the roles of church and state.**

Matthew 22: 21 Then he said to them, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

John 18:36 My kingdom is not of this world.

Luke 12:14 Who made me a judge or a divider over you?

Brug: Since there are some areas in life in which both the state and the church have a valid interest, such as marriage, sexual morality, education, and so on, their interests and activities may sometimes overlap. Perhaps it might, therefore, be clearer if we would speak of "avoiding a mixture or confusion of church and state," rather than of a "separation of church and state." It is not possible to demand a total separation of all activities of church and state. One area in which we regularly accept a certain overlap of interests is in the public establishment of a marriage ("The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms," *OGH*, II, p 406,407).

Note: In evaluating areas of church/state co-operation we must keep three questions distinct: 1) Is this co-operation forbidden by Scripture? 2) Is this

forbidden by the law of the land? 3) Does this lead to dangerous entanglement?

**a) Scripture indicates that the state and church have distinct roles.**

**1) The role of the church is to care for the spiritual welfare of God's people and to reach out to a lost world.**

Matthew 28:19,20 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> and surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.

John 21:15,16 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."<sup>16</sup> Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

**2) The role of the state is to maintain peace and stability in society, which also permits the free preaching of the gospel.**

1 Timothy 2:1,2 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—<sup>2</sup>for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

**b) Scripture indicates that the state and church have distinct too.**

**1) The tool of the state is the sword, administered on the basis of human reason. The state uses natural law to curb godlessness and violence.**

Romans 13:3-5 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.<sup>4</sup> For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

**2) The tool of the church is the sword of the Spirit, administered through the gospel in Word and Sacrament. It applies God's law as a mirror, curb, and a guide for Christian living.**

Ephesians 6:17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.



Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

**6. Scripture addresses a Christian's attitude and actions towards government.**

**a) The Christian is called upon to pray for the government and its leaders.**

1 Timothy 2:1,2 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—<sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

**b) The Christian is called upon to obey the government and its leaders and to show them honor and respect.**

Romans 13:1,6,7 Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. <sup>6</sup>This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. <sup>7</sup>Give everyone what you owe him: if you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

**c) The Christian is called upon to pray against evil including that which the government causes.**

Psalms 139:19,21 If only you would slay the wicked, O God! Away from me, you bloodthirsty men! <sup>21</sup> Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD, and abhor those who rise up against you?

Revelation 6:10 They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?"

**d) The Christian is called upon to speak out against sin and injustice, even if the government is at fault.**

Matthew 14:3,4 Now Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, <sup>4</sup> for John had been saying to him: "It is not lawful for you to have her."

Psalms 58:1,2 Do you rulers indeed speak justly? Do you judge uprightly among men? <sup>2</sup>No, in your heart you devise injustice, and your hands mete out violence on the earth.

**e) The Christian is called upon to disobey laws that require him or her to sin. Such disobedience will involve passive resistance and not active rebellion.**

Acts 5:29 Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than men!”

Exodus 1:17,20,21 The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live.<sup>20</sup> So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous.<sup>21</sup> And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

Matthew 26:52 “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.”

**f) The Christian may be called upon to patiently suffer injustice if doing so gives glory to God.**

1 Samuel 24 – David and Saul at the cave near Engedi.

Matthew 26:52 – Jesus and Peter in the garden.

Acts 5:41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

Romans 12:17-19 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.<sup>18</sup> If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.<sup>19</sup> Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.

Proverbs 20:22 Do not say, “I’ll pay you back for this wrong!” Wait for the LORD, and he will deliver you.

1 Peter 2:21-23 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.<sup>22</sup> “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”<sup>23</sup> When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

**g) The Christian may be called upon to seek justice for wrongs if doing so gives glory to God.**

John 18:23 “If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?”

Acts 16 – Paul and Silas in prison

Acts 24,25 – Paul on trial

**h) A Christian may also serve in the capacity of a government official.**

2 Kings 5:17-19 Naaman said, “please let me, your servant, be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the LORD.<sup>18</sup> But may the LORD forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down and he is leaning on my arm and I bow there also—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD forgive your servant for this.”<sup>19</sup> “Go in peace,” Elisha said.

Acts 8:36,37 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?”

Acts 17:34 A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

Luke 3:14 Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”

Luther: “Temporal Authority, To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed,” *LW* 45,81ff.

Luther: “Whether Soldiers, Too, Can Be Saved,” *LW* 46,93ff.

## **7. The church may be benefited by government.**

### **a) Good government protects it in its peaceful external development.**

Romans 13:4,6 For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.<sup>6</sup> This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing.

1 Timothy 2:2 [Pray] for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

Acts 9:31 Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

### **b) Persecution by bad government may test the spirit of the church.**

Matthew 10:16-18 I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.<sup>17</sup> Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues.<sup>18</sup> On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles.

Acts 4:24-26 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heaven and the

earth and the sea, and everything in them.<sup>25</sup> You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: ““Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?<sup>26</sup> The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One.”

Romans 8:36,37 As it is written: “For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Philippians 1:12-13 Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.<sup>13</sup> As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

## **8. For confessional statements of the roles of church and state see:**

Augsburg Confession, XVI: Of civil affairs they teach that lawful civil ordinances are good works of God, and that it is right for Christians to bear civil office, to sit as judges, to judge matters by the Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to make an oath when required by the magistrates, to marry a wife, to be given in marriage. They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid these civil offices to Christians. They condemn also those who do not place evangelical perfection in the fear of God and in faith, but in forsaking civil offices, for the gospel teaches an eternal righteousness of the heart. Meanwhile, it does not destroy the state or the family, but very much requires that they be preserved as ordinances of God, and that charity be practiced in such ordinances. Therefore, Christians are necessarily bound to obey their own magistrates and laws save only when commanded to sin; for then they ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5, 29.

Augsburg Confession, XXVIII, 10-19: Therefore, since the power of the church grants eternal things and is exercised only by the ministry of the Word, it does not interfere with civil government; no more than the art of singing interferes with civil government. For civil government deals with other things than does the Gospel. The civil rulers defend not minds, but bodies and bodily things against manifest injuries, and restrain men with the sword and bodily punishments in order to preserve civil justice and peace. Therefore the power of the church and the civil power must not be confounded. The power of the church has its own commission to teach the gospel and to administer the sacraments. Let it not break into the office of another; let it not transfer the kingdoms of this world; let it not abrogate the laws of civil rulers; let it not abolish lawful obedience; let it not interfere with judgments concerning civil ordinances or contracts; let it not prescribe laws to civil rulers concerning the form of the Commonwealth.

Augsburg Confession, Ap., IV, 22: For God wishes those who are carnal gross sinners to be restrained by civil discipline, and to maintain this, he has given laws, letters, doctrine, magistrates, penalties.

Large Catechism, The Fourth Commandment ,141.142: In this commandment

belongs a further statement regarding all kinds of obedience to persons in authority who have to command and to govern. For all authority flows and is propagated from the authority of parents. For where a father is unable alone to educate his rebellious and irritable child, he employs a schoolmaster to instruct him; if he be too weak, he enlists the aid of his friends and neighbors; if he departs this life, he delegates and confers his authority and government upon others who are appointed for the purpose. Likewise, he must have domestics, man-servants and maid-servants, under himself for the management of the household, so that all whom we call masters are in the place of parents and must derive their power and authority to govern from them. Hence also they are all called fathers in the Scriptures, as those who in their government perform the functions of a father, and should have a paternal heart toward their subordinates. As also from antiquity the Romans and other nations called the masters and mistresses of the household *patres- et matres- familiae*, that is, housefathers and housemothers. So also they called their national rulers and overlords *patres patriae*, that is, fathers of the entire country, for a great shame to us who would be Christians that we do not likewise call them so, or, at least, do not esteem and honor them as such.

Formula of Concord, Ep., XII, 12–16: [We reject those who hold] 1. That under the New Testament the magistracy is not an estate pleasing to God. 2. That a Christian cannot with a good, inviolate conscience hold or discharge the office of magistrate. 3. That a Christian cannot without injury to conscience use the office of the magistracy against the wicked in matters so requiring, nor that subjects may invoke for their protection and defense the power which the magistrates possess and have received from God. 4. That a Christian cannot with a good conscience take an oath, nor with an oath promise fidelity to the hereditary prince of his country or sovereign. 5. That under the New Testament magistrates cannot, without injury to conscience, inflict capital punishment upon malefactors.

**9. Examples of confusion of the roles of the state and religion include the following.**

**a) Roman Catholicism**

Catholic Encyclopedia CD Version: The State, then, exists to help man to temporal happiness the Church, to eternal. Of these two purposes the latter is more ultimate.... It is clear, therefore, that the purpose of the Church is higher in the order of Divine Providence and of righteous human endeavour than that of the State.... In all subject-matter not purely spiritual nor purely temporal, but at the same time both spiritual and temporal in character, both jurisdictions may enter, and so entering give occasion to collision, for which there must be a principle of solution. In case of direct contradiction, making it impossible for both jurisdictions to be exercised, the jurisdiction of the Church prevails, and that of the State is excluded. ....In analogous fashion every higher court is always judge of its own jurisdiction as against a lower.

**b) Liberation theology**

Millard J. Erickson defining: Liberation theologies – the salvation of all persons from oppression – is the goal of God’s work in history and must therefore be the task of those who believe in him, utilizing every means possible, including political effort and even revolution if necessary (*Christian Theology*, p 909).

**c) Islam**

Hathout Hassan: In Islam, the rule and role of jama’a “community” is very high, and the political sphere is just one more community where Islam is to be applied to life. But Islam is understood by Muslims to be both *din* and *dawla*, religion and government (*Reading the Muslim Mind*, p 234).

**d) Theonomy, Dominion Theology, Christian Reconstructionism.**

Greg Bahnsen: The New Testament teaches us that—unless exceptions are revealed elsewhere—every Old Testament commandment is binding, even as the standard of justice for all magistrates (Rom. 13:1-4), including every recompense stipulated for civil offenses in the law of Moses (Heb 2:2). From the New Testament alone we learn that we must take as our operating presumption that any Old Testament penal requirement is binding today on all civil magistrates. The presumption can surely be modified by definite, revealed teaching in the Scripture, but in the absence of such qualifications or changes, any Old Testament penal sanction we have in mind would be morally obligatory for civil rulers (*No Other Standard* p 68).

Gary North: The proper exegetical principle is this: Mosaic law is still to be enforced, by the church or the State or both, unless there is a specific injunction to the contrary in the New Testament (*The Sinai Strategy: Economics and the Ten Commandments*, p 255).

**e) Caesaro-papism of the Byzantine Empire and European state churches.**

Timothy Ware: At the heart of the Christian polity of Byzantium was the Emperor, who was no ordinary ruler, but God’s representative on earth. If Byzantium was an icon of the heavenly Jerusalem, then the earthly monarchy of the Emperor was an image or icon of the monarchy of God in heaven; in church men prostrated themselves before the icon of Christ, and in the palace before God’s living icon – the Emperor. The labyrinthine palace, the Court with its elaborate ceremonial, the throne room where mechanical lions roared and musical birds sang: these things were designed to make clear the Emperor’s status as vice-regent of God. . . . The Emperor had a special place in the Church’s worship: he could not of course celebrate the Eucharist, but he received communion ‘as priests do’, he preached sermons, on certain feasts he censed the altar. The vestments which Orthodox bishops now wear are the vestments once worn by the Emperor in church. . . The life of Byzantium formed a unified whole, and there was no rigid line of separation between the religious and the secular, between Church and State: the two were seen as parts of a single organism (*The Orthodox Church* , p 48-49).

**f) Calvinism**

Calvin: The duty of magistrates, its nature, as described by the word of God, and the things in which it consists, I will here indicate in passing. That it extends to both tables of the law, even if Scripture did not teach this, we could learn from profane writers, for no man has discoursed of the duty of magistrates, the enacting of laws, and the common weal, without beginning with religion and divine worship. Thus all have confessed that no polity can be successfully established unless piety be its first care, and that those laws are absurd which disregard the rights of God, and consult only for men.... This rebukes the folly of those who would neglect the care of divine things, and devote themselves merely to the administration of justice among men; as if God had appointed rulers in his own name to decide earthly controversies, and omitted what was of far greater moment, his own pure worship as prescribed by his law (*Institutes* BK IV, ch. 20, section 9).

**g) Some Lutheran dogmaticians**

Hutter. The chief duties of the civil magistrate are: (1) to pay attention to both tables of the Decalogue, so far as they pertain to outward discipline, etc (*Loc. Th.*, 279).

Hollaz: The civil magistrate has been ordained for the public good, and his office is fourfold: (1) Ecclesiastical, for kings are the nursing fathers of the Church, and the bishops outside of the temple. (2) Civil... (3)Moral... (4) Natural ...(*Examen*, 1366)

Hollaz: The magistracy is employed with sacred affairs, by carefully observing and performing those things which ought to be believed and done by all men who are to be saved, Ps. 2:10-12, and by directing the church and the Christian religion in their external government (1361). The inner economy and government of sacred things, consisting in the doctrine of the Word, in absolution from sins, and the lawful administration of the sacraments, are peculiar to the ministers of the church. The magistrate cannot claim them for himself without committing crime (*Examen*, 1362).

Baier lists specific duties: The appointing of suitable ministers of the church; the erection and preservation of schools and houses of worship, as well as the providing for the honorable support of ministers; the appointing of visitations and councils; the framing and maintenance of the laws of the church, the controlling of the revenues of the church, and the preservation of church discipline; the trial of heretical ministers, as also of those of bad character, and all other similar persons belonging to the churches and schools, and the compelling them to appear before a court; providing for the punishment of those convicted of heresies or crimes; and the abrogation of heresies that are manifest and have been condemned by the church, and of idolatrous forms of worship, so that the church be cleansed from them (*Compendium*, 809).

**10. Luther had a clear understanding of the distinction between church and state.**

Luther: After the abolition of the Law the secular emperors, kings, and princes were entrusted with the sword of iron, and the oral sword was assigned to the apostles and us preachers. This distinction must remain intact; and let all who can lend a hand to that end. But if the princes continue to jumble the two, as they are now doing, then may God in his mercy shorten our lives that we may not witness the ensuing disaster. For in such circumstances the Christian religion must go to wrack and ruin. This is what happened in the papacy when the bishops became secular princes. And if the secular lords now become popes and bishops and insist on sermons that defer to their wishes, then let the wretched devil preach to them, for he preaches too. But let us pray God that neither the spiritual nor the secular realm abuses its office that way (*LW* 22, 228, Commentary on John 2).

**V. In connection with God's providence we may also consider:  
Miracles—Prophecies—Prayer—End of life—Chance (*Zufall*).**

**1. Miracles.**

**a) The following designations of miracles occur in Scripture. These words do not always refer to miracles in the strict sense.**

**1) נִפְלְאוֹת וְתִמְתֻּלֹּת - θαυμάσιον - *miraculum* - wonders**

These words describe a miracle that inspires awe. They stress the amazing aspect of the miracle.

Psalm 9:1 I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your *wonders*.

Psalm 40:5 Many, O LORD my God, are the *wonders* you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.

Exodus 3:20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the *wonders* that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

Exodus 15:11 Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working *wonders*?

Judges 6:13 “But sir,” Gideon replied, “if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his *wonders* that our fathers told us about when they said, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian.”

Psalm 77:11,14 I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your *miracles* of long ago.<sup>14</sup> You are the God who performs *miracles*; you display your power among the peoples.



Matthew 21:15 But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the *wonderful things* he did and the children shouting in the temple area, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant.

2) מוֹפֵת - τέρας - *prodigium* - wonders, signs

Though these words are often translated “wonder” or “sign,” they sometimes carry the negative connotation of an “omen” or “portent.”

Exodus 4:21 The LORD said to Moses, “When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the *wonders* I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go.”

Exodus 7:3,9 But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and *wonders* in Egypt,<sup>9</sup> “When Pharaoh says to you, ‘Perform a *miracle*,’ then say to Aaron, ‘Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh,’ and it will become a snake.”

Matthew 24:24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and *miracles* to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.

John 4:48 “Unless you people see miraculous signs and *wonders*,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

Acts 2:19,43 I will show *wonders* in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.<sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many *wonders* and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

3) גְבוּרָה - δύναμις - *vis, virtus* - mighty acts

These words point to the power that makes the miracle possible.

Deuteronomy 3:24 O Sovereign LORD, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and *mighty works* you do?

Psalms 106:2 Who can proclaim the *mighty acts* of the LORD or fully declare his praise?

Psalms 150:2 Praise him for his *acts of power*; praise him for his surpassing greatness.

Matthew 14:2 He said to his attendants, “This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead! That is why *miraculous powers* are at work in him.”

Mark 6:2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. “Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does *miracles*!”

Galatians 3:5 Does God give you his Spirit and work *miracles* among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?

4) **τίς - σημεῖον - *signum* - sign**

These words point to the purpose or testimony of the act—why the miracle was done.

Exodus 4:8,9,17 Then the LORD said, “If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first *miraculous sign*, they may believe the second [*sign*].<sup>9</sup> But if they do not believe these two *signs* or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground.”<sup>17</sup> “But take this staff in your hand so you can perform *miraculous signs* with it.”

Exodus 7:3 But I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and though I multiply my *miraculous signs* and wonders in Egypt.

Deuteronomy 4:34 Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by *miraculous signs* and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?

Deuteronomy 6:22 Before our eyes the LORD sent *miraculous signs* and wonders—great and terrible—upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household.

Luke 11:16 Others tested him by asking for a *sign* from heaven.

John 2:11 This, the first of his *miraculous signs*, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

John 4:48 “Unless you people see *miraculous signs* and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

Acts 2:22 Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and *signs*, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

Acts 2:19,43 I will show wonders in the heaven above and *signs* on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.<sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and *miraculous signs* were done by the apostles.

Matthew 24:24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great *signs* and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.

5) **Also general words, which speak of God's works (ἔργα, עֲשֵׂוֹתָי) may denote a miracle.**

Psalm 9:11 Sing praises to the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations *what he has done*.

Isaiah 12:4 In that day you will say: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations *what he has done*, and proclaim that his name is exalted.

John 5:20,36 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all *he does*. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.<sup>36</sup> "I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very *work* that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me."

Revelation 15:3 [They] sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your *deeds*, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages."

b) **A miracle in the strict sense is a deed which is performed by power beyond the laws of nature.**

Psalm 78:13 He divided the sea and led them through; he made the water stand firm like a wall.

Compare Psalm 33:7 He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses.

Psalm 78:19,20 They spoke against God, saying, "Can God spread a table in the desert?<sup>20</sup> When he struck the rock, water gushed out, and streams flowed abundantly. But can he also give us food? Can he supply meat for his people?" Compare Numbers 11:31 Now a wind went out from the LORD and drove quail in from the sea. It brought them down all around the camp to about three feet above the ground, as far as a day's walk in any direction.

Quenstedt: A distinction must be made between *θαύματα* and *θαυμάσια*, or between miracles and wonders or marvels. Miracles which are true and properly so called are those things which are done contrary to the power given to natural things by God and contrary to the natural course or through the extraordinary power of God, as when iron floats, water is changed into wine, etc. 2 Cor 11:14; Re 17:6. It is by extraordinary providence when God works either without means or beyond or above means or contrary to means and their nature, or, which is the same, above and contrary to the order established by him (*TDP*, Part I, Chapter XI, Section II, qu. IV, fon. so., X, p 471).

- 1) **As on the one hand the laws of nature do not prevent miracles, so on the other hand miracles do not abrogate the laws of nature for the regular course of events.**
- 2) **Miracles are frequently divided into natural miracles (*miracula naturae*) and miracles of grace (*miracula gratiae*, e.g. conversion,**

**Lord's Supper, Baptism). It is the former class with which we are chiefly concerned when speaking of God's providence.**

**3) Though not miracles in the strict sense, God's government of the world is one unbroken chain of wonders.**

Job 5:8-10 “But if it were I, I would appeal to God; I would lay my cause before him.<sup>9</sup> He performs wonders that cannot be fathomed, miracles that cannot be counted.<sup>10</sup> He bestows rain on the earth; he sends water upon the countryside.

Psalm 40:4,5 Blessed is the man who makes the LORD his trust, who does not look to the proud, to those who turn aside to false gods.<sup>5</sup> Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.

**c) God alone can perform miracles.**

**1) Scripture attests to this truth.**

**Direct statements:**

Exodus 15:11 Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

Psalm 72:18 Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds.

Psalm 136:4 To him who alone does great wonders, His love endures forever.

**Implied Statements:**

Exodus 15:6 Your right hand, O LORD, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy.

Psalm 77:14 You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples.

Psalm 78:4 We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done.

Psalm 86:10 For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.

Daniel 4:2,3 It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.<sup>3</sup> How great are his signs, how mighty his wonders! His kingdom is an eternal kingdom; his dominion endures from generation to generation.

Calov: [Miracles are] things which cannot originate except from a first cause and exceed the powers of any creature, from which their divinity could certainly be easily recognized (*Systema*, tom. I, cap. III, p 273).

## **2) Men have performed miracles by God's power.**

### **-a) They were then authorized by God to do so.**

Exodus 4:21 The LORD said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go."

Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

Mark 16:17,18 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues;<sup>18</sup> they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.

### **-b) They declined any personal honor.**

Genesis 40:8 "We both had dreams," they answered, "but there is no one to interpret them." Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams."

Genesis 41:16 "I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh, "but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires."

Daniel 2:26-28 The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"<sup>27</sup> Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about,<sup>28</sup> but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these."

Acts 3:12,13,16 When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?<sup>13</sup> The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.<sup>16</sup> By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see."

## **3) Even enemies of God have performed apparent miracles.**

**-a) This was with God's permission.**

Exodus 7:11 Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts. Compare Exodus 8:18,19 But when the magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, they could not. And the gnats were on men and animals.<sup>19</sup> The magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen, just as the LORD had said.

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder,<sup>2</sup> and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them,"<sup>3</sup> you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Revelation 13:13 [The second beast] performed great and miraculous signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in full view of men.<sup>14</sup> Because of the signs he was given power to do on behalf of the first beast, he deceived the inhabitants of the earth.

**-b) God's purpose in such cases is varied.**

**-1) He does this to test his children.**

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 above

Matthew 24:24 For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible.

**-2) He does this to punish the hardened unbeliever.**

Exodus 7:22 But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart became hard; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,<sup>10</sup> and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.<sup>11</sup> For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie<sup>12</sup> and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

**d) In performing miracles, God has a clear purpose.**

**1) He performs them to rescue his children.**

Psalm 107:2,8 Let the redeemed of the LORD say this— those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,<sup>8</sup> Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. Repeated in verses 15,21,31

Jeremiah 21:2 Inquire now of the LORD for us because Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon is attacking us. Perhaps the LORD will perform wonders for us as in times past so that he will withdraw from us.

**2) He performs them to assist our faith.**

John 2:11 This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

John 20:30,31 Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.<sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Matthew 11:5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

Mark 16:20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

Acts 2:22 Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

Chemnitz: But miracles, on the other hand, should not be preferred to doctrine, which was confirmed by the miracles of Christ and the apostles. Cf Jn 2:23-24; 4:48 (*Loci*, pars III, *de ecclesia*, p 132).

Gerhard: Miracles, if they do not have the truth of doctrine joined to them, prove nothing (*Loci*, tom. XII, loc. XXIII, cap XI, sect. XI, paragraph 276, p 107).

Luther: If they try to make you institute a different worship, that is, to forsake the single pure doctrine and to start something different alongside it, then you should not believe, though it were snowing miracles.... The rule is this: Regardless of their size and number, no wonders or signs are to be accepted contrary to established teaching (*LW* 21, 279).

**3) He does not perform them to satisfy people's curiosity.**

Matthew 12:39 He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”

Luke 23:8-9 When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle.<sup>9</sup> He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer.

**e) Liberal theology denies the reality of miracles.**

Philip J. Hefner: Jesus is pictured as a person “in touch” with the creator God and God’s activity. As such he is himself an agent of the Creator’s power. The nature miracles portray this vividly. Jesus stills the storm in a quiet and matter-of-fact manner; the swine serve his purpose with the demoniac; he knows where the fish are to be found even when the master fishermen are confounded. The so-called “nature miracles,” whatever their exact background, are really creation stories reflecting Jesus’ basic trust in the creator (Braaten and Jenson, *Christian Dogmatics*, I, p 288).

**2. Prophecies.**

**a) Through prophecies God announces his plans (πρόγνωσις, πρόθεσις).**

**1) Prophecy (foretelling) proves God's sovereign majesty.**

Isaiah 41:21-23 “Present your case,” says the LORD. “Set forth your arguments,” says Jacob’s King.<sup>22</sup> “Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come,<sup>23</sup> tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear.”

Isaiah 42:9 See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.

Isaiah 43:9 All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble. Which of them foretold this and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, “It is true.”

Isaiah 44:6,7 This is what the LORD says— Israel’s King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.<sup>7</sup> Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come—yes, let him foretell what will come.

Daniel 2:28 There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:



## 2) **As a rule God employed human spokesmen.**

Numbers 12:6 He said, “Listen to my words: “When a prophet of the LORD is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams.”

1 Samuel 9:9 Formerly in Israel, if a man went to inquire of God, he would say, “Come, let us go to the seer,” because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.

Hosea 12:10 I spoke to the prophets, gave them many visions and told parables through them.

Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”

1 Samuel 28:6 [Saul] inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets.

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Numbers 23:5 The LORD put a message in Balaam’s mouth and said, “Go back to Balak and give him this message.”

John 11:51 He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation.

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Numbers 22:28 Then the LORD opened the donkey’s mouth, and she said to Balaam, “What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?”

Gerhard: The name “prophets” is given in Scripture chiefly and particularly to those teachers of the church who, after the Levitical priesthood was established, were called and raised up by God in an extraordinary way for the purification of doctrine and the clearer repetition of the promise of the Messiah and who, illuminated by the spirit of prophecy, foretold future things. (He says further:) Prophets are men ... speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and fortelling the future. (Then he adds:) Which things must be fulfilled (*Loc. tom XII, loc. XXIV, de minist. eccl., cap I, paragraph XVIII, p 18*).

## 3) **God's prophecies must not be compared with heathen oracles, human conjectures, forebodings, etc.**

Leviticus 19:31 Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 18:10-11 Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft,<sup>11</sup> or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

Isaiah 8:19 When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?

Acts 19:18-19 Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds.<sup>19</sup> A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas.

**b) All prophecies must be fulfilled (God's immutability).**

Matthew 26:54 But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?

Mark 14:49 Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.

Luke 24:25,26 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!<sup>26</sup> Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"

Romans 15:8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs.

Revelation 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must (δεῖ) soon take place.

**c) All prophecy culminates in Christ.**

**1) Jesus is himself the great prophet.**

Deuteronomy 18:15,18 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.<sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.

Matthew 12:17-18 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:<sup>18</sup> "Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations."

Matthew 17:5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

John 1:17 The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

**2) The Savior is the central theme of all prophecies.**

Matthew 11:13 All the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.

Acts 3:24 Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days.

Acts 10:43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

Gerhard: Just as the prophets describe the worship of the New Testament with words that pertain properly to the legal worship of the Old Testament and are taken from it, so also they picture the spiritual kingdom of Christ with words for earthly things taken from the customary state of the church under the Old Testament (*Loci*, tom. XX, loc. XXX, cap. VII, paragraph XC, 6, p 120).

### 3) **Jesus is the end of all the ways of God.**

#### **-a) At times seemingly trivial things were the objects of prophecy, but God's ability in the small things points to his power in the greater.**

1 Samuel 9:19-20 "I am the seer," Samuel replied. "Go up ahead of me to the high place, for today you are to eat with me, and in the morning I will let you go and will tell you all that is in your heart.

<sup>20</sup>As for the donkeys you lost three days ago, do not worry about them; they have been found. And to whom is all the desire of Israel turned, if not to you and all your father's family?"

#### **-b) All of God's plans center in Christ.**

Genesis 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Acts 2:23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 3:18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.

Acts 4:28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

#### **-c) Thus prophecies help to establish the truth that divine providence aims at man's salvation through Christ.**

Galatians 4:4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law.

Ephesians 1:10 To be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

**d) The cessationist view holds that all prophecy has ceased.**

Grudem: Within the evangelical world today there are differing positions over the question, “Are all the gifts mentioned in the New Testament valid for use in the church today?” Some would say yes. Others would say no, and would argue that some of the more miraculous gifts (such as prophecy, tongues plus interpretation, and perhaps healing and casting out of demons) were given only during the time of the apostles, as “signs” to authenticate the apostles during the early preaching of the gospel. They state that these gifts are no longer needed as signs today, and that they ceased at the end of the apostolic age, probably at the end of the first century or beginning of the second century A.D. We should also realize that there is a large “middle” group with respect to this question, a group of “mainstream evangelicals” who are neither charismatic or Pentecostals on the one hand, nor “cessationists” on the other hand, but are simply undecided, and unsure if this question can be decided from Scripture (*Systematic Theology*, p 1031).

**1) They base this view on 1 Corinthians 13:8**

1 Corinthians 13:8 But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

**2) This view seems to be in harmony with the truth that God’s plan of salvation and his Scriptures are complete.**

Hebrews 1:1-2 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

Revelation 22:18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book.

**3) Scripture does not establish this point with certainty, therefore it must remain an open question. Our only responsibility is to judge the alleged prophet’s doctrine by using Scripture.**

**3. Prayer**

**a) God hears and answers the petitions of his children.**

**1) Scripture states this clearly.**

Job 34:28 They caused the cry of the poor to come before him, so that he heard the cry of the needy.

Psalm 4:3 Know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD will hear when I call to him.

Psalm 34:17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.

Psalm 65:2 O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come.

Proverbs 15:29 The LORD is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

Zechariah 13:9 This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, "They are my people," and they will say, "The LORD is our God."

## **2) Prayer has a great influence on God's government of the world.**

Philippians 1:19 I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.

Philemon 22 And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

James 5:14-18 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. <sup>15</sup>And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. <sup>16</sup>Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. <sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. <sup>18</sup> Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

## **b) God has from eternity woven the prayers of his children into his plan of world government.**

### **1) Prayers are in themselves the free exercise of the Christian's ability to communicate with his heavenly Father.**

Luke 11:2-4 He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. <sup>3</sup> Give us each day our daily bread.

<sup>4</sup>Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.'"

John 16:26,27 In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. <sup>27</sup> No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.

Romans 8:14,28 Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.  
<sup>28</sup> And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

**2) According to the new self, Christians pray according to God's will.**

John 16:23 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

1 John 5:14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

**3) God prearranges the course of events according to his foreknowledge of his children's prayers.**

Jeremiah 7:16 So do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them; do not plead with me, for I will not listen to you.

Jeremiah 11:14 Do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them, because I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their distress.

Acts 27:24 He said, "Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you."

Compare Acts 27:31 Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved."

Isaiah 65:24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

**4. End of life (*terminus vitae*).**

**a) In a general way, God has determined the length of human life.**

Psalms 90:10 The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

Psalms 102:23,24 In the course of my life he broke my strength; he cut short my days. <sup>24</sup> So I said: "Do not take me away, O my God, in the midst of my days; your years go on through all generations."

**b) God has also determined the years of each individual.**

Note: God has done this by giving a man a certain constitution, placing him in a certain environment, leading him on a certain career, etc.

Job 14:5 Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.

Psalm 31:15 My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.

Psalm 39:4,5 Show me, O LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life.<sup>5</sup> You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath.

Psalm 91:7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

Psalm 139:16 All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

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Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

**c) In predetermining the end of an individual life, God pays due regard to natural causes, man's conduct, etc. In doing so his justice and mercy are evident.**

Isaiah 57:1,2 The righteous perish, and no one ponders it in his heart; devout men are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil.<sup>2</sup> Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.

1 Kings 14:12,13 As for you, go back home. When you set foot in the city, the boy will die. All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only one belonging to Jeroboam who will be buried, because he is the only one in the house of Jeroboam in whom the Lord, the God of Israel, has found anything good.

2 Kings 20:1-6 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."<sup>2</sup> Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD,<sup>3</sup> "Remember, O LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.<sup>4</sup> Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him:<sup>5</sup> "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the LORD.<sup>6</sup> I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.'"

Acts 27:24 He said, "Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you." Compare Acts 27:42-44 <sup>42</sup> The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. <sup>43</sup> But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those

who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land.<sup>44</sup> The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety.

Psalm 5:7 But I, by your great mercy, will come into your house; in reverence will I bow down toward your holy temple.

Compare Psalm 5:6 You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the LORD abhors.

Psalm 55:23 But you, O God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of corruption; bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you.

Psalm 94:23 He will repay them for their sins and destroy them for their wickedness; the LORD our God will destroy them.

Baier: It is a well established fact that it is not absolutely necessary that each man die at that time and in that manner of death with which he dies, nor it has not been absolutely and immutably decreed by God outside of and before all respect to causes or circumstances which are to be found outside of God. For otherwise the prayers and vows of the pious would be useless, and the divine promises and threats would also be useless ... [Gerhard:] The supernatural or divine end is always conditional, including the condition of piety or impiety or the contempt of means [to prolong life, such as food, medicine, etc.] (*Compendium*, p 315).

Note: Observation is insufficient when it comes to God's providence. Even here he often remains the hidden God.

**d) In determining the end of life God is guided by his love.**

Genesis 4:15 But the LORD said to him, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him.

Luke 2:26, 29-32 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.<sup>29</sup> Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation,<sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all people,<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

Baier: Divine providence changes the natural end of human life both as far as pious men are concerned as well as impious. For the pious God prolongs their life either as a reward for their obedience or because of their public usefulness. He shortens life for the same (i.e., the pious), partly that they may not be corrupted by the evil examples of others, partly that they may not see the calamities which are going to happen and be pained by them.—For the impious, God by a just judgment cuts off their life more quickly when he either inflicts on them a deadly disease or death or orders death to strike them, or allows that through their intemperance or other crimes they contract diseases or a violent death (*Compendium*, p 313).



e) **Even though God controls the time of our life, he makes us stewards of our lives and the lives of our fellow human beings.**

1) **As Christian stewards we will remember that God has ultimate control over life and death.**

Deuteronomy 32:39 See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

Psalm 31:14,15 But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, "You are my God."  
<sup>15</sup> My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.

2) **As Christian stewards we will let God's Word guide the decisions we make that affect life and death.**

3) **As Christian stewards we will take all medical decisions to God in prayer and ask him to bless us with wisdom, insight, and pure motives.**

4) **As Christian stewards we will remember that all human life is valuable to God, even when the quality of that life is diminished.**

5) **As Christian stewards we will seek to improve the quality of people's lives, if possible.**

5. **Chance (*casus, Zufall*).**

a) **By "chance" we understand the apparently causeless meeting of two events, each one of which is traceable to an adequate cause.**

b) **Several Bible passages contain the word or concept of "chance."**

1) **A number of them simply deny intention, or control of circumstances on the part of the acting person.**

Ecclesiastes 9:11 I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and *chance* happen to them all.

1 Kings 22:34 But someone drew his bow *at random* and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. The king told his chariot driver, "Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I've been wounded."

Deuteronomy 22:6 If you *come across* a bird's nest beside the road, either in a tree or on the ground, and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, do not take the mother with the young.

2 Samuel 1:6 "I *happened* to be on Mount Gilboa," the young man said, "and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and riders

almost upon him.”

Luke 10:31 A priest *happened* to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

Exodus 21:13 However, if he does not do it *intentionally*, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate.

Numbers 35:22 But if without hostility someone suddenly shoves another or throws something at him *unintentionally*

Numbers 6:9 If someone dies *suddenly* in his presence, thus defiling the hair he has dedicated, he must shave his head on the day of his cleansing—the seventh day.

**2) One passage speaks of real chance, quoting heathens as using the term.**

1 Samuel 6:9 If it goes up to its own territory, toward Beth Shemesh, then the LORD has brought this great disaster on us. But if it does not, then we will know that it was not his hand that struck us and that it happened to us by *chance*.

**c) Admitting chance in the strict sense of the word would deny God's government of the world.**

Note. As chance would deny God's government, so the opposite of chance, fatalism, would destroy man's responsibility.

Isaiah 45:7 I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.

Lamentations 3:37 Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it?

Amos 3:6 When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the LORD caused it?

**VI. God created a host of spirits, whom he employs as ministers in his work of providence. First we consider the good angels.**

**1. Scripture teaches that there are angels.**

**a) Angels are real beings.**

**1) When it comes to angelology, two extremes can be noted.**

**-a) Some have displayed an unhealthy interest in angels.**

Note the apocalyptic literature of the intertestamental period.

Lutheran Cyclopedia: Apocalyptic literature is a term applied to a type of literature produced in abundance by Jews after 200 BC and by Christians through AD 200. It presents a world caught in war between good and evil and offers hope of the victory of God in catastrophic action, which destroys its enemies. It is marked by strong angelology and demonology and by fervent messianic hope, which sometimes takes on an extreme political character. Apocalyptic literature usually emerges from a downtrodden and oppressed people (p 38).

Examples: The Book of Tobit and The Testament of Abraham

1 Enoch 6 And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them and said to one another: 'Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children.' And Semjaza, who was their leader, said unto them: 'I fear you will not indeed agree to do this deed, and I alone shall have to pay the penalty of a great sin.' And they all answered him and said: 'Let us all swear an oath, and all bind ourselves by mutual imprecations not to abandon this plan but to do this thing.' Then swore they all together and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. And they were in all two hundred; who descended in the days of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon, and they called it Mount Hermon, because they had sworn and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. And these are the names of their leaders: Samlazaz, their leader, Araklba, Rameel, Kokablel, Tamlel, Ramlel, Danel, Ezeqeel, Baraqijal, Asael, Armaros, Batarel, Ananel, Zaqllel, Samsapeel, Satarel, Turel, Jomjael, Sariel. These are their chiefs of tens.

1 Enoch 7 And all the others together with them took unto themselves wives, and each chose for himself one, and they began to go in unto them and to defile themselves with them, and they taught them charms and enchantments, and the cutting of roots, and made them acquainted with plants. And they became pregnant, and they bare great giants, whose height was three thousand ells: Who consumed all the acquisitions of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh, and drink the blood. Then the earth laid accusation against the lawless ones.

1 Enoch 8 And Azazel taught men to make swords, and knives, and shields, and breastplates, and made known to them the metals of the earth and the art of working them, and bracelets, and ornaments, and the use of antimony, and the beautifying of the eyelids, and all kinds of costly stones, and all colouring tinctures. And there arose much godlessness, and they committed fornication, and they were led astray, and became corrupt in all their ways. Semjaza taught enchantments, and root-cuttings, 'Armaros the resolving of enchantments, Baraqijal (taught) astrology, Kokabel the

constellations, Ezeqel the knowledge of the clouds, Araquel the signs of the earth, Shamsiel the signs of the sun, and Sariel the course of the moon. And as men perished, they cried, and their cry went up to heaven.

Erickson: In the last part of the twentieth century, a real resurgence of angelology has taken place. In society in general there has been a considerable growth of interest in the supernatural, including a fascination with the occult. Perhaps as a reaction against naturalistic scientific rationalism, explanations falling outside the realm of natural law have flourished in some circles. Christians have shown renewed interest in demonology, particularly demon possession and demonically induced illnesses. Related to that, although lagging somewhat in time, has been a popular interest in good angels. In the 1900s, this emerged in several movies related to the reality and activity of angels. Yet, for all of this, there has not been a balanced inquiry into the nature and activity of angels, both the good and the evil (*Christian Theology*, p 461).

**-b) Others have denied the existence of angels.**

Acts 23:8 The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.

Quenstedt: [The testimony of Scripture about the personal nature of angels] must be upheld against the ancient Sadducees, who believed that the angels are certain movements or feelings inspired in men; likewise (it must be upheld) against the Anabaptists, who foolishly imagine that the angels are only actions of God by which he punishes evil deeds and rewards good deeds; and likewise (it must be upheld) against David George, the archheretic of the previous century (1501–1556), who confused angels with thoughts of the human mind (*TDP*, I, p 444).

Robert Jenson: What about liturgy enables such a discourse to have sense that it would not have as mere propositions on a page? It is that liturgy is art that angels and archangels and streams and stars are spirited. Sung, “with angels and archangels,” seems perfectly natural. Even in a said service, if the language of the great thanksgiving has poetic dignity, all is well. But when liturgical experimenters have tried to make the prayers relevant by reducing them to prose, the presiding minister feels foolish at such passages (*Christian Dogmatics*, II, p 174).

**2) Angels are not the good spirits of the dead (ancestors).**

Lessa and Vogt: Ancestors play an important part in African religion. They are vested with mystical power and retain a jural role in the world of the living, particularly in the lives of their descendants. Indeed, African kin-groups are often described as communities of both the living and the dead. Ancestors are regarded as ambivalent, at best capricious. While their

benevolence is generally insured through propitiation and sacrifice, it is believed that ancestors readily punish their descendants for any neglect of such ritual obligation (*Reader in Comparative Religion*, p 393).

**3) Angels are not impersonal forces or merely something that represents good.**

Tillich: Angels and demons are mythological names for constructive and destructive powers. . . . They are not beings (*ST, II*, p 40).

**4) Angels are personal, spiritual beings.**

Hebrews 1:14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Quenstedt: The personal nature of angels is evident: 1) from their names, for they are called guardians, principalities, lords, gods, sons of God, men of God; 2) from their personal actions, which are to serve, to stand before Jehovah, to appear, to speak, etc., which surely cannot be ascribed to feelings inspired in men or mere actions of God; 3) from the fall or ruination of the angels, and from the perseverance of the good angels in the truth; 4) from the fact that knowledge, desire, power are ascribed to them (*TDP, I*, p 444).

Hollaz: The human soul is an incomplete spirit, ordained as such and by its own nature for the composition of the whole man. Therefore, also, when the soul is separated from the body, it has a natural propensity and inclination towards the body, with which as a component part it constitutes a complete man; but the angels are not naturally ordained to constitute a unit as such with a certain component part, but they have their essence complete in themselves. Therefore the human soul is an incomplete spirit, the angels are complete spirits (*Examen*, p 378).

**-a) As spiritual beings they are invisible and do not take up space (*illocal*).**

Quenstedt: Invisibility is a consequence of spirituality: for a spirit cannot be seen with bodily eyes. For this reason also the angels are numbered among the invisible things.—The indivisibility of the angelic “substance” arises from their incorporeity or immateriality; for whatever is not material, that is not a quantity, nor does it have parts outside its parts and consequently is indivisible into quantitative parts (*TDP, I*, p 446).

**-b) Yet they are confined to a single location.**

Daniel 10:13,14 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.<sup>14</sup> Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.”

Quenstedt: A *ποῦ* or whereabouts is attributed to them, in which an angel definitely is, that is, their substantial, not only their virtual, presence is limited to some space, so that they are there, not in other places, much less everywhere. And because an angel is without parts, he is not only as a whole in the whole place, but he is also able to exist as a whole in any, even the least part of a place, yes, in a point (*TDP*, I, p 446).

Hollaz: The agility and speed of the angels is wonderful, so that without local movement, which is characteristic of bodies, and therefore without a succession of parts, which they do not have, they can change their whereabouts most quickly. And nevertheless it does not seem that all movement must be denied to the angels since they are present now here, now elsewhere. And although the movement of the angels is very rapid, nevertheless it is not instantaneous, because the space in which they move is extended and continuous, which no creature can cross in an instant (*Examen*, p 384).

Note: To angels is ascribed existence in *ubi definitivo* (place, no space), to God in *ubi repletivo* (no place, no space) to physical bodies in *ubi circumscriptivo* (place and space).

## 5) Only two angels are given names in the Bible.

### -a) Michael (who is like God)

Daniel 10:13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

Jude 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

### -b) Gabriel (hero of God)

Daniel 8:16 And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision."

Daniel 9:21 While I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice.

Luke 1:19 The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news."

Luke 1:26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee.

**b) Scripture uses various words to refer to angels.**

**1) The most common name is angel (messenger or envoy). מַלְאָכִים - ἄγγελος**

**-a) A messenger of God may also be a man.**

Ecclesiastes 5:6 Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple *messenger*, “My vow was a mistake.” Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands?

Haggai 1:13 Then Haggai, the LORD’s *messenger*, gave this message of the LORD to the people: “I am with you,” declares the LORD.

Malachi 2:7 “For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, and from his mouth men should seek instruction—because he is the *messenger* of the LORD Almighty.

Malachi 3:1 “See, I will send my *messenger*, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the *messenger* of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty.

Mark 1:2 It is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my *messenger* ahead of you, who will prepare your way.”

James 2:25 In the same ways, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the *spies* and sent them off in a different direction?

Revelation 2:1,8 To the *angel* of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands: <sup>8</sup>To the *angel* of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.”

**-b) The Son of God is called the Angel of the Lord.**

This is covered under “Holy Trinity”. See page 170 ff.

**-c) Most frequently the ἄγγελοι are angels.**

Psalm 91:11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.

Psalm 103:20 Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

Psalm 148:2 Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

Matthew 1:20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 4:11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

## 2) Angels are sometimes called sons of God. בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים

### -a) Believers are also called “sons of God.”

Genesis 6:2,4 The sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.<sup>4</sup> The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

### -b) When the term “sons of God” is applied to angels, it may indicate the grandeur of their nature or position.

Job 1:6 One day the angels (בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים) came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them.

Job 2:1 On another day the angels (בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים) came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before him.

Job 38:7 While the morning stars sang together and all the angels (בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים) shouted for joy?

Psalm 89:6 (7) For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD? Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings (בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים)?

## 3) Angels are called “gods.”

Psalm 8:5 You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings (אֱלֹהִי) and crowned him with glory and honor.

Compare Hebrews 2:7 You made him a little lower than the angels (ἀγγέλους); you crowned him with glory and honor

## 4) Angels are also called holy ones or “saints.” קְדוּשִׁים - ἁγίοι



Job 5:1 Call if you will, but who will answer you? To which of the *holy ones* will you turn?

Psalms 89:5,7 The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the *holy ones*.<sup>7</sup> In the council of the *holy ones* God is greatly feared; he is more awesome than all who surround him.

Daniel 4:13 In the visions I saw while lying in my bed, I looked, and there before me was a messenger, a *holy one*, coming down from heaven.

Deuteronomy 33:2 He said: “The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of *holy ones* from the south, from his mountain slopes.

Zechariah 14:5 You will flee by my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel. You will flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the *holy ones* with him.

1 Thessalonians 3:13 May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his *holy ones*.

Jude 14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men: “See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his *holy ones*.”

## 5) Angels are called “watchers” or “watchmen.”

Daniel 4:17,23 The decision is announced by messengers (עִיר), the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.<sup>23</sup> You, O king, saw a messenger (עִיר), a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, ‘Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live like the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.

## 6) Angels are called “hosts” or “armies” צְבָאוֹת .

Psalms 148:2 Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

## c) Scripture teaches that angels were created during the six days of creation.

### 1) They were created by God.

Psalm 148:2, 5 Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts. <sup>5</sup>Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.

Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

## 2) Angels were created during the six days of creation

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Compare Genesis 2:1,2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. <sup>2</sup>By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.

Exodus 20:11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Chemnitz: Because there is no description of the creation of angels in the books of Moses, many things are curiously debated, namely, when they were created.... But because Scripture does not indicate the precise time and day of the creation of the angels, let us gladly be ignorant of what we neither should nor can know.—Let it therefore be sufficient for us to know: 1) that the angels did not come into existence of their own accord; nor were they born from the substance of God, but they were created; 2) the angels have not existed from eternity and they did not exist before that beginning when all things that are in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, began to be. For to have been in the beginning is a characteristic only of that one alone through whom all things were made and who is eternal (*Loci*, I, p 122).

Quenstedt: The angels were created by God in time together with this visible world or within the space of the first six days. But on which day or at what time they were created, we willingly admit that we don't know.... They were created, however, not after, but within the six days, because when these had elapsed, God rested from the ordinary work of creation (*TDP*, I, p 459).

### -a) Some suggest Day 1 – when light was created.

Job 38:6,7 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—<sup>7</sup> while the morning stars sang together and all the angels (Hebrew “sons of God”) shouted for joy?

Baier: That the angels were created before man is usually proved from Job 38:7. Some indeed believe that from this passage it can be known that the angels were created on the first day, namely, because when God laid the foundation of the earth, the angels are at once said to have praised God. But these things are not sufficiently clear, although we do not deny that according to Job 1:6 angels are denoted by the name sons of God, and we say that the beginning of these (i.e.,

the angels) is to be included in the beginning of the rest of the creatures. Perhaps, also, just as we know that man was created after the other creatures that were intended for his good, so also it is rightly concluded that the angels, who were going to serve man, were created before man. Nevertheless, it is not necessary that we say that the angels are indicated by the names heaven or light, taken metaphorically (*Compendium*, I, Cap. III, p 106).

- b) **Some suggest Day 2 because the phrase “and God saw that it was good” is missing since the angels were created and the evil angels immediately fell.**

Chemnitz: Others suggest that when Moses says, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,” the angels are included under the word “heaven.” Still others believe that they were created on the second day and that some of them immediately fell, because with respect to this day Moses does not add the words “God saw that it was good” (*Loci Theologici*, I, p 165).

- c) **Some suggest Day 4 since that is when the sun, moon, and stars were created. They cite the close connection in Scripture between the angels and the sun, moon and stars.**

Psalms 148:1-3 Praise the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights above.<sup>2</sup> Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts.<sup>3</sup> Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars.

- d) **Some suggest Day 6 saying that creation is progressive.**
- e) **Scripture seems to indicate that angels were created early in the creation week, but we cannot determine the day with certainty.**

Job 38:4-7 Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand.<sup>5</sup> Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it?<sup>6</sup> On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—<sup>7</sup> while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

Chemnitz: It is sufficient that we know this: (1) that the angels did not exist by themselves and that they were not begotten of the substance of God, but were created; (2) that the angels were not from eternity and had not existed before the beginning when all things which are in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, began to exist, for in the beginning there was only he through whom all things were made and who is the eternal One, John 1:1,3; (3) that the angels were created before the human race, which may be concluded from Job 38:4-7. For God says in regard to the human race, “where were you when all the sons of God shouted for joy?” He is referring to the founding of the earth, the creation of the stars, and he adds this in regard to the angels; and finally he says regarding the human race, “Where were you then?” v. 4 (*Loci Theologici*, I, p 165).

**-f) The time of their creation remains an open question**

Chemnitz: Because Scripture does not expressly state the precise time and day of the creation of the angels, “We are free to be ignorant,” as Ambrose says, “because we neither must nor can know.” (*Loci Theologici*, I, p 165).

**-g) Some put the creation of angels prior to the creation of the world.**

J. Kenneth Grider: The creation accounts in Genesis do not mention the creation of angels. On several bases, however, Scripture elsewhere implies that they were created prior to the world and us. . . . Further, Scripture implies that they must have been created at some point in time, since it implies that only God existed “in the beginning” (*A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*, p 166).

Chemnitz: To Gregory of Nazianzus is attributed the opinion that the angelic nature was made out of nothing, before the creation of heaven and earth (*Loci Theologici*, I, p 165).

**-h) According to this view the fall also occurred before the creation of the world.**

Ed Murphy: The Old Testament hints that these invisible, evil, supernatural, created cosmic beings are fallen angelic creatures. Somewhere, sometime, evidently before the creation of mankind, they were led by a mighty angelic creature, perhaps called Lucifer, into rebellion against the lordship of God (*The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*, p 21).

**d) God created numerous angels.**

**1) Angels were created holy.**

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Hollaz: The angels were created with a perfect but not immutable righteousness that could not be lost. For in the state of grace the will of the angels was not limited to perpetually loving and choosing the good, but God had given the angels freedom of choice with a concreated inclination toward the good, so that they had not a likely but a most remote possibility of sinning, consisting in a denial of the impossibility of sinning and of the incapability of losing the gifts with which they were created (*Examen*, p 385).

**2) Their number is great.**

Deuteronomy 33:2 The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones from the south, from his mountain slopes.

Daniel 7:10 Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him.

Matthew 26:53 Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.

Revelation 5:11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.

**3) Their number appears to be stable since they do not die or reproduce.**

Luke 20:35,36 But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage,<sup>36</sup> and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.

Calov: Although they could again be reduced to nothing by God, by whom they were created out of nothing, through his absolute power, and in that way could be called corruptible, and God alone is incorruptible and has immortality, nevertheless they are free from physical corruption, nor do they have any internal beginning of corruption, because they are altogether without matter, and therefore they are by nature incorruptible and immortal (*Systema*, IV, p 24).

Hollaz: God alone is absolutely immutable; the angels are relatively immutable, because they are not subject to physical changes, which are characteristic of natural bodies. For neither do the angels reproduce (*Examen*, p 382).

**4) The good angels were confirmed in their holiness.**

Matthew 18:10 See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

Luke 20:36 They can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection.

1 Timothy 5:21 I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

Quenstedt: The angels are called good not only on account of their innate, metaphysical or transcendental goodness, which all the angels, even the evil ones, have; for inasmuch as they are beings, in so far they are also

good. Nor only on account of the good aptitude which they have by virtue of their creation, for also in this respect they were equal to the evil angels, since they formerly had this in an equal measure, but also on account of the good deed or obedience they rendered to God and on account of their perseverance in the good and finally on account of their own confirmation in what is good. And so the essential reason why they are called good angels is that they remained in the goodness and truth in which they were created and now have been confirmed in it in such a way that they never wish to nor are able to fall from it. Confirmation in their original state did not deprive the good angels of their liberty, nor did they on this account cease to have a free will, but rather they obtained greater liberty thereafter.... The greatest liberty, indeed, is not to be able to sin, not to be able not to do well, which highest degree of liberty God, who is the freest of all, possesses (*TDP*, I, p 477).

## **2. Scripture teaches that there are ranks of angels yet nothing definite can be said about the order of precedence.**

Hollaz: There is no doubt that there is a certain order among the good angels, but what and of what kind that angelic order is, we believe that no one in this life knows.—This is proved 1) by the general rule, 1 Cor 14:40; 2) by the various names of the heavenly spirits; 3) by analogy: There is an order among the evil angels (*Examen*, p 392).

Pomazansky: The Orthodox Church, guided by the view of the ancient writers of the Church and the Church Fathers, and in particular by the work of St. Dionysius the Areopagite, divides the angelic world into nine choirs or ranks, and these nine into three hierarchies, with three ranks in each. In the first hierarchy are those who are closest to God: The Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. In the second middle hierarchy are the Authorities, Dominions and Powers. In the third closer to us are the Angels, Archangels and Principalities (*Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, p 117).

### **a) Archangel (ruling angel)**

#### **1) Michael is called the archangel.**

Daniel 10:13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes (אֶחָד הַשָּׂרִיִּם הַרְאֲשֻׁנִים), came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Jude 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

**2) Scripture does not reveal whether there is only one archangel or many archangels.**

**b) Cherubs or Cherubim**

Note: The etymology of this word is uncertain. Possibly related to the Semitic root *karabu* (כָּרַב) which appears in Akkadian and means to “bless, praise, adore.”

Genesis 3:24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Ezekiel 1:8-10 Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings,<sup>9</sup> and their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved.<sup>10</sup> Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle.

Ezekiel 10:20 These were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Kebar River, and I realized that they were cherubim.

Psalms 80:1 Hear us, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock; you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth.

Exodus 25:17,18 Make an atonement cover of pure gold—two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide.<sup>18</sup> And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover.

**c) Seraphs or Seraphim**

Note: The word “seraph” comes from the root שָׂרַף meaning to “burn”

Isaiah 6:2-4 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.<sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”<sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

**d) Other names do not seem to establish a systematic order.**

Ephesians 1:21 Far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. ὑπεράνω πάσης ἀρχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας καὶ δυνάμεως καὶ κυριότητος καὶ παντὸς ὀνόματος ὀνομαζομένου.

Ephesians 3:10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. ταῖς ἀρχαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἐξουσίαις ἐν τοῖς

Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. *θρόνοι εἴτε κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι*

1 Peter 3:22 Who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

### **3. Though spiritual beings, angels can assume various visible forms.**

#### **a) Angels can assume a form like that of ordinary humans.**

Genesis 19:1-5 The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.<sup>2</sup> “My lords,” he said, “please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning.” “No,” they answered, “we will spend the night in the square.”<sup>3</sup> But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate.<sup>4</sup> Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house.<sup>5</sup> They called to Lot, “Where are the men who came to you tonight?”

#### **b) Angels can assume a form like a man, but brilliant and glorious.**

Matthew 28:2,3 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.<sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

Daniel 10:6 His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

#### **c) Angels can assume the form of horses and chariots.**

2 Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, “O LORD, open his eyes so he may see.” Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

2 Kings 2:11 As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Note how Scripture uses a similar phrase to refer to the prophets.

2 Kings 2:12 Elisha saw this and cried out, “My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them apart.

2 Kings 13:14 Now Elisha was suffering from the illness from which he died. Jehoash king of Israel went down to see him and wept over him. “My father! My father!” he cried. “The chariots and horsemen of Israel!”



**d) Angels can assume the form of a creature with four faces.**

Ezekiel 1:4-14 I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north—an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal,<sup>5</sup> and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man,<sup>6</sup> but each of them had four faces and four wings.<sup>7</sup> Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze.<sup>8</sup> Under their wings on their four sides they had the hands of a man. All four of them had faces and wings,<sup>9</sup> and their wings touched one another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved.<sup>10</sup> Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle.<sup>11</sup> Such were their faces. Their wings were spread out upward; each had two wings, one touching the wing of another creature on either side, and two wings covering its body.<sup>12</sup> Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went.<sup>13</sup> The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it.<sup>14</sup> The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.

Ezekiel 10:20 These were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Kebar River, and I realized that they were cherubim.

Compare with the description in Revelation 4:6-8

Revelation 4:6-8 Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.<sup>7</sup> The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.<sup>8</sup> Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

**e) Angels are also pictured with wings:**

**1) Two wings**

1 Kings 6:24 One wing of the first cherub was five cubits long, and the other wing five cubits—ten cubits from wing tip to wing tip.

**2) Four wings**

Ezekiel 1:6 But each of them had four faces and four wings.

**3) Six wings**

Isaiah 6:2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.

Revelation 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings.

#### **4. God gave angels exceptional abilities.**

##### **a) Angels possess wisdom.**

###### **1) This wisdom is superior to that of human beings.**

Daniel 9:22 He instructed me and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding.”

Daniel 10:13,14,21 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. <sup>14</sup>Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come.” <sup>21</sup>but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your prince.

###### **2) Yet the wisdom of the angels is limited and capable of increase.**

Matthew 24:36 No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Ephesians 3:10 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.

1 Peter 1:12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Quenstedt: But the angels do not know all things at one time, by one perception, but separately and through various perceptions, and not only through a simple apprehension, but also by putting things together and dividing them, yes, also by drawing conclusions and by inferring one thing from another. They know God, yet they do not comprehend him, because of the infinity of the divine essence and the finitude of the angels' intellect (*TDP*, I, p 445).

Gerhard: But what can we little worms crawling on the ground affirm in this darkness of our mind about the understanding of heavenly spirits since we do not even fully understand our own mind. It is better, therefore, to give sincere thanks to God for the service of the angels which he daily demonstrates to us than to search out curiously these secret things outside the limits of the Word that have not been revealed (*Loci*, IV, p 22).

##### **b) Angels have great but limited power.**

Psalm 103:20 Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

Acts 12:7,10 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.<sup>10</sup> They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

2 Thessalonians 1:7 [God will] give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.

2 Peter 2:11 Yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against such beings in the presence of the Lord.

Hollaz: The power of the angels is great, but finite (*Examen*, p 382).

**c) Angels are not equal to Christ in excellency.**

Hebrews 1:4-8,13,14 So [Christ] became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.<sup>5</sup> For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"?<sup>6</sup> And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."<sup>7</sup> In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire."<sup>8</sup> But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom."<sup>13</sup> To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"?<sup>14</sup> Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

**5. Angels were created to serve God.**

**a) Angels worship God.**

Isaiah 6:1-4 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.<sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying.<sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."<sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

Revelation 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

**b) Angels serve as divine messengers.**

Luke 1:26-28 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,<sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.<sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

**c) Angels played a role in the giving of the law.**

Acts 7:53 You who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.

Galatians 3:19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator.

Deuteronomy 33,2 [Moses] said: "The LORD came from Sinai and dawned over them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones from the south, from his mountain slopes."

Compare also the follow passages.

Exodus 19:16,19 On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled.<sup>19</sup> and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.

Matthew 24:31 And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

**d) Angels prevent evil and execute judgment.**

Acts 12:23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

Note also the account of the Passover in Exodus 12. Compare with Psalm 78:49 He unleashed against them his hot anger, his wrath, indignation and hostility—a band of destroying angels.

**e) Angels ministered to the Savior.**

Matthew 1:20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."

Matthew 2:13,19 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to

kill him.”<sup>19</sup> After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt

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Matthew 4:11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Luke 22:43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.

**f) Angels serve God’s people.**

**1) Angels serve the physical needs of God’s people.**

1 Kings 19:5,7 Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.”<sup>7</sup> The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.”

2 Kings 6:17 And Elisha prayed, “O LORD, open his eyes so he may see.” Then the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Psalms 34:7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

Psalms 91:11,12 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;<sup>12</sup> they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

Daniel 6:22 My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, O king.

Calov: The purpose of the created angels ... with respect to men is service, which they were divinely destined to furnish since God created all things on account of man and he made the angels servants in their very creation, intending to use their service especially for men for their welfare (*Systema*, IV, p 23).

**2) Angels promote the spiritual welfare of God’s people and the spread of the gospel.**

Luke 15:7,10 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.<sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Acts 5:17-20 Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.<sup>18</sup> They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.<sup>19</sup> But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out.<sup>20</sup> “Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people the full message of this new life.”

Acts 8:26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”

Acts 10:1-3 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment.<sup>2</sup> He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.<sup>3</sup> One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

Acts 12:7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. “Quick, get up!” he said, and the chains fell off Peter’s wrists.

Acts 27:23,24 Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I serve stood beside me<sup>24</sup> and said, “Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.”

### 3) **Whether each believer has a personal guardian angel is an open question.**

Matthew 18:10 See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

Acts 12:15 “You’re out of your mind,” they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, “It must be his angel.”

Tim Unsworth: Saint Jerome, a fourth-century doctor of the church, wrote that the dignity of the souls was so great that each person has an angel to guard him or her from birth (*U. S. Catholic*, March 1990, p 31).

Grudem: Scripture clearly tells us that God sends angels for our protection: “He will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone” (Ps. 91:11-12). But some people have gone beyond this idea of a general protection and wondered if God gives a specific “guardian angel” for each individual in the world, or at least for each Christian. Support for this idea has been found in Jesus’ words about little children, “in heaven *their angels* always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 18:10). However, our Lord may simply be saying that angels who are assigned the task of protecting little children have ready access to God’s presence. (To use an athletic analogy, the angels may be playing “zone” rather than “man-on-man” defense.) When the disciples in Acts 12:15 say that Peter’s “angel” must be knocking at the door, this does not necessarily imply belief in an individual guardian angel. It could be that an angel was guarding or caring for the Peter just at that time. There seems to be, therefore, no convincing support for the idea of individual “guardian angels” in the text of Scripture (*Systematic Theology*, p 399, 400).

**g) Angels pray for the church.**

Zechariah 1:12 Then the angel of the LORD said, "LORD Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you have been angry with these seventy years?"

**h) Angels carry believers to heaven.**

Luke 16:22 The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side.

**i) Angels will accompany Christ at the final judgment.**

Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

Mark 8:38 If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.

1 Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Matthew 13:39,41 The enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.<sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

Matthew 24:31 He will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

**6. Scripture warns us not to worship angels.**

Colossians 2:18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.

Revelation 19:10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Smalcald Articles, II, 26: And although the angels in heaven pray for us (as Christ himself also does), as also do the saints on earth, and perhaps also in heaven, yet it does not follow thence that we should invoke and adore the angels and saints, and fast, hold festivals, celebrate Mass in their honor, make offerings, and establish churches, altars, divine worship, and in still other ways serve them, and regard them

as helpers in need and divide among them all kinds of help, and ascribe to each one a particular form of assistance, as the Papists teach and do. For this is idolatry, and such honor belongs alone to God.

## **VII. Scripture also teaches that there are evil angels called demons.**

### **1. Some deny the existence of the devil and his evil angels.**

Barth: They are the myth, the myth of all mythologies (*CD*, III,3,521), one of the bad dreams of the older dogmatics (*CD*, III,3,531).

Bultmann: I maintain that to revive or perpetuate the demonology of the NT in the modern world is to incur the charge of obscurantism and superstition. The church should do all in her power to root it out (*Kerygma and Myth*, 120).

Peters: Symbols such as Satan and demonic forces give expression to something endemic to human experience—namely, sin comes from the outside as well as the inside. Evil is larger than we are. It comes to us just as we go to it (*God, the World's Future*, p 168).

Note also that Anton LaVey (1930-1997), the leading figure in Satanism in the past century, did not believe that Satan was a real person. He believed that the term “Satan” personified all that is evil.

### **2. Demons were created by God as holy angels. Entirely on their own initiative they turned and became the enemies of God.**

#### **a) Demons originally were angels.**

Jude 6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority (*ἀρχήν*) but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

Quenstedt: They are called evil angels not because of their essence, for as far as their essence is concerned they are good and were created with the rest of the angels in truth, holiness, and righteousness. But they are called evil 1) because of their evil act, namely, their malicious defection and apostasy from God; 2) because of the habitual malice or horrible depravity of their nature, which followed that act; 3) because of their perseverance and persistence in incorrigible evil; and 4) finally because of their evil effects since they perpetrate nothing but evil deeds.—The general essence of the devils' fall consists in a free and spontaneous turning away from God and from the rule of right. For they could have continued in the truth and holiness with which they were created and not have fallen. By the grace of creation they could have held to the rule of right. They sinned, therefore, willingly and freely, namely, through the abuse of the liberty that had been given them.—For they did not sin because of a defect in their nature or because of helplessness, but out of pure malice and obstinacy and through a spontaneous abuse of the free will given to them (*TDP*, I, p 450).

#### **b) These angels rebelled against God; they willingly joined Satan's rebellion and believed the lie that God is not love.**



2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment.

Genesis 3:5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

1 John 3:8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Quenstedt: What in particular the first sin of the evil angels was is not clear. Nevertheless, the temptation with which Satan attacked and overcame our first parents renders probable the opinion of those who think that it was aspiring to equality with God or a striving for higher authority (*TDP*, I, p 452).

**3. About the time of the fall nothing definite can be said. It must have happened between the end of creation and the fall of man.**

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Quenstedt: In what order the evil angels sinned, whether all at the same time or one after another, or whether one fell first and led the others by his example and persuasion into apostasy and the fall, about this the scholastics argue but without any basis in Scripture (*TDP*, I, p 453).

Hollaz: It is probable that the evil angels fell under a certain leader or head, whom Holy Scripture calls Satan and the devil, who either by his example or persuasion influenced more angels to join him in the same sin (*Examen*, p 399).

The following passages speak about kings as servants of Satan. They cannot be used to develop a history and chronology of Satan.

Ezekiel 28:12-17 Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.<sup>13</sup> You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ruby, topaz and emerald, chrysolite, onyx and jasper, sapphire, turquoise and beryl. Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared.<sup>14</sup> You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones.<sup>15</sup> You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.<sup>16</sup> Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, O guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones.<sup>17</sup> Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings.'"

Isaiah 14:12-15 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! <sup>13</sup>You said in your heart, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. <sup>14</sup>I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” <sup>15</sup>But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

**4. A significant number of angels rebelled against God and became demons.**

Mark 5:9 Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.”

**a) Scripture does not reveal with certainty the number of angels that fell.**

**b) Based on Revelation 12, some put the number at one-third.**

Revelation 12:3,4 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. <sup>4</sup>His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth.

**5. The head of these evil angels is Satan or the devil. They represent a well-organized kingdom.**

Matthew 12:26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?

**a) Scripture reveals that there are many evil angels.**

**1) Evil angels are called demons (*δαιμόνιον*).**

Matthew 9:34 But the Pharisees said, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.”

Mark 1:34 Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

**2) Evil angels are called evil spirits (*πονήρα πνεῦμα*).**

Luke 7:21 At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits (*πνευμάτων πονηρῶν*), and gave sight to many who were blind.

Luke 8:2 Also some women who had been cured of evil spirits (*πνευμάτων πονηρῶν*) and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out.

Acts 19:12,13 Even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits (τὰ τε πνεύματα τὰ πονηρὰ) left them.<sup>13</sup> Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits (τὰ πνεύματα τὰ πονηρὰ) tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.”

### 3. Evil angels are called unclean spirits (ἀκάθαρτα πνεῦμα).

Matthew 10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits (πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων) and to heal every disease and sickness.

Mark 1:23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit (πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ) cried out.

Luke 6:18 Those troubled by evil spirits (πνευμάτων ἀκαθάρτων) were cured.

Luke 8:29 For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit (τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἀκαθάρτῳ) to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

### 4) Evil angels are called “world rulers.”

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

πρὸς τὰς ἀρχάς, πρὸς τὰς ἐξουσίας, πρὸς τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας τοῦ σκότους τούτου, πρὸς τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν κοσμοκράτορας ἐπουρανίους.

### b) Scripture reveals that there is only one devil (διάβολος), that is, Satan (ἰϋψ̄ σατανᾶς).

Note: The word **διάβολος** “devil” “slanderer” is used in Scripture only in the singular.

Note: The word “satan” often refers to an accuser, especially in court.

Matthew 4:1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

1 Chronicles 21:1 Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel.

Zechariah 3:1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him.

Matthew 4:10 Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

Mark 1:13 He was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Luke 11:18 If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebub.

Revelation 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

### 1) **Satan serves as the tempter (ὁ πειράζων).**

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

Revelation 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

1 Corinthians 7:5 Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

### 2) **Satan serves as the accuser (ὁ κατηγορῶν).**

Revelation 12:10 The accuser (ὁ κατηγορῶν) of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

Job 1:6-11 One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and [the] Satan also came with them.<sup>7</sup> The LORD said to [the] Satan, “Where have you come from?” [The] Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it.”<sup>8</sup> Then the LORD said to [the] Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”<sup>9</sup> “Does Job fear God for nothing?” [The] Satan replied.<sup>10</sup> “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.<sup>11</sup> But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

Jude 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!”

### 3) **Other names, titles, or descriptions for Satan include:**

- **Prince of this world** ὁ ἀρχὼν τοῦ κόσμου
- 

John 12:31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.

- **the ruler of the kingdom of the air, ὁ ἀρχων τῆς ἐχουσίας τοῦ αἴρος**

Ephesians 2:2 You followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

- **God of this age ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνου**

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

- **Evil one ὁ πονηρός**

Ephesians 6:16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

- **Abaddon and Apollyon (destroyer)**

Revelation 9:11 They had as king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek, Apollyon.

- **Murderer ἀνθρωποκτόνος**

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- **Red Dragon δράκων**

Revelation 12:3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads.

- **Ancient Serpent ὄφις**

Revelation 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

- **Roaring lion ὡς λέων ὠρυόμενος**

1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

- **Beelzebub בְּעֻזְבֵּל בְּעֻזְבֵּל originally name of a heathen god**  
Βεελζεβουλ βεεζεβουλ βεελζεβουβ

Luke 11:15 But some of them said, “By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.” Compare 2 Kings 1:2-4.

2 Kings 1:2-4 Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers, saying to them, “Go and consult *Baal-Zebub*, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury.”<sup>3</sup> But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Go up and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult *Baal-Zebub*, the god of Ekron?’<sup>4</sup> Therefore this is what the LORD says: ‘You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!’”

- **Belial** בְּלִיַּעַל בְּלִי עַל בְּלִי יַעַל בְּלִיַּעַל βελιάλ βελιάρ  
**originally name for a scoundrel**

2 Corinthians 6:15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

- **Lucifer, “light bearer”** הַיְלִיל בְּמִשְׁחָר הַיְלִיל  
**originally name for the King of Babylon.**

Isaiah 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! (KJV)

- **Angel of light**

2 Corinthians 11:14 And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

## 6. **Hell was prepared as a place of punishment for Satan and his evil angels.**

Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

### a) **Satan and his evil angels are confirmed in sin.**

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

2 Peter 2:4 God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment.

Jude 6 And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

Baier: When sin had been committed, all those angels lost the grace with which they had been created and so fell into the greatest misery without hope of restoration (*Compendium*, p 280).

Calov: The punishment of the evil angels is, on the one hand, the eternal desertion of God, from which they can never be converted, and, on the other hand, the rejection to infernal punishments which must be borne forever (*Systema*, IV, p 318).

Hollaz: The punishment of loss, which is also called deprivation, is the saddest loss of grace and glory. The punishment of sensation or positive punishment is the tortures which the demons from the time of their fall feel as being very great, but which they will undergo even more on the day of the final judgment (*Examen*, p 403).

**b) Contrary to popular portrayals, Satan is an inmate and not the warden of hell.**

Revelation 20:1-3 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain.<sup>2</sup> He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.<sup>3</sup> He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

**7. Satan and his demons are powerful.**

Mark 9:20-22 So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.<sup>21</sup> Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered.<sup>22</sup> "It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."

Luke 4:5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

Luke 8:29 For Jesus had commanded the evil spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

Luke 11:14 Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed.

**a) Their natural powers were corrupted by sin.**

Ephesians 4:17,18 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.<sup>18</sup> They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Quenstedt: The evil angels through their fall did not lose their natural knowledge or that which they had from the light of nature, for to a certain extent they know God and other supernatural things; but that knowledge of supernatural things is joined 1) with an extreme hatred and raging against God; 2) with malice, envy and fury against the good angels and pious and blessed people; 3) with ignorance, doubt, error and forgetfulness. They lost completely, however, the knowledge which arises from the light of grace (*TDP*, I, p 454).

Baier: Their intellect, since it was deprived not only of the light of grace but also of the light of glory and since it is riveted as it were on contemplating divine wrath and their own misery, is dulled and lacks a correct judgment concerning good deeds. The corruption of the devils' intellect is at other times usually shown from this that Satan promoted the death of Christ with such eagerness, not realizing that thereby his own very great adversity was brought about. Whatever natural knowledge remains in the evil angels, however, adds no happiness to those who have been rejected by God (*Compendium*, p 280).

**b) They can perform deceiving signs and wonders.**

2 Thessalonians 2:9,10 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,<sup>10</sup> and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

<sup>9</sup> οὗ ἐστὶν ἡ παρουσία κατ' ἐνέργειαν τοῦ σατανᾶ ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει καὶ σημείοις καὶ τέρασιν ψεύδους <sup>10</sup> καὶ ἐν πάσῃ ἀπάτῃ ἀδικίας τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις.

Exodus 7:10-12 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake.<sup>11</sup> Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts:<sup>12</sup> Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.

**c) They distort the truth of God's Word and plant the seeds of false doctrine.**

1 Timothy 4:1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

1 Kings 22:20-22 And the LORD said, "Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?" One suggested this, and another that.<sup>21</sup> Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, "I will entice him."<sup>22</sup> "By what means?" the LORD asked. "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets," he said. "You will succeed in enticing him," said the LORD. "Go and do it."

**d) They work against God's church and its members and against the spread of God's kingdom.**

Luke 8:12 Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.



Luke 22:31 Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat.

2 Corinthians 2:11 In order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Ephesians 2:2 In which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

1 Thessalonians 2:18 For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan stopped us.

1 Peter 5:8,9 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.<sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

Revelation 2:10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Revelation 12:12,17 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.<sup>17</sup> Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Hollaz: The evil spirits zealously scheme to disturb, to overthrow, and deeply undermine the existing church by scattering heresies, by hindering the efforts of pious ministers of the church, by distracting the minds of the hearers from meditating on and practicing the divine Word, by stirring up persecutions against the kingdom of Christ (*Examen*, p 403).

**e) They can work on the heart and mind of a person and plant the seeds of doubt.**

Matthew 13:25,39 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.<sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

Luke 22:3,4 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.<sup>4</sup> And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus.

John 13:2 The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.

John 13:27 As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

Acts 5:3 Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?”

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

**f) Apart from Christ all people are a part of Satan’s kingdom.**

Ephesians 2:1,2 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,<sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

John 8:42-44 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me.<sup>43</sup> Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say.<sup>44</sup> You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

**g) They can “demonize” people in various ways.**

**1) They can afflict people physically.**

Job 2:7: Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the top of his head to the soles of his feet.

2 Corinthians 12:7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

Also see point 4 below concerning physical possession.

**2) They can afflict people spiritually.**

Luke 22:3,4 Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.<sup>4</sup> And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus.

John 13:2 The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.

John 13:27 As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

Hollaz: The activities of the evil angels are indeed various, but they are all directed toward undermining divine glory and toward not only the temporal but also eternal destruction of both individual human beings and the hierarchical estates (i.e., in both the church and the state) (*Examen*, p 400).

Augsburg Confession, Ap., 46,47,49,50: Although the scholastics extenuate both sin and punishment when they teach that man, by his own strength, can fulfill the commandments of God; in Genesis the punishment, imposed on account of original sin, is described otherwise. For there human nature is subjected not only to death and other bodily evils, but also to the kingdom of the devil. For there, Gen. 3:15, this fearful sentence is proclaimed: I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.<sup>471</sup> The defects and the concupiscence are punishments and sins. Death and other bodily evils, and the dominion of the devil, are properly punishments. For human nature has been delivered into slavery and is held captive by the devil, who infatuates it with wicked opinions and errors.<sup>491</sup> Even the history of the world shows how great is the power of the devil's kingdom. The world is full of blasphemies against God and of wicked opinions, and the devil keeps entangled in these bands those who are wise and righteous in the sight of the world. In other persons grosser vices manifest themselves. But since Christ was given to us to remove both these sins and these punishments, and to destroy the kingdom of the devil, sin and death, it will not be possible to recognize the benefits of Christ unless we understand our evils. For this reason our preachers have diligently taught concerning these subjects, and have delivered nothing that is new, but have set forth Holy Scripture and the judgments of the holy Fathers.

Large Catechism, The Sacrament of the Altar, 80-82: Besides this, you will also have the devil about you, whom you will not entirely tread under foot, because our Lord Christ Himself could not entirely avoid him. Now, what is the devil? Nothing else than what the Scriptures call him, a liar and murderer. A liar, to lead the heart astray from the Word of God, and to blind it, that you cannot feel your distress or come to Christ. A murderer, who cannot bear to see you live one single hour. If you could see how many knives, darts, and arrows are every moment aimed at you, you would be glad to come to the Sacrament as often as possible. But there is no reason why we walk so securely and heedlessly, except that we neither think nor believe that we are in the flesh, and in this wicked world or in the kingdom of the devil.

### **3) They can oppress people.**

1 Samuel 16:14 Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.

### **4) They can possess people.**

Mark 5:1-9 They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.<sup>2</sup> When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an evil spirit came from the tombs to meet him.<sup>3</sup> This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind

him any more, not even with a chain.<sup>4</sup> For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.<sup>5</sup> Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.<sup>6</sup> When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him.<sup>7</sup> He shouted at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won’t torture me!”<sup>8</sup> For Jesus had said to him, “Come out of this man, you evil spirit!”<sup>9</sup> Then Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “My name is Legion,” he replied, “for we are many.”

Luke 8:2 And also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out.

Matthew 12:22 Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.

Mark 9:17-22 A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech.<sup>18</sup> Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.”<sup>19</sup> “O unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.”<sup>20</sup> So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.<sup>21</sup> Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered.<sup>22</sup> “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.”

Luke 13:11 A woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all.

Note how Scripture distinguishes between illnesses that have a medical basis, illnesses and physical afflictions that have a demonic cause, and demonic oppression and possession.

Matthew 4:24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

Quenstedt: [Possession] is an action of the devil by which with the permission of God he instigates people to sin and occupies and torments their bodies in order that they might lose their eternal salvation. From the first, namely, the instigation to sin, spiritual possession arises; from the second, namely, the occupying of human bodies by the devil, bodily possession arises. The former happens when the devil is said to possess and fill the minds and hearts of the ungodly, to enter into their hearts and persons, and to be active in them. The latter happens when the devil directly and locally lives and works within the body and subjugates it for a

time.... The subject of this bodily possession is not only an ungodly person, but also sometimes a godly person (Mk 9:21) [??], since it sometimes happens that also upright persons are possessed by Satan as a result of a secret but nevertheless most just judgment and counsel of God. God gives the ungodly over to be possessed by Satan in order that they may be punished and corrected; he gives the godly over, however, in order that the heinousness of their sins may be demonstrated and their faith exercised (*TDP*, I, p 456).

**h) God warns us that Satan has powers that are superior to those of human beings, but not sufficient to overcome those who trust God's power.**

1 Peter 5:8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

Ephesians 6:11-18 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. <sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup>Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup>and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup>Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. <sup>18</sup>And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Quenstedt: Sometimes they know future happenings with certainty from divine revelation (Job 1:12; 2:6; 1 Kgs 22:22). Certain things, however, they know as very probable from their natural shrewdness (*TDP*, I, p 454).

**i) God comforts us with the truth that he is more powerful than Satan and his evil angels.**

Exodus 7:10-12 So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron threw his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. <sup>11</sup>Pharaoh then summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the Egyptian magicians also did the same things by their secret arts: <sup>12</sup>Each one threw down his staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff swallowed up their staffs.

Job 1:12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Job 2:6 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

Luke 8:31,32 And they begged him repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.<sup>32</sup> A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into them, and he gave them permission. Parallel Matthew 8:31.

James 2:19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Revelation 20:2,3 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.<sup>3</sup> He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

**j) God comforts us with the truth that the good angels can overpower the evil angels and defend us.**

2 Kings 6:15-17 When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. “Oh, my lord, what shall we do?” the servant asked.<sup>16</sup> “Don’t be afraid,” the prophet answered. “Those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”<sup>17</sup> And Elisha prayed, “O LORD, open his eyes so he may see.” Then the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Revelation 12:7-9 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.<sup>8</sup> But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven.<sup>9</sup> The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

**8. Satan and his demons were defeated by Christ.**

**a) Satan tried to tempt Jesus to sin.**

Matthew 4:1-10 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.<sup>2</sup> After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.<sup>3</sup> The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.<sup>6</sup> “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”<sup>7</sup> Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”<sup>8</sup> Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.<sup>9</sup> “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

Luke 4:1-12 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert,<sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He

ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.<sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”<sup>4</sup> Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone.’”<sup>5</sup> The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.<sup>6</sup> And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.”<sup>7</sup> So if you worship me, it will all be yours.”<sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”<sup>9</sup> The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here.”<sup>10</sup> For it is written: “‘He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; <sup>11</sup> they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’”<sup>12</sup> Jesus answered, “It says: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

### **1) These temptations were real**

Hebrews 2:14-18 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—<sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.<sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.<sup>17</sup> For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.<sup>18</sup> Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.

### **2) Because of the communication of attributes, it was not possible for Christ to sin.**

James 1:13 When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.

### **3) This gives us the assurance that our salvation was never in doubt.**

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

### **b) Christ crushed the head of Satan through his death on the cross.**

Hebrews 2:14,15 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—<sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Colossians 2:13-15 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He

forgave us all our sins,<sup>14</sup> having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.<sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

1 Peter 3:18,19 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit,<sup>19</sup> through whom also he went and preached to the spirits in prison.

## **9. Scripture warns us against various forms of the occult.**

### **a) This includes Satanism.**

Matthew 4:8-10 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor.<sup>9</sup> “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.”<sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

### **b) This includes witchcraft and magic.**

Micah 5:12 I will destroy your witchcraft and you will no longer cast spells.

#### **1) Wicca, also called witchcraft, is a nature religion condemned by God.**

Romans 1:25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

#### **2) Wicca worships many gods and goddesses, especially the horned god of nature and hunting and Diana, the moon goddess. They do not necessarily regard these gods and goddesses as personal beings.**

Exodus 20:3,4 “You shall have no other gods before me.<sup>4</sup> “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

### **c) This includes astrology, mediums, spiritists, tarot cards, and other methods used to contact the dead or to know the future.**

Deuteronomy 18:10-11 Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft,<sup>11</sup> or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.

2 Chronicles 33:1,2,6 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years.<sup>2</sup> He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.<sup>6</sup> He sacrificed his sons in the fire in the Valley of Ben



Hinnom, practiced sorcery, divination and witchcraft, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, provoking him to anger.

Isaiah 47:13,14 All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you.<sup>14</sup> Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame. Here are no coals to warm anyone; here is no fire to sit by.

**d) God protects his people against the occult.**

Numbers 23:7-10, 23: Then Balaam uttered his oracle: “Balak brought me from Aram, the king of Moab from the eastern mountains. ‘Come,’ he said, ‘curse Jacob for me; come, denounce Israel.’<sup>8</sup> How can I curse those whom God has not cursed? How can I denounce those whom the LORD has not denounced?<sup>9</sup> From the rocky peaks I see them, from the heights I view them. I see a people who live apart and do not consider themselves one of the nations.<sup>10</sup> Who can count the dust of Jacob or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like theirs!”<sup>23</sup> There is no sorcery against Jacob, no divination against Israel.

## **2. Man's Nature.**

**I. Man was created by God as a personal being consisting of body and soul.**

**1. Adam and Eve were created directly by God.**

Genesis 2:7,21,22 The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.<sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh.<sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

**2. They were not the result of an evolutionary process.**

Genesis 1:26,27 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Contra Genesis 1, Ted Peters: This leads to our third and fourth scientific concepts—evolution and ecology. The planet earth represents one of these open subsystems at the meso level. Earth is constantly receiving energy input from the sun. Its own system—its ecology—is for the time being exempt from falling victim to entropy. Hence, the interplay of randomness and chance makes possible leaps in creativity, fluctuations out of which new and higher forms of order can emerge. The fact that earth is an open system has made possible the evolution of life. By *evolution* I mean here essentially what Charles Darwin in 1859 meant, namely, the gradual epigenetic

appearance of new species due to mutations and natural selection. The chronology looks something like this: point zero in time and the onset of the big bang began perhaps 15 billion years ago; the earth's crust congealed about 4 billions years ago; single cell life forms appeared 3.8 billion years ago; dinosaurs roamed the planet from 180 million to 63 million years ago; and the proto-human *homo erectus* flourished between 600,000 and 350,000 years ago (*God—The World's Future*, p 140, 141).

**3. God created man with a material body.**

**a) God made man from the dust of the ground.**

**Note: the Hebrew says God formed man “dust from the ground.”**

Genesis 2:7 The LORD God formed the man [from the] dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

וַיִּצְרֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עֹפָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נְשֵׁמַת חַיִּים  
וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה

**b) God gave man the “breath of life” (נְשֵׁמַת חַיִּים).**

**c) God made man a “living being” (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה).**

Genesis 2:7: The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Note that the animals were also made “living beings” (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה). Thus Genesis 2:7 is not a proof passage for the doctrine of soul as the KJV may seem to indicate.

Genesis 1:30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה) in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul (KJV).

**4. God created man with an immaterial soul.**

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 And the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Note that there is no single word in Scripture that corresponds to the English word “soul.” The following words may be used to denote the immaterial “soul” of man.

Hebrew: נֶפֶשׁ - רוּחַ - לֵב Greek: ψυχή - πνεῦμα Latin: *anima, spiritus*

**5. The human soul is a creation and not an emanation from God.**

Isaiah 42:5 This is what God the LORD says—he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath (נְשָׁמָה) to its people, and life (רוּחַ) to those who walk on it.

Jeremiah 38:16 But King Zedekiah swore this oath secretly to Jeremiah: “As surely as the LORD lives, who has given us breath (נְפֶשׁ), I will neither kill you nor hand you over to those who are seeking your life (נְפֶשׁ).”

Note this word is also used of animals.

Genesis 1:20,24 And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures (שֶׁרֵץ נְפֶשׁ חַיָּה) and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.”<sup>24</sup> And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. — See also Genesis 7:22 Everything on dry land that had the breath of life (נְשָׁמָה רוּחַ חַיִּים) in its nostrils died.

Hollaz: The soul is said to have been breathed in *by* God, not *from* God. For God did not breathe the soul into man out of his own divine substance (*Examen*, p 409).

## 6. Man's nature seems to consist of two parts: a material body and an immaterial soul (dichotomy).

### a) There are some who try to distinguish three constituents: body, soul, and spirit (trichotomy).

Ed Murphy: In speaking about the three levels of protection around us, he states, “The schema follows the trichotomous view that the human person is made up of body, soul, and spirit” (*The Handbook for Spiritual Warfare*, p 434).

#### 1) They point to the following passages for support.

Genesis 2:7 The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Luke 1:46,47 And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

1 Thessalonians 5:23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

#### 2) When interpreted with the rest of Scripture, it is doubtful that these passages teach a trichotomy.

Gerhard: It seems simplest in those passages in which spirit is distinguished from soul to understand by the term “spirit” the higher faculty of the regenerated and renewed soul, by which a man clings to God and follows the leading of the Holy Spirit (Ro 8:16). With this solution for the most part agrees the explanation of those who say that “soul” is used in a double sense by the apostles, first, in so far as it according to its substance gives life to the body, and this is indicated by the word “soul,” secondly, in so far as it is renewed by the Holy Spirit, and this is indicated by the word “spirit” (*Locis*, tom. XVII, loc. XXII, paragraph LXXVI, p 81).

Quenstedt: 1) In passages of this kind Holy Scripture does not understand by “spirit” some spirit substantially different from the human soul, but the higher part of the soul. 2) A distinction must be made between “spirit” taken for an essential part of man—and thus it is the same as soul and not distinguished from it—and when it is used for spiritual gifts and the gifts of sanctification, which are conferred on believers by the Holy Spirit, or when it is used for the grace and effect of the Holy Spirit, namely, the qualities and gifts of the Holy Spirit in a regenerate person (*TDP*, I, p 518).

**b) Scripture uses the terms “soul” and “spirit” somewhat interchangeably to designate the same “substance”.**

**1) In Scripture the “soul” words, שְׁפָאָה and ψυχή, are used in many ways. The NIV and other English translations use many different terms to reflect these differences.**

Note: The LXX often uses ψυχή as a translation for שְׁפָאָה.

**-a) שְׁפָאָה / ψυχή can refer to “breath.”**

Job 41:21 His *breath* sets coals ablaze, and flames dart from his mouth.

Acts 20:10 Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “He’s *alive!*” [He’s breathing]

**-b) שְׁפָאָה / ψυχή can denote “odor” or “fragrance.”**

Isaiah 3:20 The headdresses and ankle chains and sashes, the *perfume* bottles [literally “houses of soul”] and charms.

**-c) שְׁפָאָה / ψυχή is used for “that which animates the body and makes it a functioning living being.”**

Genesis 1:30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the *breath* of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

Genesis 9:4 But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood (αἷματι ψυχῆς LXX) still in it.

**-d) שְׁדָּוָה / ψυχή is contrasted with the body.**

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the *soul*. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both *soul* and body in hell.

1 Kings 17:21 Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried to the LORD, “O LORD my God, let this boy’s *life* return to him!” [or soul?]

**-e) שְׁדָּוָה / ψυχή is used to denote the emphatic “I,” “me,” or “self.”**

Psalms 103:1,2 Praise the LORD, O my *soul*; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. <sup>2</sup>Praise the LORD, O my *soul*, and forget not all his benefits.

Luke 1:46,47 And Mary said: “My *soul* glorifies the Lord <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

**-f) שְׁדָּוָה / ψυχή can refer to the living creature, including a human being.**

Genesis 1:21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living and moving *thing* with which the water teems, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.

Revelation 8:9 A third of the *living* creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

**-g) שְׁדָּוָה / ψυχή is the seat of emotions, affections, and inner feelings of all kinds.**

Genesis 34:3 His *heart* was drawn to Dinah daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her.

Psalms 6:3 My *soul* is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long?

Ephesians 6:6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your *heart*.

**-h) שְׁדָּוָה / ψυχή can denote “earnestness.”**

Proverbs 27:9 Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one’s friend springs from his *earnest* counsel (literally “soul counsel”). Note: ψυχή in LXX.

**-i) All the functions by which life is sustained or strengthened is attributed to the נַפְשׁ / ψυχή**

- The soul gets thirsty and hungry.

Psalm 107:9 For he satisfies *the thirsty* [the soul who is thirsty] and fills *the hungry* [the soul who is hungry] with good things.

- Fasts

Psalm 69:10 When I weep and fast, *I* [my soul] must endure scorn;

- Gets full

Proverbs 27:7 *He* [The soul] who is full loathes honey, but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.

- Gets refreshed

Jeremiah 31:25 I will refresh the weary [*soul*] and satisfy the faint [*soul*].

- **Delights in the richest of fare**

Isaiah 55:2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your *soul* will delight in the richest of fare.

- **Can pollute itself with defiled food**

Ezekiel 4:14 Then I said, “Not so, Sovereign LORD! *I* (my soul) have never defiled myself. From my youth until now I have never eaten anything found dead or torn by wild animals. No unclean meat has ever entered my mouth.”

**-j) The following are true of the נַפְשׁ / ψυχή**

- It can be killed

Numbers 31:19 All of you who have killed *anyone* or touched anyone who was killed must stay outside the camp seven days. On the third and seventh days you must purify yourselves and your captives.

- devoured

Ezekiel 22:25 There is a conspiracy of her princes within her like a roaring lion tearing its prey; they devour *people*, take treasures and precious things and make many widows within her.

- demanded or asked for

1 Kings 3:11 So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the *death* of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice.”

- risked or forfeited

Judges 9:17 And to think that my father fought for you, risked his *life* to rescue you from the hand of Midian

- redeemed

Psalms 34:23 The LORD redeems [*the souls of*] his servants; no one will be condemned who takes refuge in him.

- renewed

Psalms 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the *soul*.

- relieved

Lamentations 1:11 All her people groan as they search for bread; they barter their treasures for food to *keep themselves alive* (to revive their souls).

- feared for.

Joshua 9:24 They answered Joshua, “Your servants were clearly told how the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you the whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants from before you. So we feared for our *lives* because of you, and that is why we did this.”

2) **Scripture also uses the “spirit” words רִיחַ / πνεῦμα in many ways.**

**-a) רִיחַ / πνεῦμα can refer to “wind.”**

Genesis 8:1: But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded.

**-b) רִיחַ / πνεῦμα can refer to “breath of life.”**

Genesis 6:17 I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life (רִיחַ דַּיִם) in it. Everything on earth will perish.

James 2:26 As the body without the *spirit* is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

- c) **רוּחַ / πνεῦμα can be used to stress the temporary nature of life.**

Job 7:7 Remember, O God, that my life is but a *breath*.

- d) **רוּחַ / πνεῦμα can be used to refer to the soul (as opposed to the body).**

Ecclesiastes 12:7 The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the *spirit* returns to God who gave it.

- e) **רוּחַ / πνεῦμα can refer to “anger.”**

Judges 8:3 “God gave Oreb and Zeeb, the Midianite leaders, into your hands. What was I able to do compared to you?” At this, their *resentment* against him subsided.

- f) **רוּחַ / πνεῦμα can refer to the seat of other affections and sensations.**

- Unrest

Genesis 41:8 In the morning his *mind* was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.

- Sorrow and vexation

Isaiah 65:14 My servants will sing out of the joy of their hearts, but you will cry out from anguish of heart and wail in brokenness of *spirit*.

- Patience and pride

Ecclesiastes 7:8 The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience (*in spirit*) is better than pride (*in spirit*).

- Despair

Isaiah 61:3 And provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a *spirit* of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

- Inner thoughts

1 Corinthians 2:11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s *spirit* within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the *Spirit* of God.



**-g) רַחַם / πνεῦμα may refer to the emotion or attitude that governs a person’s actions.**

- Spirit of jealousy

Numbers 5:14 And if *feelings* of jealousy come over her husband and he suspects his wife and she is impure—or if he is jealous and suspects her even though she is not impure.

- Spirit of prostitution

Hosea 4:12 A *spirit* of prostitution leads them astray; they are unfaithful to their God.

- Spirit of dizziness

Isaiah 19:14 The LORD has poured into them a *spirit* of dizziness; they make Egypt stagger in all that she does, as a drunkard staggers around in his vomit.

- Spirit of timidity, power, love, self-discipline

2 Timothy 1:7 For God did not give us a *spirit* of timidity, but a *spirit* of power, of love and of self-discipline.

**-h) רַחַם / πνεῦμα is also used to refer to the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit.**

Exodus 31:3 And I have filled him with the *Spirit* of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts.

John 3:8: The *wind* blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the *Spirit*.”

**3) When comparing “soul” and “spirit” in Scripture we can note the following similarities.**

**-a) Both רַחַם / πνεῦμα and נַפְשׁ / ψυχή are regarded as the seat of emotions, affections, and intelligence.**

Philippians 1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in *one spirit*, contending as *one man* for the faith of the gospel.

ὅτι στήκετε ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι, μιᾷ ψυχῇ συναθλοῦντες τῇ πίστει τοῦ εὐαγγελίου

Note also passages in the previous sections.

- b) Human beings are said to be body and  $\eta\gamma\epsilon$  /  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  (Matthew 10:28) and body and  $\psi\kappa\chi\eta$  /  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  (1 Corinthians 5:5).**

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

1 Corinthians 5:5 Hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature [flesh] may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

- c) Death is described as giving up the  $\eta\gamma\epsilon$  /  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  (Matthew 27:50; Acts 7:59) and the departing of the  $\psi\kappa\chi\eta$  /  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  (Genesis 35:18; Acts 5:5,10).**

Matthew 27:50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit ( $\acute{\alpha}\phi\eta\kappa\epsilon\nu\ \tau\omicron\ \pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ ).

Acts 7:59 While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ( $\delta\acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\iota\ \tau\omicron\ \pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\ \mu\omicron\upsilon$ ).”

Genesis 35:18 As she breathed her last ( $\eta\psi\kappa\eta\ \eta\ \beta\epsilon\tau\alpha$ )—for she was dying—she named her son Ben-Oni. But his father named him Benjamin.

Acts 5:5,10 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died ( $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\acute{\epsilon}\psi\upsilon\chi\epsilon\nu$ ). And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.<sup>10</sup> At that moment she fell down at his feet and died ( $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\acute{\epsilon}\psi\upsilon\chi\epsilon\nu$ ). Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

- d) The departed are called  $\eta\gamma\epsilon$  /  $\pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$  (Hebrews 12:23; 1 Peter 3:19) and  $\psi\kappa\chi\eta$  /  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  (Revelation 6:9; 20:4).**

Revelation 6:9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the *souls* of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained.

Revelation 20:4 I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the *souls* of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to

life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Hebrews 12:23 To the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the *spirits* of righteous men made perfect.

1 Peter 3:19 Through whom also he went and preached to the *spirits* in prison.

**4) While it is difficult to define clearly the differences between “soul” and “spirit,” yet we can note the following differences.**

- a) נַפְשׁ / ψυχὴ is preferred when speaking about emotions, while רוּחַ / πνεῦμα is preferred when speaking about intelligent will.
- b) נַפְשׁ / ψυχὴ is preferred when speaking about “essence” while רוּחַ / πνεῦμα is preferred when speaking about “activity.”
- c) נַפְשׁ / ψυχὴ is preferred when speaking about receptivity (of some actions) while רוּחַ / πνεῦμα is preferred when speaking about the activity (of the soul).
- d) נַפְשׁ / ψυχὴ is preferred when speaking about the creature as a whole while רוּחַ / πνεῦμα is preferred when speaking about the living principle in the creature.
- e) נַפְשׁ / ψυχὴ is preferred when speaking of the spiritual substance that is joined to the body while רוּחַ / πνεῦμα is preferred when speaking about the spiritual substance as opposed to matter.
- f) נַפְשׁ / ψυχὴ is preferred when speaking of humans, who are called souls but not spirits (though deceased humans can be called spirits), while רוּחַ / πνεῦμα is preferred when speaking of angels (called spirits but not souls).
- g) נַפְשׁ / ψυχὴ is preferred to speak of the natural life in unbelievers while רוּחַ / πνεῦμα is preferred when speaking about the new spiritual life in Christians and the exalted state of Christ.

c) Scripture also uses the word “heart” (לֵב / לֵבָב / καρδία) in similar ways, yet does not suggest that this is another part of man’s essence.

1) **The word “heart” (לֵב / לֵב / καρδία) is used to describe the seat of life.**

Psalm 22:26 The poor will eat and be satisfied; they who seek the LORD will praise him— may your *hearts* live forever!

Isaiah 1:5 Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole *heart* afflicted.

2) **The word “heart” (לֵב / לֵב / καρδία) is used to describe the center of spiritual or soul-life.**

- Love

Judges 16:15 Then she said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when you won’t *confide* in me? (literally: “when your heart is not with me.)

Mark 12:30 Love the Lord your God with all your *heart* and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

1 Peter 1:22 Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the *heart*.

- Joy

Psalm 104:15 Wine that gladdens the *heart* of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart.

Acts 2:26 Therefore my *heart* is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope.

- Heaviness

Proverbs 12:25 An anxious *heart* weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.

- Sorrow

Proverbs 14:13 Even in laughter the *heart* may ache, and joy may end in grief.

- Despair

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the *brokenhearted*, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.

Psalm 109:16 For he never thought of doing a kindness, but hounded

to death the poor and the needy and the *brokenhearted*.

- Fear

Psalm 27:3 Though an army besiege me, my *heart* will not fear; though war break out against me, even then will I be confident.

**3) The word “heart” (לֵב / לֵבָב / καρδία) is used to describe the seat of thoughts and concepts.**

Song of Solomon 5:2 I slept but my *heart* was awake.

2 Kings 5:26 But Elisha said to him, “Was not my *spirit* with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you?”

Psalm 31:12 I am *forgotten* by them as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery. (literally: “I have passed out of heart/mind.”)

Judges 5:16 Why did you stay among the campfires to hear the whistling for the flocks? In the districts of Reuben there was much searching of *heart*.

1 Kings 9:3 The LORD said to him: “I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my *heart* will always be there.

Luke 2:19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her *heart*.

1 Corinthians 14:25 And the secrets of his *heart* will be laid bare.

**4) The word “heart” (לֵב / לֵבָב / καρδία) is used to describe the seat of motivation, inclination, determination, and planning.**

1 Samuel 14:7 “Do all that you have in *mind*,” his armor-bearer said. “Go ahead; I am with you *heart and soul*.”

1 Samuel 13:14 But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own *heart* and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD’s command.

Exodus 35:21 And everyone who was willing and whose *heart* moved him came and brought an offering to the LORD for the work on the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments.

Esther 7:5 King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, “Who is he? Where is the man who has *dared to do* such a thing?” (literally: “have in heart”)

Matthew 18:35 This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you

unless you forgive your brother from your *heart*.

Luke 12:34 For where your treasure is, there your *heart* will be also.

2 Corinthians 9:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

**5) The word “heart” (לֵב / לֵב / καρδία) is used to describe the seat of understanding and wisdom.**

1 Kings 10:24 The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.

Psalm 90:12 Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

**6) The word “heart” (לֵב / לֵב / καρδία) is used to describe the center of moral life of a person.**

Deuteronomy 4:29 But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your *heart* and with all your soul.

Deuteronomy 6:5 Love the LORD your God with all your *heart* and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Psalm 51:10 Create in me a pure *heart*, O God, and renew a steadfast *spirit* within me.

1 Kings 3:6 Solomon answered, “You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in *heart*. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.”

1 Kings 9:4 As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of *heart* and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws.

Nehemiah 9:8 You found his *heart* faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Girgashites. You have kept your promise because you are righteous.

Jeremiah 24:7 I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their *heart*.

Jeremiah 3:17 At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil *hearts*.

Psalm 101:4 Men of perverse *heart* shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil.

Matthew 15:19 For out of the *heart* come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

Acts 1:24 Then they prayed, “Lord, you know everyone’s *heart*. Show us which of these two you have chosen.”

Acts 8:21 You have no part or share in this ministry, because your *heart* is not right before God.

Romans 10:10 For it is with your *heart* that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Note: In Scripture the heart is used for the whole inner man including—but not limited to—the emotions. It is not contrasted to the head or intelligence, as is done in Western culture. This shows that the western way of viewing the heart as the center of emotions does not parallel the Scriptural concept of “heart.” It should also be noted that Scripture uses other words to describe the emotional center of human beings (Example: Romans 12:2 “the renewing of your *mind*” – τῆ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς).

**d) Scripture may prefer certain words when speaking about the material or spiritual aspects of human beings. However, it does not make clear distinctions in the use of these words. It frequently uses them interchangeably.**

**1) Scripture seems to teach dichotomy.**

Ecclesiastes 12:7 The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it.

Matthew 10:28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

**2) The relationship between body and soul/spirit is one of mutual dependence:**

- The body is the instrument of the soul/spirit. Without the body the soul/spirit is incomplete.
- The soul/spirit gives life to the body. Without the soul/spirit the body is dead.

Genesis 2:7 The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

2 Corinthians 5:1-4 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in

heaven, not built by human hands.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling,<sup>3</sup> because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.<sup>4</sup> For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

2 Peter 1:13,14 I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body,<sup>14</sup> because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

Hollaz: a) The body is a true part of man, without which he is not a true and complete man. b) The human soul has not been thrown by God into the body as into a squalid prison, by which it is hindered from being able to lift itself up quickly and fly to God, who is to be known, loved, and worshiped (*Examen*, p 411).

### 3) Scripture, then, clearly condemns:

- a) **Materialism (Greek atomists, Marxists, Behaviorists)—which assumes the existence of matter only and considers the phenomena of the mind as merely the product of a neurological system.**

Susan Blackmore: We are biological organisms, evolved in fascinating ways for no purpose at all and with no end in any mind. We are simply here and this is how it is. I have no self and “I” own nothing. There is no one to die. There is just this moment, and now this and now this (*Dying to Live: Near-Death Experiences*, p 263, 264).

- b) **Idealism (spiritualistic philosophy, e.g., Christian Science) — which claims that reality is essentially psychic, accounting for matter as a product of (misguided) fantasy.**

Mary Baker Eddy: All is infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, for God is All-in-All.... Spirit is God, and man is His image and likeness. Therefore, man is not material; he is spiritual (*Science and Health with Key to Scriptures*, p 468:9-15).

## II. All inhabitants of the earth today are descended, according to body and soul, from the first pair of human beings created by God in the beginning.

### 1. The oneness of humanity is the clear doctrine of Scripture.

- a) **All humans descended from two people.**

Genesis 1:27,28 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”



Genesis 2:18-25 The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”<sup>19</sup> Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.<sup>20</sup> So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.<sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh.<sup>22</sup> Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.<sup>23</sup> The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”<sup>24</sup> For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.<sup>25</sup> The man and his wife were both aked, and they felt no shame.

Genesis 9:1 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.”

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

**b) The existing differences between the various races have led some to deny the descent of all mankind from one pair.**

**1) Some have spoken of co-Adamites, or pre-Adamites.**

Peyrerius (1655) taught that the Gentiles are different in race and origin from the Jews. The Jews were formed by God in Adam. The Gentiles were created earlier, on the same day as the other animate beings. The origin of the latter is described in Genesis 1, of the former in chapter 2. ... The Gentiles were many ages earlier than the Jewish people.— He refers also to Gn 4:14,16,17; 6:2–4; Ro 5:12–14 (*Prae-Adamitae*, Hoenecke, *Dogmatik*, II, p 315).

**2) Today much of modern science (evolution) advocates the other extreme. It denies not only the creation of man by God, but creation in general.**

**c) The propagation of mankind is a work of God's providence (preservation).**

Job 10:8,9,11,12 Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me?<sup>9</sup> Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again?<sup>11</sup> Clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews?<sup>12</sup> You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me; the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Psalm 119:73 Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands.

Psalm 139:14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

**2. Special difficulties have been experienced in explaining the propagation of the human soul, leading to different theories.**

**a) Preexistentism. Platonic philosophers, mystics, Origen, Mormons.**

- 1) This theory assumes that the life of the soul antedates that of the body. In the moment of conception one of the ready souls, created in the beginning, is sent into the new body.**

William Wordsworth (d. 1850):  
Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath elsewhere its setting and cometh from afar;  
Not in entire forgetfulness  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God who is our home. (*Ode*)

- 2) This is against Scripture.**

Genesis 1:27,28 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.<sup>28</sup> God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Genesis 5:3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

Psalm 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Romans 5:12 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.

**b) Creationism. Many church fathers, Catholics, Pelagius, Melanchthon.**

- 1) This theory assumes that by a direct act God creates a soul for every new body naturally conceived (either in the moment of conception or within the first forty days thereafter or later).**
- 2) Scripture which speaks of God as our creator is cited in support of this theory.**

Numbers 16:22 But Moses and Aaron fell facedown and cried out, “O God, God of the spirits of all mankind, will you be angry with the entire assembly when only one man sins?”

Job 10:12 You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit.

John 5:17 Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”

Acts 17:25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

**3) However, the following passages argue against creationism.**

God ceased his work of creation at the end of the sixth day.

Genesis 2:1-3 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. <sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. <sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

God is the creator of the body, but he does it through the parents.

Job 10:8,9,11 Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me?<sup>9</sup> Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again?<sup>11</sup> Clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews?

Job 31:15 Did not he who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?

Psalms 119:73 Your hands made me and formed me; give me understanding to learn your commands.

Psalms 139:14-16 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.<sup>15</sup> My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth,<sup>16</sup> your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Children are born in the image of sinful parents.

Genesis 5:3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

Genesis 46:26 All those who went to Egypt with Jacob—those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons’ wives—numbered sixty-six persons.

Genesis 46:26 All the *souls* that came with Jacob into Egypt, *which came out of his loins* ( יֵצְאֵי יָרְכוּ ), besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six (KJV).

Psalm 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. etc.

c) **Traducianism. Tertullian, Augustine, most Lutheran dogmaticians.**

- 1) **This theory (from *tradux*, “runner” or “shoot”) holds that in conception the new soul is propagated together with the body.**
- 2) **It is the one most compatible with Scripture, especially with the doctrine of original sin.**

Genesis 1:28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Genesis 5:3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

Psalm 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Hebrews 7:10 When Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

See the passages against creationism above.

Formula of Concord, T.D., I, 7: In the second place, this, too, is clear and true, as the Nineteenth Article of the *Augsburg Confession* teaches, that God is not a creator, author, or cause of sin, but by the instigation of the devil through one man sin, which is a work of the devil, has entered the world, Rom. 5, 12; 1 John 3, 7. And even at the present day, in this corruption of nature, God does not create and make sin in us, but with the nature which God at the present day still creates and makes in men original sin is propagated from sinful seed, through carnal conception and birth from father and mother.

Formula of Concord, T.D., I, 30: [Nor can we accept the view] Augustine attributes to the Manicheans, as though it were not the corrupt man himself that sins by reason of inborn original sin, but something different and foreign in man, and that God, accordingly, accuses and condemns by the law, not the nature as corrupt by sin, but only the original sin therein. For, as stated above *in thesi*, that is, in the explanation of the pure doctrine concerning original sin, the entire nature of man, which is born in the natural way of father and mother, is entirely and to the farthest extent corrupted and perverted by original sin, in body and soul, in all its powers, as regards and concerns the goodness, truth, holiness, and righteousness concreated with it in Paradise. *Non tamen in aliam substantiam genere aut*

*specie diversam, priori abolita, transmutata est*, that is: Nevertheless the nature is not entirely exterminated or changed into another substance, which, according to its essence, could not be said to be like our nature but is diverse in genus or species, and therefore cannot be of one essence with us.

**3) Our theologians have expressed themselves in different ways. In general, they support traducianism without being dogmatic about it.**

Quenstedt: The soul of the first man was created by God directly without means. But the soul of Eve and the souls of the rest of men are not daily created in this same way. Nor are they created in the same way as the body or the souls of beasts are born from their parents, but by force of the divine benediction they are propagated from their parents through propagation [like the development of a new plant from a strawberry runner].... This is proved 1) from the primeval blessing of God (Gn 1:28, coll 8:17; 9:1); 2) from God's rest and cessation from all work on the seventh day (Gn 2:2); 3) from the making of Eve's soul (Gn 2:21, 22); 4) from the description of generation (Gn 5:3). Just as Adam after the Fall fathered a son in his image and likeness, not only with respect to the body but also with respect to the soul, so also the rest of men; 5) from Gn 46:26; 6) from the following absurdities: a) if it is claimed that souls are created directly (without means) by God, either original sin would clearly have to be denied or God could not be freed from injustice, both of which are absurd; b) it follows that man does not beget an entire man or a complete composite being, but only a part of him; but anyone who does not give the essence of a man does not beget a man, for a man without his essence, that is, his soul, is not a man; 7) from Ps 51:5 (*TDP*, I, p 519)

Gerhard: From this basic fact [namely, that without the Fall the blessed condition of the first people would have been passed on to all their descendants] we deduce this theory: also the souls of those who were born of Adam and Eve were not created, nor even generated, but propagated.... After the Fall original sin has taken the place of the image of God in man, the propagation of which shows also that after the Fall that propagation of souls takes place. The propagation of original sin shows that human souls are not created directly by God, but are propagated from the parents to the children (*Loci*, IV, p 278).

Gerhard: We do not say that the body is produced separately and the soul separately, but we say that the whole man is generated from the whole man. For it is an axiom in the schools of the philosophers that generation is an act of the whole composite being (*Loci*, IV, p 280).

Augustine: We will gladly defend the opinion of Jerome if they can show us how the souls do not come from Adam and yet receive from him a just sentence of damnation (Cited in Hoenecke, *Dogmatik*, II, p 317).

Augustine: What pertains to the origin of it (i.e., the soul), how it happens that it is in the body, whether it comes from that one who was first created, when man was made into a living soul, or whether individual souls are

always made in this way for individual beings, I did not know then and I still don't know (*Retractions*, cited in Hoenecke, *Dogmatik*, II, p 317).

Chemnitz: Let it suffice, therefore, to know about the effective cause that the first parents by their fall merited this that as they were after the Fall both in body and soul, so also all their offspring were procreated. How the soul contracts this evil, however, can be ignored without harm to faith (*Loci*, I, p 219).

Note. The propagation of the body is wonderful indeed; but being witnessed daily also in the animal kingdom the force of the miraculous is not so felt.

Special care must be taken to avoid any materialistic conception of the soul.

### **3. Image of God**

#### **I. The image of God consisted in a natural conformity of man's mind to God's. Man was created holy just as God is holy.**

J. P. Meyer: Sinlessness is the core of the concept of image. Everything else, all pure knowledge, pure strivings, pure joy, is only a fruit of sinlessness, to be viewed as granted with sinlessness (*Our Great Heritage*, II, p 187).

##### **1. It is God's unchanging will that man should bear his image.**

###### **a) This was his plan in creating man.**

Genesis 1:26,27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." <sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Genesis 5:1 This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.

Genesis 9:6 Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

James 3:9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.

###### **b) When this image was destroyed through sin, God declared it restored through the sacrifice of his own Son (justification).**

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

**c) Scripture also teaches that through the work of the Spirit the image of God is being renewed in the Christian (sanctification).**

Ephesians 4:23,24 To be made new in the attitude of your minds;<sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.  
23 ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν 24 καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνη καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας.

Colossians 3:9,10 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices<sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

10 καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν.

**d) The image is spoken of in connection with man in his sinful state, since God sees each person as one in whom he wants to restore the image through faith in Christ.**

Genesis 9:6 Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.

James 3:9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.

Franz Pieper: The Lutheran theologians are agreed that the image of God is lacking in man after the Fall (Col 3:10; Eph 4:24). They differ on the question as to whether a divine image is still ascribed to man after the Fall (Gen 9:6; James 3:9). Some deny this and take the passages to describe man as the noble creature who once bore the image of God and in whom God would recreate this image through faith in Christ (Luther). Others say that these passages describe man as he is after the Fall, a creature endowed with intellect and will, and contend that this constitutes a certain similitude with God (Baier, Quenstedt). The interpretation of Luther is to be preferred (*Christian Dogmatics*, p 518, 519).

**2. In determining what constitutes the image of God the following must be considered.**

**a) God is absolute spirit.**

**1) The image of God cannot be seen. Therefore the image of God should not be considered as something corporeal.**

**2) The image presupposes a personal being, that is, a person that exists distinct from God and capable of self-awareness.**

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Genesis 2:7 The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Genesis 5:1 This is the written account of Adam's line. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.

**b) Christ is the essential image of God.**

**1) Scripture teaches this truth.**

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. *ὁ υἱὸς ὡς ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτῆρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ.*

Compare John 14:9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

John 12:45 When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me.

**2) Man's image of God will be similar to Christ.**

Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

1 Corinthians 15:49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

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Matthew 10:38 Anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 12:26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.



1 Peter 2:21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

Calov: The substantial image of God is the eternal Son of God because he expresses in himself the entire essence of the Father, but distinct from him in his manner of subsisting. From this it is evident that the conformity which is found in the substance of the soul or body does not pertain to the image of God described in the biblical style, because the substance of the soul or body was not lost through the Fall nor is it restored through renewal (*Systema*, IV, p 573).

**c) The spiritual life of a Christian is a restoration of the original image of God.**

**1) The natural sinful state of man may be regarded as the reverse of the image.**

Ephesians 4:22,25 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires;<sup>25</sup> Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Colossians 3:5-9,10 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.<sup>6</sup> Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.<sup>7</sup> You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.<sup>8</sup> But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.<sup>9</sup> Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices<sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

**2) The various elements of Christian life may be regarded as components of the image.**

Ephesians 4:23,24,32 To be made new in the attitude of your minds;<sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.<sup>32</sup> Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.

**d) The ordinary use of the Hebrew terms will shed some light.**

**1) The word *צֶלֶם* (image, *imago*) is used in the following ways:**

Numbers 33:52 Drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved *images* and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places.

2 Kings 11:18 All the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and *idols* to pieces and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars. Then Jehoiada the priest posted guards at the temple of the LORD.

Ezekiel 7:20 They were proud of their beautiful jewelry and used it to make their detestable idols and vile *images*. Therefore I will turn these into an unclean thing for them.

2 Chronicles 23:17 All the people went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and *idols* and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars.

Ezekiel 16:17 You also took the fine jewelry I gave you, the jewelry made of my gold and silver, and you made for yourself male *idols* and engaged in prostitution with them.

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1 Samuel 6:5,11 Make *models* of the tumors and of the rats that are destroying the country, and pay honor to Israel's god. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you and your gods and your land.<sup>11</sup> They placed the ark of the LORD on the cart and along with it the chest containing the gold rats and the *models* of the tumors.

Ezekiel 23:14 But she carried her prostitution still further. She saw men portrayed on a wall, *figures* of Chaldeans portrayed in red.

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Psalms 39:6 Man is a mere *phantom* as he goes to and fro: He bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it.

Psalms 73:20 As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as *fantasies*.

**2) The word תמוּנָה (likeness, *similitudo*) is used in the following ways:**

2 Kings 16:10 Then King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. He saw an altar in Damascus and sent to Uriah the priest a *sketch* of the altar, with detailed plans for its construction.

Isaiah 40:18 To whom, then, will you compare God? What *image* will you compare him to?

Ezekiel 23:15 With belts around their waists and flowing turbans on their heads; all of them *looked like* Babylonian chariot officers, natives of Chaldea.

Ezekiel 1:5,10, 22 In the fire was what *looked like* four living creatures. In appearance their form was that of a man.<sup>10</sup> Their faces *looked like* this: Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle.<sup>22</sup> Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what *looked like* an expanse, sparkling like ice, and awesome.

Ezekiel 1:28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the *likeness* of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

2 Chronicles 4:3 Below the rim, *figures* of bulls encircled it—ten to a cubit. The bulls were cast in two rows in one piece with the Sea.

### 3) Theologians provide the following on both terms.

Hollaz: In the beginning two terms were used ... not for this purpose that they might be symbols of distinct things and that the “image” might denote the substance itself of the human soul, “likeness” its attributive qualities (as some papists want to understand the terms), but in order that the latter might be explanatory of the former, and that the image might be designated as a most similar or very similar image of God (*Examen*, p 502).

Gerhard: We do not distinguish “image” and “likeness” in such a way that we refer the former to the essence of the soul, the latter to holiness, righteousness, the knowledge of God, etc. in man, but we state that the same thing is expressed by both words and the term “likeness” is to be taken exegetically (*Loci*, p 241).

#### e) For a statement of these principles by our Lutheran fathers

Calov: This conformity of man with God has reference to the image of God which 1) was impressed on our first parents in creation, 2) was lost for the most part through transgression (note Calov is using a broader definition), 3) must be restored through renewal in this life and especially in the blessed regeneration to the life to come (*Systema*, p 572).

Meisner: 1) The image of God must be put among those things by reason of which some similarity exists between man and God. 2) The image of God must not be included among those things which remained whole in man after the Fall. 3) The image of God is not sought in one similarity between man and God, but in all similarities. 4) The image of God can become known in part from a consideration of original sin. 5) The image of God can be recognized best if the renewal of man is noted, which takes place with respect to the lost image. 6) A consideration of our state of glory in the life to come contributes considerably to a knowledge of the image.—Meisner then sums all this up in the axiom: Whatever is similar to God, what we lost through the Fall, the opposite of which we find in unregenerate man, what we know must be restored in us—that let us consider to have belonged without doubt to the image of God (*Loci*, p 7,8)

### 3. From Scripture we can learn a number of things about loss of the image.

#### a) Man's intellect was originally conformed to God's but became darkened.

Genesis 2:19,23 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the

beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. <sup>23</sup> The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

Ecclesiastes 7:29-8:1 This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes.” <sup>1</sup>Who is like the wise man? Who knows the explanation of things? Wisdom brightens a man’s face and changes its hard appearance.

Colossians 3:9,10 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

Note. This was a conformity in the principles upon which one makes moral judgments, not in the manner, extent, or degree of knowledge used for making those judgments.

**b) Man's emotions were stirred and his will strove in harmony with the good and holy will of God but became rebellious against God.**

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Genesis 2:25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Ephesians 4:24 Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

**c) As a result of the loss of the original holiness and righteousness, the following became true.**

**1) Man was free from pain and suffering but now suffers.**

Genesis 3:16,19 To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

Genesis 5:29 He named him Noah and said, “He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed.”

Job 14:1 Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble.

Psalms 90:10 The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

**2) Man was not subject to death but now dies.**

Genesis 2:17 But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”

Romans 5:12 Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**3) Man had an easy dominion over creation but now struggles.**

Genesis 1:26,27 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Compare Genesis 9:2 The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands.

J. P. Meyer: Obviously, it does not mean that we identify the entrusted dominion with the concept of image. The matter is scarcely done justice if man has dominion over creatures simply because of the concept of image. Then dominion is on the same plane as other results of the concept of image, like immortality, freedom from physical and intellectual collapse, and the like. Basically the correct thought is that in the dominion a predisposition or capability is set in motion. To rule with God, to administer God’s property freely—here man is to find his blessedness. And in order to make man capable and worthy of such dominion, God grants him his image. Even if the concept of image is not to be identified with dominion either, they are still woven together most intimately, so that we can hardly view one separate from the other (*Our Great Heritage*, II, p 179).

**d) Our Lutheran fathers state the following:**

Gerhard: Man was created in the highest innocence, in the highest purity of soul and body, so that in him as in a kind of living mirror the image of God shone forth. Thus the image of divine wisdom shone in the intellect of man; the image of goodness, patience, gentleness, and tolerance in the soul of man; the image of divine love and mercy shone in the feelings of the human heart; the image of divine righteousness, holiness and purity shone in the will of man; the image of friendliness, kindness, and truth in man’s deeds and words (*Loci*, p 246).

Baier: This image of God in man ought not or cannot be referred to all things which are in God; nor is it in that degree of perfection in man in which it is in God (*Compendium*, p 203).

#### **4. Scripture reveals God's aim in making man in his image.**

##### **a) That man may thereby be in a position to enjoy his company.**

Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

1 Corinthians 1:9 God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful.

1 John 1:3,6,7 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. <sup>6</sup>If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. <sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

John 17:21,26 I pray that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>26</sup>I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

##### **b) That man may act as God's representative on earth.**

Genesis 1:26,28 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” <sup>28</sup>God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Genesis 9:5,6 And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. <sup>6</sup>“Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.”

Psalms 115:16 The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man.

#### **5. Within the Christian church there has been and continues to be a wide variety of views on the image of God.**

##### **Catholic and Orthodox distinguish image and likeness in order to preserve spiritual powers in man.**

Catechism of the Catholic Church: Disfigured by sin and death, man remains “in the

image of God,” in the image of the Son, but is deprived “of the glory of God,” (Rom 3:23) of his “likeness” (paragraph 705).

Catechism of the Catholic Church: Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone (paragraph 357).

Timothy Ware: The image of God denotes the powers with which each one of us is endowed by God from the first moment of our existence; the likeness is not endowment which we possess from the start, but a goal at which we must aim, something which we can only acquire by degrees. However sinful we may be, we never lose the image; but the likeness depends upon our moral choice, upon our “virtue,” and so it is destroyed by sin (*The Orthodox Church*, p 219).

Daniel B. Clendenin: The Eastern fathers also define theosis as the movement from the divine image to the divine likeness. Many (but not all) Orthodox theologians make this distinction. It was the view of Diadochos of Photiki, Maximus, John of Damascus, Palamas, and others that every person is made in the divine image, but only a few attain the transformation of the distorted image into the divine likeness. That is, we all possess the divine image by nature, but only some acquire the divine likeness through vigilance (*Eastern Orthodox Christianity: A Western Perspective*, p 133).

### **Evangelicals generally follow a wider definition of the image of God.**

R. L. Reymond: Luther regarded the image exclusively in terms of original righteousness and concluded, therefore that the image of God was entirely lost in the Fall.... Calvin disagreed, viewing the image as lying primarily in the understanding or in the heart, that is, in the soul and its powers, but he also suggested that “no part of man, not even his body,” is not adorned in some sense with some rays of its glory. In other words, the image included, for Calvin, both natural endowments and the spiritual qualities of original righteousness (knowledge, righteousness, holiness). The whole image, according to Calvin, had been affected by the Fall, with only original righteousness being completely lost. This is the explication of the image that has become generally acceptable in the Reformed tradition (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*,” p 426).

Millard Erickson: The image of God should be thought of as primarily substantive or structural. The image is something in the very nature of humans, in the way in which they were made. It refers to something a human is rather than something a human has or does. By virtue of being human, one is in the image of God; it is not dependent upon the presence of anything else. . . . The image is the powers of personality that make humans, like God, capable of interacting with other persons, of thinking and reflecting, and of willing freely (*Christian Theology*, p 532).

Wayne Grudem: Out of all the creatures God made, only one creature, man, is said to be “in the image of God.” What does that mean? We may use the following definition: The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God. . . . Though it would be difficult to define all the ways in which we are like God, we can mention several aspects of our existence that show us to be more like God than all the rest of creation.

- Moral aspects—we are morally accountable before God for our actions.

- Spiritual aspects—we have immaterial spirits.
- Mental aspects—we have an ability to reason and think logically.
- Relational aspects—we relate to God and other human beings.
- Physical aspects—our bodies reflect something of God’s own character.  
(*Systematic Theology*, p 442-449)

Compare the heathen poet Ovid: A being holier than these and more capable of a high mentality was lacking up till now, and one which would be able to rule over the rest. Man was born.... The son of Iapetus formed [earth] mixed with rain water into an image of the gods who rule over all things. While the rest of the animals look down to the earth, he gave man an elevated face and commanded him to look up toward heaven and to carry his face raised to the stars (*Met.I,76–88.*) Note: Iapetus was one of the Titans; the son referred to is Prometheus.

H. Orton Wiley: [The image of God] includes both the rational and moral elements, the former being commonly known as the Natural or Essential image of God; the latter as the Moral or Incidental image. . . . We may further summarize the two positions as follows: the natural image of God in man has reference to personality, by which he is distinguished from the lower animal creation; while the moral image refers to the character or quality of this personality. The first has to do with the constitution of man as possessing self-consciousness and self-determination; the second has to do with the rightness or wrongness of the use of these powers (*Christian Theology*, p 32, 38).

Robert L Reymond: Some scholars (e.g., Buswell) suggest that the image in man (or at least an aspect of it) is his dominion over the creation (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, p 427).

### **Liberal Lutheran**

Philip J. Hefner: The image of God presents a fundamental image of human beings as “being-with-a-destiny” (Braaten/Jenson, *Christian Dogmatics*, I, p 330).

Paul Sponheim: Despite Luther and Calvin, it will not do to speak of the image of God as being entirely lost. Already the Priestly writer of the Pentateuch has God blessing humankind after the flood of judgment in nearly the same terms as the initial blessing and making specific appeal to the image of God (Gen. 9:1-2). Ernst Kasemann’s statement is simply too strong: “Adam is a different person before and after the fall.” (Braaten/Jenson, *CD I*, p 421)

Ted Peters: The *imago Dei* is the divine call forward, a call we hear now and respond to now but a call that is drawing us toward transformation into a future reality. . . . Through divinization humanity as the *imago Dei* becomes fulfilled in us. If this is what is meant by *theosis*, then it expresses in other language what I have here been referring to as the call forward to true humanity (*God—The World’s Future*, p 157, 159)

## **II. The image was an inhering attribute of man (but *accidentalis*).**

### **1. It was not a part of man's essence (not *substantialis*).**

#### **a) Christ (but no creature) is the essential image of God.**



2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

**b) Man's essence was not changed by the fall.**

- 1) Man is still a rational (personal) being consisting of body and soul.**
- 2) If the image had been a part of man's substance, the fall would have produced a radical change in man's constitution, destroying his identity.**

Calov: It is evident that the conformity which is found in the substance of the soul or of the body does not belong to the image of God described in the biblical style, because the substance of the soul or body was not lost through the fall nor is it restored through renewal (regeneration) (*Systema*, p 573).

Quenstedt: The image of God is not man but in man, that is, it is not substantial or essential to man, but accidental (*TDP*, p 17).

- 3) If the image (righteousness and holiness) had been essential, the fall would have been impossible. In such a fall man would have ceased to be man.**
- 4) If the image had been essential, original sin would now constitute a part of man's substance. This would involve a false dualism.**

Formula of Concord, T.D., I, 27: For although in Adam and Eve the nature was originally created pure, good, and holy, nevertheless sin did not enter their nature through the Fall in the way fanatically taught by the Manicheans, as though Satan had created or made some evil substance, and mingled it with their nature. But since man, by the seduction of Satan through the Fall, has lost his concreated hereditary righteousness according to God's judgment and sentence, as a punishment, human nature, as has been said above, is so perverted and corrupted by this deprivation or deficiency, want, and injury, which has been caused by Satan, that at present the nature is transmitted, together with this defect and corruption [propagated in a hereditary way], to all men, who are conceived and born in a natural way from father and mother.

Formula of Concord, Ep., 17,19: On the other hand, we also reject the

false dogma of the Manicheans, when it is taught that original sin, as something essential and self-subsisting, has been infused by Satan into the nature, and intermingled with it, as poison and wine are mixed.<sup>19</sup> We reject and condemn also as a Manichean error the doctrine that original sin is properly and without any distinction the substance, nature, and essence itself of the corrupt man, so that a distinction between the corrupt nature, as such, after the Fall and original sin should not even be conceived of, nor that they could be distinguished from one another [even] in thought.

**2. The image and likeness were not merely external gifts (*donum superadditum*).**

**a) This is the view of the Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.**

Catechism of the Catholic Church: Disfigured by sin and death, man remains “in the image of God,” in the image of the Son, but is deprived “of the glory of God,” (Rom 3:23) of his “likeness” (paragraph 705).

Timothy Ware: The image of God denotes the powers with which each one of us is endowed by God from the first moment of our existence; the likeness is not endowment which we possess from the start, but a goal at which we must aim, something which we can only acquire by degrees. However sinful we may be, we never lose the image; but the likeness depends upon our moral choice, upon our “virtue,” and so it is destroyed by sin (*The Orthodox Church*, p 219).

**b) If the image was simply an added gift, the loss of the image could not have affected man's free will as such.**

Council of Trent: First of all the holy synod declares ... that although in the lie of Adam all men lost their innocence ... nevertheless the free will in them was by no means extinguished. *Can.5*: If anyone says that the free will of man after the fall of Adam was lost and extinguished ... let him be damned (VI, Cap. 1).

Bellarmino: The condition of man after the fall of Adam does not differ from his condition in purely natural things any more than a stripped man differs from a naked man ... a wreath, which is placed on the head of a virgin, and although it is removed, she nevertheless remains none the less a virgin; just as a garment, when it has been taken off, makes a man naked, to be sure, but his nature is not taken away (*Disput.*, tom. IV, de gratia primi hominis, cap. V, 11, p 8).

**c) We reject this position.**

Formula of Concord p782,15. [We reject the view of Strigel] that original sin is only an external impediment to the good spiritual powers, and not a despoliation or want of the same, as when a magnet is smeared with garlic-juice, its natural power is not thereby removed, but only impeded; or that this stain can be easily wiped away like a spot from the face or pigment from the wall.

Hollaz: The image of God did not indeed constitute the nature of the first man as an essential part, nor did it emanate from his nature of itself and necessarily as an inseparable characteristic; nevertheless it belonged naturally to the first man because by creation it began to be together with the nature itself of the man; and

so it was, on the one hand, something that belonged to him and, on the other hand, was deeply fixed in him. Accordingly also it inwardly perfected the nature of the entire man to achieve his purpose and could be passed on through natural generation to his descendants (*Examen*, p 518).

Meisner: As far as the word “natural” is concerned, therefore, it is taken: 1) constitutively, for that which gives the nature itself its essence; 2) consecutively, for that which flows essentially from the essence, as the faculties of the soul; 3) subjectively, for that which inheres most deeply fixed in the nature; 4) perfectly, for that which adorns, aids, and perfects the nature; 5) transitively, because it is propagated naturally and by nature. We do not include the first and second way the term is used when we call righteousness “natural” because the image was neither a part nor the constitutive principle of man in the proper sense of the word, nor was it some faculty of the soul. But we hold to all the latter ways the term is used, and therefore we deny that the primeval righteousness was a supernatural gift, because it did not adhere intrinsically nor was it beyond the native endowments or powers; but rather we call it co-natural, both because it inheres in the nature from creation of itself and most closely as a natural property, and because it perfected the same (i.e., man's nature), and therefore it accompanied it as its natural complement, and because it would have been propagated through physical generation to man's descendants and naturally derived (*Loci*, p 44).

Gerhard: We do not deny that original righteousness can be called a gift of God or a grace by reason of its origin, because the first man did not have that integrity of himself but received it as a result of his condition (as a creature). But if a question is raised about the manner of its inherence, we say that original righteousness was a gift that was not external and superadded, but created together with man, because after he lost it through sin, his natural endowments did not remain unimpaired (*Confessio Catholica*, p 1372).

Luther: The scholastics argue that original righteousness was not a part of man's nature but, like some adornment, was added to man as a gift, as when someone places a wreath on a pretty girl. The wreath is certainly not a part of the virgin's nature; it is something apart from her nature. It came from outside and can be removed again without any injury to her nature. Therefore they maintain about man and about demons that although they have lost their original righteousness, their natural endowments have nevertheless remained pure, just as they were created in the beginning. But this idea must be shunned like poison, for it minimizes original sin. Let us rather maintain that righteousness was not a gift which came from without, separate from man's nature, but that it was truly part of his nature, so that it was Adam's nature to love God, to believe God, to know God, etc. (*LW*, 1, 164f).

### **3. The image was an important attribute.**

#### **a) Consider the following:**

##### **1) Man was made in the image of God in his creation.**

Genesis 1:26,27 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air,

over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”<sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

**2) In propagation the image or its absence are transmitted.**

Genesis 1:27-28 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Genesis 5:3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

Romans 5:12 Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

**b) Man was not in a neutral state, a state of moral equilibrium.**

**1) Freedom to sin is not freedom.**

John 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

**2) The image was capable of development.**

**-a) Man was not yet in a state of heavenly perfection.**

Baier: [The concreated wisdom was sufficient for the primeval condition] and therefore it was such that with the passing of time it could nevertheless be increased, but was not so perfect and fully developed that it would even include knowing the free decrees of God or would involve a most accurate knowledge of all the things of nature.—Without a doubt (the condition of man when he was in the image of God was such) that sincere and complete obedience was offered not only to the positive laws of God, but also to the negative ones, and all things which could incline the will in another direction could be declined or spurned (*Compendium*, p 205).

**-b) The image must not be classed with instincts.**

**-1) Instincts produce necessary actions as a result of physiological conditions.**

**-2) The will of man was free to act in different ways.**

**-c) If man was in a state of moral equilibrium, some questions would come to mind.**

**-1) Would not a right decision have been purely accidental?**

-2) **Would a right exercise of the will tend to make righteousness habitual?**

-3) **Would man after every correct decision swing back to the original state of equilibrium?**

-d) **It was God's will that man should consciously exercise his innate righteousness.**

-1) **Scripture teaches this truth.**

Genesis 2:17 But you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

-2) **Logically this would have led to a confirmation. Man would have moved from an ability not to sin (*posse non peccare*) to an inability to sin (*non posse peccare*).**

Cf The angels.

## **4. The Fall of Man**

**I. The first man, abusing his freedom of choice (formal liberty), yielded to the temptation of Satan and abandoned his faith in God.**

**1. Sin among mankind stemmed from an outside temptation rather than any concreated inner flaw.**

**a) Sin or sinful lust was not the natural product of man's mind, nor did it spring up spontaneously in the heart of man. It came through a personal tempter.**

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

1 John 3:8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

**b) Sin came to man through suggestions from outside, which man did not properly meet and reject. The tempter was Satan using the outward appearance of a real serpent.**

Genesis 3:1,4,13 Now the serpent was more crafty (עָרוּם) than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”<sup>4</sup> “You will not surely die,” the

serpent said to the woman.”<sup>13</sup> Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Revelation 12:9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

Romans 16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

Quenstedt: The first and principal external cause of this sin is Satan, acting here not through an inner impulse, nor through outward force ... but through pure outward moral persuasion (*TDP*, II, II, I, Qu. 5, p 973).

Theological Axiom: The serpent was real but an instrument of the devil.

**c) The outcome of the temptation was that man ate of a certain tree against the express will of God.**

Genesis 2:16,17 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;<sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

Genesis 3:6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Quenstedt: The first sin in the human race is the voluntary apostasy of our first parents from God, their Creator, by which, when they were seduced by the devil, they willingly transgressed both the general and inner divine law impressed on their mind, and the special outward prohibition about not eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Concerning the existence of this sin the history recorded in Genesis 3 does not permit us to doubt (*TDP*, II, II, I, Qu. 7, p 998).

Hollaz: Our first parents by their fall directly violated a positive law made known in paradise about not eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Indirectly and virtually by their disobedience they broke the bounds of the whole moral law. . . . The reason for the positive law was a testing or trial of their obedience, which the whole moral law requires as owed to God. Whoever does not fear, however, to transgress one commandment is not ashamed to violate the rest of the commandments since they have the same author and the same binding force. (*Exam.*, II, 3, Qu 9, p 513).

**2. Analyzing the temptation, we find chiefly two attacks.**

**a) The first attempt tried to induce man to investigate critically the command of God. This attack was met and rejected by the woman.**

**1) The temptation contained a wicked insinuation: Is the command of God compatible with his goodness since it is so burdensome?**

Genesis 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden.”

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

**2) The form of the temptation (a sneering question) suggested that man analyze and criticize the divine command, which would be to exhibit an attitude that is against the very nature of faith.**

Job 40:1-5 The LORD said to Job: <sup>2</sup> “Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!” <sup>3</sup> Then Job answered the LORD: <sup>4</sup> “I am unworthy—how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. <sup>5</sup> I spoke once, but I have no answer—twice, but I will say no more.”

Job 42:1-6 Then Job replied to the LORD: <sup>2</sup> “I know that you can do all things; no plan of yours can be thwarted. <sup>3</sup> You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know. <sup>4</sup> “You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’ <sup>5</sup> My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. <sup>6</sup> Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”

Note: A critical analysis of God is different from a contemplation of him and his works. It is quite compatible with faith to contemplate the ways of God.

**3) The woman adequately repeats the command in its proper form setting forth God's goodness and shows she understands God's use of it as a test of their obedience of faith.**

Genesis 3:2,3 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup> but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

**4) Yet it may also be said that the victory was not decisive. The woman emphasized the divine purpose negatively and Satan thus gained an advantage of position.**

- Her answer became argumentative, while faith simply confesses.
- This exposed her to suspicion and fear, but fear is against faith.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

**b) The second attack involved a more bold assertion by Satan and a clear act of disobedience on the part of man.**

**1) Satan boldly denied God's word and asserted God's envy.**

Genesis 3:4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

Genesis 3:5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

**2) The woman believed Satan rather than God. The man willingly followed the lead of the woman. Through unbelief mankind severed their relationship with God.**

Genesis 3:6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Quenstedt: This deflection embraces in its course several distinct sinful acts, among which according to the previous Word of God there is this order. The first is unbelief, or not having faith in the Word of God. The second is the desire to be like God. The third, born of this [i.e., the desire to be like God], is the intention to transgress the law. The fourth is the carrying out of this intention in the act (*TDP, II, II, I, Thes XXIII, p 54*).

**3. Despite various efforts to do so, we cannot reasonably account for the fact that the first man yielded to temptation.**

**a) The freedom of choice given to mankind does not adequately explain the fall of man.**

**1) We acknowledge that man was created as a rational, personal being endowed with freedom of choice (formal liberty), that the possibility of choosing evil is not a defect of such liberty but essential to it, and that this freedom of choice thus provided a possibility of the fall.**

**2) Yet this does not account for the reality of the fall any more than this freedom would have necessitated the fall.**

**b) To assume that God decreed the fall does not properly explain the fall of man.**

**1) This is the blasphemous doctrine of Supralapsarian (or Antelapsarian) Calvinists.**

Calvin: That it is a horrifying decree indeed, I admit, nevertheless no one would be able to deny that God foreknew what end man would have before he created him, and he foreknew it for this reason that he had so ordained it by his decree (*Institutes, Bk III, Ch 23, Par 7*).



Ursinus (d. 1583): God willed the assent of man, however, by which he obeyed the devil contrary to the divine Word, as a revelation of the creature's weakness... He likewise willed this deed as an opportunity or way to manifest his justice and severity toward those who deserve to be punished and his mercy toward sinners who are to be saved (*Tractatio de libero arbitrio*, p 242).

Wayne Grudem: Even though we must never say that God himself sinned or he is to be blamed for sin, yet we must also affirm that the God who “accomplishes all things according to the counsel of his will” (Eph. 1:11), did ordain that sin would come into the world, even though he does not delight in it and even though he ordained that it would come about through the voluntary choices of moral creatures (*Bible Doctrine*, p 211).

Millard Erickson: God’s plan includes what we ordinarily call good acts. . . On the other hand, the evil actions of humans, contrary to God’s law and moral intentions, are also seen in Scripture as part of God’s plan, foreordained by him (*Christian Theology*, p 380).

Robert Reymond: If someone should ask: Was Adam totally free from God’s eternal decree, Reformed theology would say, of course not. Could Adam have done differently? Again, from the viewpoint of the divine decree, the answer is no. To answer these questions any other way is simply to nullify the Scripture’s teaching to the effect that God, who works everything in conformity with his eternal purpose (Eph. 1:11), purposed before the foundation of the world to save a multitude of sinners who would fall in Adam (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, p 374).

## 2) **This doctrine has no biblical support.**

Genesis 2:16,17 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”

Cf. also all passages about God's universal love, his truth, and faithfulness.

Quenstedt: A distinction must be made between a positive act of God which works by arousing inwardly or suggesting outwardly ... and a negative act of God when he withdraws his grace and does not supply new grace for fleeing sin, nor does he hinder but permits sin; and that is the case here (i.e., here in the Fall this negative act of permitting occurs). (*TDP*, II, II, V, ecthesis, qu V, nota IV, p 96).

Quenstedt: God can in no way be called the cause of sin on account of his withdrawal of grace (i.e., the grace of confirmation)... Sin is to be derived not from the withholding of help (namely, of the grace of confirmation), but from the abuse of the divinely granted liberty (*TDP*, II, II, I, Thes IV, p 49).

Note: Reason, in its search for an explanation, ultimately concludes that God's option to intervene, impede, or prohibit the fall must have been overcome by some divine purpose or concern. The truth remains that the Bible is silent on such things.

- c) **To assume that man's nature possessed an inherent weakness, thus making the fall inevitable, does not rightly explain the fall of man.**

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Quenstedt: Man did not fall as a result of the absence and denial of some more special grace nor because of the presence of some internal weakness and natural defect, but because of the incidental abuse of his liberty. (*TDP*, II, I, Thes XVII, nota, p 52)

- d) **The nature of sin itself does not furnish a reasonable explanation for the fall. Unbelief is full of contradictions and thus incomprehensible. A review of events in Genesis 3 confirms this:**

- 1) **God, who had outdone himself in lavishing his blessings on man (Genesis 2:4-25), is represented as envious of man's happiness.**

Genesis 3:5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

- 2) **God, the omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth and author of absolutely everything that is, is represented as unable to prevent the misuse of the tree of knowledge—so that his only expedient is a threat (bluff).**

Genesis 2:16,17 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 3:5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

- 3) **All the good and happiness man had experienced had come from God, yet man is told to expect greater and in fact the only real happiness by breaking away from God.**

- 4) **The Tempter had nothing to substantiate his claims and his word had all the earmarks of a lie, yet man accepted his word.**

Smalcald Articles, III, VIII, 5,6. All this is the old devil and old serpent, who also converted Adam and Eve into enthusiasts, and led them from the outward Word of God to spiritualizing and self-conceit, and nevertheless he accomplished this through other outward words. <sup>61</sup> Just as also our enthusiasts at the present day condemn the outward Word, and nevertheless they themselves are not silent, but they fill the world with their pratings and writings, as though, indeed, the Spirit could not come through the writings and spoken word of the apostles, but first through their writings

and words he must come. Why then do not they also omit their own sermons and writings, until the Spirit Himself come to men, without their writings and before them, as they boast that He has come into them without the preaching of the Scriptures? But of these matters there is not time now to dispute at greater length; we have elsewhere sufficiently urged this subject.

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Hebrews 13:9 Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them.

Proverbs 4:23 Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

## **II. The story of the fall as told by Moses is real history.**

### **1. The Bible presents Genesis chapter 3 as real history that is to be understood or interpreted literally.**

- a) Nothing in the text or the immediate context (the preceding and the following chapters) indicates that the account is anything but real history.**
- b) The New Testament repeatedly confirms the historicity of the event.**

2 Corinthians 11:3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

1 Timothy 2:14 Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.

Romans 5:12-19 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—<sup>13</sup> for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. <sup>15</sup> But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! <sup>16</sup> Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. <sup>17</sup> For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. <sup>19</sup> 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.

1 Corinthians 15:21,22 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Note: A word of caution is in place when seeking to confirm the historicity of Adam from some other OT passages. Examples of such passages are:

Job 31:33 If I have concealed my sin as men (כְּאָדָם) do . . . .

Ecclesiastes 7:29 This only have I found: God made mankind (אֱדָמָה) upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes.

Isaiah 43:27 Your first father (אָבִי הָרִאשׁוֹן) sinned; your spokesmen rebelled against me. [The reference may be to Jacob and other patriarchs.]

Hosea 6:7 Like Adam (אָדָם), they have broken the covenant—they were unfaithful to me there. [The reference may be to a geographical location, a city.]

## **2. Therefore all approaches to Genesis 3 that question or deny its historicity must be rejected.**

### **a) This includes those views of Genesis 3 that see a mixture of fact and fantasy, e.g., allegorical interpretations.**

#### **1) Some take the fall to have been a possible historical event, but maintain that Genesis 3 is a poetical embellishment.**

Jack Finegan: The biblical records cannot, on the whole, be “cleverly devised myths” (II Peter 1:16) but are, rather, substantially dependable reports of actual happenings in which real people participated and in which they believed God was dealing with them. . . . What was the fall? The fall was something which happened. . . . The fact that this is a story means that we do not have to take it literally, but the fact that it is a story of an event means that we must reckon seriously with the fact that the fall is something that happened (*In the Beginning*, p 7, 23).

Hermann Gunkel: Does Genesis (known as “The First Book of Moses”) narrate history or story? For historians this is no longer a question. . . . We find then in ancient civilizations two different types of historical transmission: history writing in the strict sense and, side by side with it, popular tradition which deals with the same material, but in popular and imaginative ways, and relates partly to the ancient prehistorical period.

Such popular transmissions can also preserve historical recollections, even though in poetic form. . . . But story is not lie; it is rather a particular type of poetic writing. *Story is popular poetic narrative, handed down from of old, dealing with people or events of the past.* . . . It is especially noteworthy that Hebrew narrative is not sensible to the great lack of verisimilitude in what is reported. The first woman was not surprised when the snake began to talk with her; the narrator did not ask how Noah managed to get the animals into the ark, and so on. This is a clear indication that we would be doing an injustice to such simplicity were we to align it with concrete reality (*The Stories of Genesis*, p 1,2,5,6).

**2) Others have taken the account as fiction, but with a historical background.**

Franz Reinhard (Supranaturalist, d. 1812): The tree was poisonous.—The woman saw the serpent eat with impunity.—Then she deliberated (the reported dialog).—Then she ate.—Her eating poisoned the human system, subjecting all of Eve's descendents to death.

Note: How could a physical poison affect the purity of the soul?

Richard Hanson: The concept of a fall belongs to the Orphic world of thought, where one begins with the ideal man, a creature of the heavens, and then proceeds to explain how that perfect soul got himself into the predicament of the imperfection we behold on every hand. . . . The notion that Genesis 3 might be the account of the fall came about in that age when Orphic thought was having a heyday in the Eastern Mediterranean world. As its ideas took hold, men sought in the stories of the past an event which could be labeled as the unfortunate moment when man lost his heavenly glory and was forced to take up his abode in mortal flesh. The third chapter of Genesis was conveniently there and was twisted in meaning to fit the demand (*The Serpent Was Wiser*, p 41-42).

**b) This also includes those views of Genesis 3 that see it only as fiction (myth, legend).**

**1) Some scholars assume it to be pure fiction.**

Theodor Gaster: The Biblical story of Paradise is a tapestry woven of ancient threads; all of its salient features recur in the traditional folklore of other peoples (*Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament*, p 24).

**2) Others assume that Genesis 3 merely presents in allegorical or symbolic form what still happens in free men when tempted.**

Tillich: Biblical literalism did a distinct disservice to Christianity in its identification of the Christian emphasis on the symbol of the Fall with the literalistic interpretation of the Genesis story. Theology need not take literalism seriously, but we must realize how its impact has hampered the apologetic task of the Christian church. Theology must clearly and unambiguously represent “the Fall” as a symbol for the human situation universally, not as the story of an event that happened “once upon a time.”

(S.T., II, p 29)

Regin Prenter (b. 1907): There can hardly be any doubt that the biblical authors conceive of Adam as a real person. On the other hand, there is no doubt either that the narratives about him have the form of a tribal patriarchal legend. Adam is never conceived of as an isolated figure of the past, but as one whom each of us recognizes within himself. The history of the fall is our own history (*Creation and Redemption*, p 255).

Ralph Gehrke: Prototypical narratives cannot be historicized because they tell about what never happened “just that way,” but what always happens in whatever has happened, is happening, and will happen, from earliest times to the present (*Beginning From Basics: The Bible’s Universal Primer in Genesis 1 – 11*, p 112).

**3) Modern theology holds that the account of the fall must be demythologized to get at the “religious truth” it conveys.**

Barth: [He calls it biblical saga and says that he could not take the account in Genesis 3 as historical], “for a speaking serpent—well, I cannot imagine that any more than anybody else” (*Grundfragen*, p 30).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (d. 1945): Who can speak of these things except in pictures? Pictures are not lies: they denote things, they let the things that are meant shine through. . . . They are true to the extent that God remains in them. . . . We remain completely in the world of pictures, in the world of the magical, of magic effects by means of forbidden contacts with sacred objects. We hear of trees of miraculous power, of enchanted animals, of fiery angel forms, the servants of a God who walks in his magic garden, of their mysterious deeds, of the creation of man (*Creation and Fall*, p 47, 48).

Emil Brunner: For our generation, the fact that this narrative is no longer historically credible means that the convincing power of this imposing doctrine, which dominated the thought of Europe for fifteen hundred years and—although modified in different ways—has formed the solid substance of the doctrine of sin of all Christian churches, has completely disappeared. . . . We may be grateful to historical science that it has eliminated the historical element from the story of the creation and Fall (*Man in Revolt*, p 120, 144).

Ralph Gehrke: The most we can say about its literary genre is that it is a didactic story (*CTM*, Sept. 1965, p 545).

Ralph Gehrke: The traditional understanding of the Garden of Eden that most of us carry around in our memories is the result of some subtle revising and updating of the original. To be sure, such interpretations were made in good faith, in order to put these stories on a time line and thus incorporate them in one all-encompassing theological view of history as The History of Salvation. Yet careful students must concede that such interpretations have added new lines, have changed the basic roles of the characters, and have put the entire prototypical narrative into a history-of-

salvation context the original had not known (*Beginning From Basics: The Bible's Universal Primer in Genesis 1 – 11*, p 70-71).

The Lutheran: *Is it now considered naive or even heresy for Lutherans to believe that Adam and Eve were real people?* For centuries the church believed in the actual existence of Adam and Eve. Recent scholarship suggests that the significance of the Adam and Eve stories is not their literal truth or lack of it about the creation of humankind in God's image. If someone believes Adam and Eve were historic people, and this view is helpful to their Christian life, it is not good ministry to rip such a viewpoint from them. Nor should the faith of those who understand these stories in a symbolic way be questioned. (June 22, 1988, p 42) *Is Genesis 3:15 a reference to the coming Savior?* Nowhere in the New Testament is this verse mentioned as a prophecy of the coming Messiah. Christian tradition has understood the passage as a prophecy about Christ and Mary. Most New Testament scholars agree that the messianic prophecy of this passage is confusing. Most see it as the origin of the battle that has gone on for millennia between humans and snakes ...But this image is helpful in expressing the truth of what God is about in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. (February 2002, p 31)

Philip Hefner: If we read Genesis 3 as if it were an eyewitness account, written on the very day of the fall, it is misleading, because then it seems that humans were from the very beginning sinful. But when we keep in mind that the account is put together in the tenth century B.C. as an explanation of how God works in history, then it becomes not an etiology or even a protology but rather a way of expressing far greater optimism. Of saying that evil is not written in the very law of things, but is located discretely in the human will. As such it can be dealt with and guarded against. The writer is saying, "Humans are like this. If you keep this in mind, it is possible to deal with sin and evil constructively" (Braaten and Jenson, *CD*, p 284).

## **5. Sin**

### **I. Sin is any deviation from God's revealed precepts, any failure to conform to divine law.**

- 1. Sin may be defined as something "negative" (or "privative"), marking a lack of conformity to divine standards of perfection. Sin may also be defined as something "positive," as a condition or act explicitly opposing divine law.**

Note: Definitions of sin that borrow from the terminology of the Latin Scholastics have categorized it "in the abstract" (without reference to a particular act, but referring to the quality common to all concrete acts) primarily as a "negative" thing. They have likewise considered sin "in the concrete" (relating to a specific departure from God's standard) to be "positive." Few writers use this terminology any more.

- a) **In biblical use, sin is both a negative concept (lacking conformity to God's law) and a positive one (opposition to the law).**

1 John 3:4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness (Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.)

Romans 8:7 The sinful mind is hostile (ἐχθρα) to God. It does not submit to God's law (τῷ γὰρ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται), nor can it do so.

Hollaz: Sin is a blameworthy deviation from the divine law which is binding on creatures, a deviation which leads to temporal and eternal punishment (*Examen*, II, II, qu 1, p 531).

Calov: Sin is nothing else than illegality or deviation from the law (*TP*, II, II, IV, thes. II, p 276).

Tillich (in disagreement): It is not disobedience to a law which makes an act sinful but the fact that it is an expression of man's estrangement from God, from men, and from himself (*ST*, II, p 46f).

- b) **Of great importance is to note that sin may be a habitual state (or condition) as well as acts. Whether it is a condition or an act, sin incurs guilt (liability, culpability, *reatus ad poenam*).**

*Apology* II (I), 35 Here our adversaries inveigh against Luther also because he wrote that "Original sin remains after baptism." They add that this article was justly condemned by Leo X. But His Imperial Majesty will find on this point a manifest slander. For our adversaries know in what sense Luther intended this remark that original sin remains after baptism. He always wrote thus, namely, that baptism removes the guilt of original sin, although the material, as they call it, of the sin, *i.e.*, concupiscence, remains. He also added in reference to the material that the Holy Spirit, given through baptism, begins to mortify the concupiscence, and creates a new light, a new sense and spirit in man (*Trig.* p 112).

- c) **A study of biblical names of sin clarifies what sin is and does.**

- 1) **In the OT we find various names referring principally to sin as a failure to conform to divine law.**

- a) אָחַז: **In Hebrew the generic concept of sin is expressed by the root אָחַז. It pictures sin as missing a target (Judges 20:16) or going astray (Proverbs 19:2). It is thus parallel to the Greek word ἁμαρτάνω, ἁμαρτία. In the piel the verb may mean "make reconciliation," "offer for sin," or "bear the loss." In the hiphil it means "cause to sin" or "lead into sin." There are six different nouns formed from the root אָחַז that can be translated "sin" or "sinful." Three are so-called "intensive" forms with dagesh in the ו. On this word group see *TWBOT*, p 277-279.**



- 1) חַטָּאת, the most common form (about 298x), refers either to sin in general or to the sin offering. More rarely, it may refer to punishment that must be borne because of sin.

#### Sin

Genesis 4:7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, *sin* is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.

Psalms 32:5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”—and you forgave the guilt of my *sin*.

Psalms 38:4 (3) Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my *sin*.

Psalms 38:19 (18) I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my *sin*.

Psalms 51:4 (2), 5 (3) <sup>2</sup>Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my *sin*. <sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my *sin* is always before me.

#### Sin offering

Leviticus 4:3 If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, he must bring to the LORD a young bull without defect as a *sin offering* for the sin he has committed. Also verses .8,20,21,25.

Leviticus 4:33 He is to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it for a *sin offering* at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered.

#### Punishment

Zechariah 14:19 This will be the *punishment* of Egypt and the *punishment* of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

- 2) חַטְּוֹת, a rare alternate form with an open ending, refers to sin or sinfulness.

Exodus 34:7 . . . maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and *sin*. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the *sin* of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.

Isaiah 5:18 Woe to those who draw *sin* along with cords of

deceit, and wickedness as with cart ropes.

- 3) **שׁוֹטֵף**, the third “intensive” form, an adjective, usually is used as an adjectival noun, “sinner.” A segolate form without dagesh, **שׁוֹטֵף** (34x), refers to sin, guilt, or to punishment as the consequences of sin. It has a feminine variant, **הַשׁוֹטֵף**, which occurs only once.

Leviticus 22:9 The priests are to keep my requirements so that they do not *become guilty* [bear sin for it] and die for treating them with contempt. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.

Leviticus 24:15 Say to the Israelites: “If anyone curses his God, he *will be held responsible* [will bear his sin].”

Deuteronomy 15:9 Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: “The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near,” so that you do not show ill will toward your needy brother and give him nothing. He may then appeal to the LORD against you, and you will be found *guilty of sin*.

Isaiah 1:18 “Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your *sins* are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”

Punishment or guilt

Leviticus 19:17 Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his *guilt* [bear sin].

Lamentations 3:39 Why should any living man complain *when punished for his sins*? [complain about the punishment for his sins]

- 4) **הַשׁוֹטֵף**, without the dagesh, is much rarer (8 or 9x). It refers to sin or to the sin offering.

Genesis 20:9 Then Abimelech called Abraham in and said, “What have you done to us? How have I wronged you that you have brought such great *guilt* upon me and my kingdom? You have done things to me that should not be done.”

Exodus 32:21,30,31 He said to Aaron, “What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great *sin*?”<sup>30</sup> The next day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great *sin*. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your *sin*.”<sup>31</sup> So Moses went back to the LORD and said, “Oh, what a great *sin* these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold.”

Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose *sins* are covered.

Sin offering

Psalm 40:7 (6) Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced; burnt offerings and *sin offerings* you did not require.

**-b) פשע portrays sin as rebellion or violation of a relationship. It has a greater connotation of willfulness than חטא.**

Genesis 31:36 Jacob was angry and took Laban to task. “What is my *crime*?” he asked Laban. “What sin have I committed that you hunt me down?”

Genesis 50:17 “This is what you are to say to Joseph: ‘I ask you to forgive your brothers the *sins* and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly. Now please forgive the *sins* of the servants of the God of your father.’” When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

Job 33:9 I am pure and without *sin*; I am clean and free from guilt.

Psalm 32:1 Blessed is he whose *transgressions* are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

**-c) חַטָּא Etymologically חַטָּא describes sin as that which is twisted, bent, or perverse. It usually carries the connotation of “guilt.” Guilt is liability to punishment because of sin. חַטָּא may refer to the deed which incurs guilt, to the guilt itself, or to the punishment due to the guilt.**

Deeds that incur guilt

Hosea 12:8 Ephraim boasts, “I am very rich; I have become wealthy. With all my wealth they will not find in me any *iniquity* or sin.”

Guilt

Leviticus 5:17 If a person sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands, even though he does not know it, he is guilty and *will be held responsible* [will bear his guilt].

Genesis 15:16 In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the *sin* of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.

Exodus 28:38,43 It [the gold plate attached to the turban] will be on Aaron's forehead, and he will bear the *guilt* involved in the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be. It will be on Aaron's forehead continually so that they will be acceptable to the LORD.<sup>43</sup> Aaron and his sons must wear them [linen breeches] whenever they enter the Tent of Meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur *guilt* and die. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants.

Leviticus 18:25 Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its *sin*, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

Numbers 15:31 Because he has despised the LORD's word and broken his commands, that person must surely be cut off; his *guilt* remains on him.

1 Samuel 3:14 Therefore, I swore to the house of Eli, "The *guilt* of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering."

Nehemiah 3:37 (4:5) Do not cover up their *guilt* or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders.

Job 31:11,28 For that would have been shameful, a *sin* to be judged.<sup>28</sup> These also would be *sins* to be judged, for I would have been unfaithful to God on high.

Psalms 32:2,5 Blessed is the man whose *sin* the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.<sup>5</sup> Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my *iniquity*. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"—and you forgave the *guilt* of my sin.

Psalms 69:28 (27) Charge them with *crime upon crime* (עָוֹן עַל־עֲוֹן); do not let them share in your salvation.

### Punishment

Genesis 4:13 Cain said to the LORD, "My *punishment* is more than I can bear.

1 Samuel 28:10 Saul swore to her by the LORD, "As surely as the LORD lives, you will not be punished for this" [lit.: *guilt* will not come upon you].

Lamentations 4:6,22 The punishment of my people is greater than that of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment without a hand turned to help her.<sup>22</sup> O Daughter of Zion, your punishment will end; he will not prolong your exile. But, O Daughter of Edom, he will punish your sin [visit your *guilt*] and expose your wickedness.

- d) חַטָּאת also refers to deeds which incur guilt, to guilt, or to the punishment incurred by guilt. It is also the name of the offering which makes reparation for guilt (Leviticus 5).**

Genesis 26:10 Then Abimelech said, “What is this you have done to us? One of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought *guilt* upon us.”

Numbers 5:7,8 [He] must confess the sin he has committed. He must make full restitution for his *wrong*, add one fifth to it and give it all to the person he has wronged.<sup>8</sup> But if that person has no close relative to whom restitution can be made for the *wrong*, the restitution belongs to the LORD and must be given to the priest, along with the ram with which atonement is made for him.

- e) חַדָּוָה, which pictures sin as turning aside, deviation, or stubbornness.**

Deuteronomy 13:6 (5) That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached *rebellion* against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.

Deuteronomy 19:16 If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse a man of a *crime* . . . .

Isaiah 1:5 Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in *rebellion*? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted.

Jeremiah 28:16 Therefore, this is what the LORD says: “I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached *rebellion* against the LORD.”

- f) חַמְדָּה, which describes sin as treachery or unfaithfulness.**

Ezekiel 15:8 I will make the land desolate because they have been *unfaithful*, declares the Sovereign LORD.

Ezekiel 17:20 I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon and execute judgment upon him there because he was *unfaithful* to me.

Ezekiel 18:24 But if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked man does, will he live? None of the righteous things he has done will be remembered. Because of the *unfaithfulness* he is guilty of and because of the sins he has committed, he will die.

Ezekiel 20:27 Therefore, son of man, speak to the people of Israel and say to them, “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In this also your fathers blasphemed me by *forsaking* me.”

Daniel 9:7 Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the men of Judah and people of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our *unfaithfulness* to you.

**-g) שְׁגָגָה, which describes sin as wandering, error, or negligence.**

Leviticus 4:2,27 Say to the Israelites: “When anyone sins *unintentionally* [in ignorance] and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands . . . .<sup>27</sup> If a member of the community sins *unintentionally* [in ignorance] and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands, he is guilty.”

Ecclesiastes 5:6 Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, “My vow was a *mistake*.” Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands?

Ecclesiastes 10:5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, the sort of *error* that arises from a ruler.

**-h) נְבִלָה portrays sin as folly or wickedness.**

Job 42:8 So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your *folly*. You have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has.

2 Samuel 13:12 “Don’t, my brother!” she said to him. “Don’t force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don’t do this *wicked thing*.”

**-i) עֲוֹן describes sin as iniquity or futility.**

Numbers 23:21 No *misfortune* is seen in Jacob, no misery observed in Israel. The LORD their God is with them; the shout of the King is among them.

Isaiah 1:13 Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your *evil* assemblies.

**-j) עוֹל describes sin as injustice and unrighteousness.**

Leviticus 19:15: Do not pervert justice [do no unrighteousness]; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

Ezekeil 3:20 When a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does *evil*, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sin.

**-k) עֲבָרָה describes sin as an outburst of wrath or pride which overflows or crosses over the boundary.**

Isaiah 16:6 We have heard of Moab’s pride—her overweening pride and conceit, her pride and her *insolence*—but her boasts are empty.

Jeremiah 48:30 “I know her *insolence* but it is futile,” declares the LORD, “and her boasts accomplish nothing.”

Proverbs 21:24 The proud and arrogant man—“Mocker” is his name; he behaves with *overweening pride* [haughtiness of pride].

**2) In the OT we also find names for sin that primarily emphasize that it is opposition to divine law (as a condition or an act). (Several of the terms listed above also fall into this category, especially b, e, and k.)**

**-a) עָוֹן evil. This term emphasizes that sin is enmity against God and man (moral evil). עָוֹן also refers to the evil consequences of sin (physical evil).**

Moral evil

Genesis 2:9 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and *evil*.

Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw how great man’s wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only *evil* all the time.

Deuteronomy 4:25 After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time—if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing *evil* in the eyes of the LORD your God and provoking him to anger . . .

Psalms 51:6 (4) Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is *evil* in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

Psalm 97:10 Let those who love the LORD hate *evil*, for he guards the lives of his faithful ones and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.

Misfortune, physical evil

Job 2:10,11 He replied, “You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not *trouble*?” In all this, Job did not sin in what he said. <sup>11</sup> When Job’s three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, heard about all the *troubles* that had come upon him, they set out from their homes and met together by agreement to go and sympathize with him and comfort him.

Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no *evil*, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 91:10 No harm will befall you, no *disaster* will come near your tent.

Isaiah 45:7 I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create *disaster*; I, the LORD, do all these things.

#### –b) עָשָׂה: Wickedness

Deuteronomy 9:27 Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Overlook the stubbornness of this people, their *wickedness* and their sin.

1 Samuel 24:13 As the old saying goes, “From evildoers come *evil deeds*,” so my hand will not touch you.

Psalm 5:5 (4) You are not a God who takes pleasure in *evil*; with you the wicked cannot dwell.

### 3) In the NT we find various designations for sin that denote a failure to conform to divine standards (so-called “formal” designations).

#### –a) ἁμαρτία (missing the mark): sin (often collectively)

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the *sin* of the world!”

John 8:21 Once more Jesus said to them, “I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your *sin*. Where I go, you cannot come.”

Romans 5:12,13,20 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—<sup>13</sup> for before the law was given, *sin* was in



the world. But *sin* is not taken into account when there is no law.<sup>20</sup> The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where *sin* increased, grace increased all the more.

Romans 6:1,2,6,11 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?<sup>2</sup> By no means! We died to *sin*; how can we live in it any longer?<sup>6</sup> For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of *sin* might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to *sin* . . . .<sup>11</sup> In the same way, count yourselves dead to *sin* but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 7:7 What shall we say, then? Is the law *sin*? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what *sin* was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.”

Sin personified

John 8:34 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to *sin*.”

Romans 5:21 . . . so that, just as *sin* reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let *sin* reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires.

Romans 7:9,11,17 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, *sin* sprang to life and I died.<sup>11</sup> For *sin*, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.<sup>17</sup> As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is *sin* living in me.

Sinful acts (plural)

Matthew 9:2 Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, son; your *sins* are forgiven.”

Matthew 26:28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of *sins*.

Mark 1:4 And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of *sins*.

John 20:23 If you forgive anyone his *sins*, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.

**-b) ἀμάρτημα: sin (sinful acts)**

Mark 3:28 I tell you the truth, all the *sins* and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them.

Romans 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the *sins* committed beforehand unpunished.

1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other *sins* a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

**-c) ἀνομία: lawlessness, non-observance of law, iniquity**

Matthew 7:23 Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you *evildoers* [doers of lawlessness]!”

Romans 6:19 I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing *wickedness*, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.

2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and *wickedness* have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

Romans 4:7 Blessed are they whose *transgressions* are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Hebrews 10:17 Then he adds: “Their sins and *lawless acts* I will remember no more.”

**-d) ἀδικία: unrighteousness**

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and *wickedness* of men who suppress the truth by their *wickedness*.

Romans 3:5 But if our *unrighteousness* brings out God’s righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.)

2 Timothy 2:19 Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from *wickedness*.”

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all *unrighteousness*.

**-e) παρακοή: disobedience, not listening**

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.

Hebrews 2:2 For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and *disobedience* received its just punishment . . .

**-f) παράβασις: transgression, crossing the line**

Romans 2:23 You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by *breaking the law*?

Romans 4:15 Where there is no law there is no *transgression*.

Romans 5:14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by *breaking a command*, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

Galatians 3:19 What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of *transgressions* until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come.

**-g) παράπτωμα: trespass**

Matthew 6:14,15 For if you forgive men *when they sin* [their trespasses] against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.  
<sup>15</sup>But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your *sins*.

Mark 11:25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your *sins*.

Romans 5:20 The law was added so that the *trespass* might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more.

Ephesians 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your *transgressions* and sins.

**-h) πλάνη: error, wandering**

Romans 1:27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed *indecent acts* with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

2 Thessalonians 2:11 For this reason God sends them a powerful *delusion* so that they will believe the lie.

James 5:20 Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the *error* of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

4) **In the NT we also find designations for sin that highlight the nature or character of sin as opposition to divine law (so-called “material” designations). (Some of the preceding words have an element of willfulness and could be placed below).**

**-a) κακία: Malice, wickedness, evil**

Acts 8:22 Repent of this *wickedness* and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.

1 Corinthians 5:8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and *wickedness*, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

1 Corinthians 14:20 Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to *evil* be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

James 1:21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the *evil* that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

**-b) πονηρία: wickedness, iniquity**

Matthew 22:18 But Jesus, knowing their *evil intent*, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me?”

Acts 3:26 When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your *wicked ways*.

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of *evil* in the heavenly realms.

5) **In both OT and NT we also find the term “flesh” (ἡ ψῆ, σάρξ) which is used in reference to sinfulness.**

Note: This usage is hard to track in the NIV because of the many different translations it uses for the words for “flesh.”

**-a) The term is used in the literal sense.**

Genesis 2:21,23 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with *flesh*.<sup>23</sup> The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and *flesh* of my *flesh*; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

Luke 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have *flesh* and bones, as you see I have.

Hebrews 2:14 Since the children have *flesh* and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil.

**-b) The term is also used of the human body. In such cases, it is sometimes a euphemism for the sexual organs.**

Leviticus 14:9 On the seventh day he must shave off all his hair; he must shave his head, his beard, his eyebrows and the rest of his hair. He must wash his clothes and bathe *himself* with water, and he will be clean.

Job 19:26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my *flesh* I will see God;

Psalm 16:9 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my *body* also will rest secure.

Acts 2:31 Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his *body* see decay.

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Genesis 17:14 Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the *flesh*, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

Ezekiel 44:7 In addition to all your other detestable practices, you brought foreigners uncircumcised in heart and *flesh* into my sanctuary, desecrating my temple while you offered me food, fat and blood, and you broke my covenant.

Ezekiel 23:20 There she lusted after her lovers, whose *genitals* were like those of donkeys and whose emission was like that of horses.

Ezekiel 16:26 You engaged in prostitution with the Egyptians, your *lustful* [great of flesh] neighbors, and provoked me to anger with your increasing promiscuity.

**-c) The term is also used to designate human beings (individually and collectively) as naturally (physically and mentally) constituted.**

Ezekiel 21:4 (20:48) Everyone [All flesh] will see that I the LORD have kindled it; it will not be quenched.

Matthew 16:17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man [flesh and blood], but by my Father in heaven.”

Luke 3:6 And all mankind [all flesh] will see God’s salvation.

John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Romans 3:20 Therefore no one will [all flesh will not] be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

**-d) The term is also used to denote relationship (in various senses).**

Genesis 2:23,24 The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and *flesh of my flesh*; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”<sup>24</sup> For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become *one flesh*.

Genesis 37:27 Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, *our own flesh and blood*.

Romans 1:3 [The gospel he promised] regarding his Son, who as to his *human nature* was a descendant of David.

Romans 9:3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those *of my own race*.

**-e) The term is used collectively for animal life (including mankind).**

Genesis 6:17,19 I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, *every creature* that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish.<sup>19</sup> You are to bring into the ark two of all living *creatures*, male and female, to keep them alive with you.

Genesis 7:21 *Every living thing* that moved on the earth perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind.

Psalms 136:25 [He] gives food to *every creature*. His love endures forever.

**-f) The term is also used especially to designate humans in their frailty.**

Psalms 56:4 In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can *mortal man* do to me?

Psalms 78:39 He remembered that they were *but flesh*, a passing breeze that does not return.

Isaiah 40:6 A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All *men* are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the

field.”

Jeremiah 17:5 This is what the LORD says: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on *flesh* for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD.”

1 Peter 1:24 All *men* are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall.

**-g) Finally, the term is used particularly for humans as beings dominated by sin.**

Genesis 6:3 Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is *mortal* [or *sinful*]; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.”

John 3:6 *Flesh* gives birth to *flesh*, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

Romans 7:5,18,25 For when we were *controlled by the sinful nature* [in the flesh], the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.<sup>18</sup> I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my *sinful nature*. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.<sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the *sinful nature* a slave to the law of sin.

Romans 8:8,12 Those *controlled by the sinful nature* [in the flesh] cannot please God.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the *sinful nature*, to live according to it.

Galatians 5:17-24 For the *sinful nature* desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the *sinful nature*. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.<sup>18</sup> But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.<sup>19</sup> The acts of the *sinful nature* are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;<sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions<sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.<sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the *sinful nature* with its passions and desires.

**6) In summary, then, every act and every state or condition of our human will deviating from God's will and norm is sinful.**

1 John 3:4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

**2. Analyzing sin, we may distinguish various elements. (Note: The full sequence of elements may not be evident in a particular example of sin, and the sequence is as much logical as chronological.)**

**a) The beginning of sin is a lack of trust in God: unbelief.**

Genesis 3:1-6 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”<sup>2</sup> The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,<sup>3</sup> but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”<sup>4</sup> “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman.<sup>5</sup> “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”<sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Psalms 78:32: In spite of all this, they kept on sinning; in spite of his wonders, they did not believe.

Matthew 14:31: Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?”

**b) Unbelief is followed by error of judgment.**

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.

Romans 1:21,22,27 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.<sup>22</sup> Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools.<sup>27</sup> In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Ephesians 4:17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.

James 5:20 Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Note: There is value in recalling the basic meaning of *ἁμαρτάνειν* and *ἁμαρτία*: to miss, which often includes a failure to grasp the real scope and goal of life or to comprehend what is right and wise.

**c) Error is coupled with strong desire.**

Romans 1:24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

Romans 7:7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not



have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet.”

1 Corinthians 10:6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

Galatians 5:16,17,24 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.<sup>17</sup> For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.<sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

Ephesians 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

**d) This desire pays no regard to the holy will of God.**

Romans 2:25,27 Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised.<sup>27</sup> The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

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.

2 Corinthians 10:6 And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

**e) This disobedience reveals enmity against God.**

Genesis 39:9 No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?

Exodus 32:33 The LORD replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.”

Psalms 51:4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Romans 8:7 The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.

**f) The sinner’s interests are essentially self-centered.**

**1) The sinner sets himself up as a god against God.**

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like

one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.”

Psalm 36:1,2 An oracle is within my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: There is no fear of God before his eyes. <sup>2</sup> For in his own eyes he flatters himself too much to detect or hate his sin.

Colossians 1:21: Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

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Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

Matthew 23:12 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

## **2) The sinner’s selfishness also shows itself in a lack of love for others.**

Titus 3:3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

Luke 6:32-35 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even “sinners” love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even “sinners” do that. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even “sinners” lend to “sinners,” expecting to be repaid in full. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Also Matthew 5:46,47.

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1 Corinthians 10:24 Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.

1 Corinthians 13:4,5 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Romans 13:9 The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

## **3. The following truths will help clarify the definition and scope of sin.**

### **a) Sin against God includes more than disobedience to divine law revealed in the Bible.**

#### **1) Every transgression of the natural (inscribed) law is also sin against God. This truth emphasizes the universality of sin.**

Romans 2:12,14,15 All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.<sup>14</sup>(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law,<sup>15</sup> since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)

Romans 5:13,14 Before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

Baier: By “law” ought to be understood the eternal and immutable wisdom of God and his judgment concerning those things which are proper or not proper for the rational creature in so far as he is such, joined with his will that they should or should not be done (*Compendium*, II, I, III, p 286).

Baier: That law was first made known in creation itself when a knowledge of practical principles and the ability to apply them to individual actions and circumstances of actions was conferred on men (*Compendium* II, I, IV, p 287). Afterwards when those perfections which had been received earlier by virtue of the divine image were lost through the Fall, that law was, to be sure, to a great extent obliterated, but nevertheless some traces or indications of it remained. God, however, in addition to other revelations, especially in the decalog by voice and in writing repeated the sum of the law and explained individual precepts more clearly here and there in holy Scripture (*Compendium* II, I, V, p 288).

The universality of sin

Romans 3:9-12,22,23 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.<sup>10</sup> As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one;<sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.<sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”<sup>22</sup> This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 5:12 Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

Galatians 3:22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

1 John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**2) Transgressions of laws imposed by human authorities are also sin unless those laws conflict with God's law.**

Romans 13:2,4,5 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. <sup>4</sup> For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. <sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

1 Peter 2:13-14 Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, <sup>14</sup> or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

Acts 5:29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!"

Baier: That, moreover, is also truly sin which is committed against some positive law, whether divine or human, provided only that the human law is not contrary to the divine law (*Compendium* II, I, VII, p 289).

**b) Every sin is a condition or an act of the will in rational beings. This does not mean, however, that sins are only those acts committed against divine law consciously or with deliberation.**

Hollaz: A sinner is a rational creature, endowed with a free will and subject to the divine law, who deviates from it in what he does or does not do (*Examen.*, 497).

**1) Original (inherited) sin is real sin.**

Psalms 51:2-10 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. <sup>4</sup>Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. <sup>5</sup>Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. <sup>6</sup>Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. <sup>7</sup>Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. <sup>8</sup>Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. <sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. <sup>10</sup>Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Ephesians 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

*Augsburg Confession*, II, 2,: This disease ... is truly sin, damning (Trig. p 42).

**2) Many deeds done without knowledge of their nature and without deliberate opposition against God are called sins. These kinds of sins are prevalent in the life of fallen mankind.**

Genesis 19:33 That night they got their father to drink wine, and the older daughter went in and lay with him. He was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up.

Matthew 26:69-75 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said.<sup>70</sup> But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said.<sup>71</sup> Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.”<sup>72</sup> He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!”<sup>73</sup> After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away.”<sup>74</sup> Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately a rooster crowed.<sup>75</sup> Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly. cf 33-35<sup>33</sup> Peter replied, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will.”<sup>34</sup> “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.”<sup>35</sup> But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.

John 16:2 They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.

Romans 10:2,3 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.

1 Timothy 1:13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.

Psalms 19:12 Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

Romans 7:14,15,16,19 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.<sup>15</sup> I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.<sup>16</sup> And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good.<sup>19</sup> For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

Galatians 5:17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

**3) This clarification is important on account of Roman Catholic and Arminian positions.**

Bellarmino: Sin intrinsically requires a free will, and it cannot be understood how anything is a sin in the proper sense of the word if it is not properly free (*Disput.*, tom IV, de grat. et lib. arb., lib II, cap VII, p 260).

Schmalz: For sin man's will is altogether necessary because it is a voluntary transgression of the divine law, and only there is there sin where knowledge has preceded (*Disp. II, contra Franzium*, p 42).

Erickson: Until the first conscious or responsible moral action or decision by a person, there is no imputation of the Adamic sin, just as there is no imputation of Christ's righteousness until there is a conscious acceptance of that work (*How Shall They Be Saved?* p 250).

Grider: Wesley felt ...that there is a vast difference between unintentional and intentional sins-the latter being utterly serious, dislodging us from our redeemed relationship with God. Wesley was often wise to call the unintentional sins mistakes or blunders or infirmities.... Some Wesley-holiness people ask for forgiveness as they later realize that they have breached God's will. Others of us understand (1) that since the act was not willful, perhaps we do not require forgiveness, but only cleansing and (2) that since we receive Christ's cleansing at the time, we do not later pray for either cleansing or forgiveness (*A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*, p 293, 294)

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Brochmand: Is it true that nothing has the nature of sin in the proper sense of the term which is not voluntary? — The Papists and Socinians are of this opinion, but the divine Word clearly maintains the opposite point of view. (*Systema*, I, art XI, cap II, qu I, p 413)

Quenstedt: A distinction must be made between a subjectively voluntary and an effectively voluntary sin. In the former way every sin is voluntary, namely, in so far as it inheres in man's will; but in the latter way there are certain involuntary sins, namely, those which are indeed in and with the will, but not from the will (done deliberately) (*TDP*, II, II, I, Thes LVIII, p 67).

Quenstedt: Take note of the theological rule: For the definition of sin lawlessness is enough, whether willfulness is present or not. And so willfulness is not a part of the essence of sin, nor does it enter into its definition, but it is something outside it (*TDP*, II, II, II, qu III, Thes V, p 93).

**c) Sin remains real and universal despite the fact that many deny it. Sin is denied by the following schools of thought:**

- 1) In pantheism so-called sin, together with other phenomena of life, is an emanation from God—the dark side of the force, yin vs. yang, witchcraft.**

Deepak Chopra: To the visionary, good and evil “are two sides of the same force. God created both because both are needed; God is in the evil as much as in the good” (*How to Know God*, p 151).

Wen-Tzu, referring to the Tao, states that: the Way has no front or back, no left or right: all things are mysteriously the same, with no right and no wrong (*Further Teachings of Lao-Tzu*, p 109).

Witches Janet and Stewart Farrar: The Theory of Polarity maintains that all activity, all manifestation, arises from (and is inconceivable without) the interaction of pairs and complementary opposites...and that this polarity is not a conflict between ‘good’ and ‘evil’, but a creative tension like that between the positive and negative terminals of an electric battery. Good and evil only arise with the constructive or destructive application of the polarity’s output (*A Witches’ Bible, Part 2*, p 107).

**2) In evolution sin is merely a stage of development.**

Morals do evolve. This stage of evolutionary thought...

Anthony Flew: All morals, ideas, and ideals have originated in the world; and that having thus in the past been subject to change, they will presumably in the future too, for better or worse, continue to evolve (*Evolutionary Ethics*, p 55).

...evolves (devolves) to this:

The Blood Hound Gang: “You and me, baby, ain’t nothin’ but mammals, so let’s do it like they do on the Discovery Channel.”

**3) For philosophical optimism there is no real sin, merely different degrees of goodness.**

Mary Baker Eddy: Man is not matter—made up of brains, blood, bones, and other material elements.... Man is spiritual and perfect.... Man is incapable of sin, sickness, and death, inasmuch as he derives his essence from God (*Science and Health with Key to the Scripture*, p 475).

**4) For rationalism (e.g., lodges) sin is an excusable weakness and defect which may be overcome by personal effort and training.**

Masonry: By the Rough Ashlar we are reminded of our rude and imperfect nature; by the perfect Ashlar of that state of perfection at which we hope to arrive by a virtuous education, by our own endeavors, and by the blessings of God (*Tennessee Craftsman or Masonic Textbook*, p 13).

**5) In modern thought sin is inadequately or perversely defined.**

Ayn Rand (d. 1982): Accept the fact that the achievement of your happiness is the only *moral* purpose of your life, and that happiness—not pain or mindless self-indulgence—is the proof that your moral integrity, since it is the proof and the result of your loyalty to the achievement of

your values....Discard the protective rags of that vice which you call humility—learn to value yourself, which means to fight for your happiness—and when you learn that pride is the sum of all virtues, you will learn to live like a man (*Atlas Shrugged*, quoted in Burr and Goldinger, *Philosophy and Contemporary Issues*, p 200.)

Daphne Hampson: Consequently some woman have wanted to say that woman's "sin"...is the failure to take responsibility for self-actualization. To name such behavior "sin" is (as I have discovered when working with groups of women) very effective. For women to hear that it is their right and duty to take themselves seriously, that it matters who they are and what they think, is to turn Christian theology as they have imbibed it upside-down (*Theology and Feminism*, p 124.)

Universal Panentheism: "Sin lies only in hurting others unnecessarily. All other 'sins' are invented nonsense. Hurting yourself is not sinful-just stupid" (Quoted from the novel *Time Enough For Love* by Robert A. Heinlein).... So what really is a good modern Universal working definition of sin? Heinlein had something, but let's clarify it even more. The Universal Planetary Panentheist Temple definition of sin is: Causing clear and uncalled-for harm to others. Example: Homosexuality. It is the written policy and belief of the UPPT that homosexuality, in and of itself, is not a sin, and that in fact those who hate homosexuals and cause them harm, are indeed the real sinners because they cause clear and uncalled-for harm to others. We call on them to repent such behavior (Universal Planetary Panentheist Temple web site).

**6) In postmodern thought sin is a culturally unacceptable choice that is not wrong absolutely or in and of itself.**

A. J. Ayer: Moral judgments "are simply expressions of emotion that can be neither true nor false" (*Language, Truth, and Logic*, p103).

The Ethics of Popular Music: It can't be wrong if it feels so right ("You Light Up My Life")

**II. "The cause of sin is the evil will of the wicked, that is, of the devil and ungodly men" (A.C. XIX, p 52). The cause of sin is not God.**

**1. In no way is God the cause of sin.**

**a) God is the Holy One who hates sin.**

Isaiah 6:3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

Matthew 5:48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Psalms 5:4 You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell.



Psalm 34:16 The face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

Psalm 45:7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

Isaiah 65:12 I will destine you for the sword, and you will all bend down for the slaughter; for I called but you did not answer, I spoke but you did not listen. You did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me.

Zechariah 8:17 “Do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this,” declares the LORD.

**b) God did not create man with a constitution or disposition that made human sin inevitable.**

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

Genesis 2:25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

**c) God does not tempt man to sin. In fact, he actively opposes and punishes those who do, and he urges Christians to resist temptation.**

James 1:13 When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.

Genesis 3:14,15 So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

Revelation 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Jeremiah 23:32 “Indeed, I am against those who prophesy false dreams,” declares the LORD. “They tell them and lead my people astray with their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint them. They do not benefit these people in the least,” declares the LORD.

Matthew 18:6 But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Ephesians 4:27 Do not give the devil a foothold.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 5:8,9 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> Resist him, standing firm in

the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

**d) God does not approve of sin or condone it. More than that, God sacrificed his Son to save mankind from sin and continues to call mankind to repentance (a change of heart and mind) from sin.**

2 Chronicles 19:7 Now let the fear of the LORD be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the LORD our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery.

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Ezekiel 33:12,13 Therefore, son of man, say to your countrymen, “The righteousness of the righteous man will not save him when he disobeys, and the wickedness of the wicked man will not cause him to fall when he turns from it. The righteous man, if he sins, will not be allowed to live because of his former righteousness.”<sup>13</sup> If I tell the righteous man that he will surely live, but then he trusts in his righteousness and does evil, none of the righteous things he has done will be remembered; he will die for the evil he has done.”

Hosea 13:6-9 When I fed them, they were satisfied; when they were satisfied, they became proud; then they forgot me.<sup>7</sup> So I will come upon them like a lion, like a leopard I will lurk by the path.<sup>8</sup> Like a bear robbed of her cubs, I will attack them and rip them open. Like a lion I will devour them; a wild animal will tear them apart.<sup>9</sup> You are destroyed, O Israel, because you are against me, against your helper.

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Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Isaiah 53:6,7 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

John 3:16 God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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1 Timothy 2:4 [God] wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Chemnitz: With both hands, indeed with all our hearts, we must hold to this true and pious opinion, that God is not the author of sin, nor does he approve of sin.

No, rather he is indeed terribly angry with sin, as he declares so often in his Word, by the continuous punishments and miseries he sends upon the world and by his threats of eternal wrath. This wrath against sin has been demonstrated by the Son of God in a particular way when he came to become a sacrifice for sin and to show that the devil was the author of sin and to appease by his death the overwhelming wrath of the Father (*Loci Th*, I, p 127f.)

e) **It is an inconsistency when supralapsarian Calvinists try to deny that they make God the author of sin.**

Hermann Witsius (d. 1708): It infallibly follows that Adam, when God moved him to understand, will, and eat, was not able not to understand, will, and eat. But since God did not give him the good quality of those actions, he was not able to understand and to will correctly (*De oeconomia foed. Dei cum hominibus*, 1685, I, VIII).

Johannes Wolleb (d. 1629): Even the things that are counter to God's will do not take place apart from his will. —Many things may take place counter to the *voluntas signi*, which yet conform to the *voluntas beneplaciti*. By the will of sign God did not will man's fall, indeed he most severely forbade it. Yet he willed and decreed it by the will of his good pleasure, according as it was a means of revealing his glory... Thus by God's decree and will things good and bad take place, the former by efficient, the latter by permissive decree (*Christianae Theologiae Compendium*, p 18-19).

Robert Reymond: If someone should ask: Was Adam totally free from God's eternal decree, Reformed theology would say, of course not. Could Adam have done differently? Again, from the viewpoint of the divine decree, the answer is no. To answer these questions any other way is simply to nullify the Scripture's teaching to the effect that God, who works everything in conformity with his eternal purpose (Eph. 1:11), purposed before the foundation of the world to save a multitude of sinners who would fall in Adam (*A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, p 374).

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Chemnitz: This explanation also must be noted, however, what it means that God is not the cause of sin, namely, that he does not will and does not approve of sin, nor does he move people's will to sin. For some (i.e., the Calvinists) understand that he is not the author of sin in such a way that in the beginning he did not create sin, nor did he have it in himself or produce sin through himself. But nevertheless men sin by the will of God, and God not only permissively but also effectively produces sin in men and through men; and yet he is not for this reason called the author of sin (according to the Calvinists). And so for the sake of explanation, as it were, there is added: Author and cause of sin (*Loci Th*., I, 146).

Quenstedt: In no way whatsoever is God the efficient cause of sin as such: neither in part nor totally; neither directly nor indirectly, neither as such nor incidentally; God is not the author of sin nor can he be called the author of sin in the fall of Adam in particular nor of any sin whatsoever in general.—God is not the cause of sin 1) physically or by himself because evil or sin has no cause in that sense; 2) nor psychologically by commanding, persuading, or approving of it, because he does not will sin but hates it; 3) nor incidentally, because nothing

can happen to God either by chance or by accident. This is opposed to divine wisdom (*TDP*, II, II, I, Thes. IV, p 49).

**2. The cause of sin in the world is the free will of Satan, who tempted man, and of man who yielded to the temptation.**

John 8:44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

1 John 3:8 He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Genesis 3:6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

Romans 5:12 Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

Augsburg Confession XIX: Of the cause of sin they teach that, although God does create and preserve nature, yet the cause of sin is the will of the wicked, that is, of the devil and ungodly men; which will, unaided of God, turns itself from God, as Christ says John 8, 44: When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own (*Trig.*, p 52).

Formula of Concord, T.D., I, 7: In the second place, this, too, is clear and true, as the Nineteenth Article of the Augsburg Confession teaches, that God is not a creator, author, or cause of sin, but by the instigation of the devil through one man sin (which is a work of the devil) has entered the world, Rom. 5, 12; 1 John 3, 7. And even at the present day, in this corruption of nature, God does not create and make sin in us, but with the nature which God at the present day still creates and makes in men original sin is propagated from sinful seed, through carnal conception and birth from father and mother (*Trig.*, p 860).

Formula of Concord, T.D., I, 40: From this article, now, the distinction is found indisputably and clearly. For original sin does not come from God. God is not a creator or author of sin. Nor is original sin a creature or work of God, but it is a work of the devil (*Trig.*, p 870).

Formula of Concord, T.D., XI, 6: The foreknowledge of God (*praescientia*) foresees and foreknows also that which is evil; however, not in such a manner as though it were God's gracious will that it should happen; but all that the perverse, wicked will of the devil and of men wills and desires to undertake and do, God sees and knows before; and His *praescientia*, that is, foreknowledge, observes its order also in wicked acts or works, inasmuch as a limit and measure is fixed by God to the evil which God does not will, how far it should go, and how long it should last, when and how He will

hinder and punish it; for all of this God the Lord so overrules that it must redound to the glory of the divine name and to the salvation of His elect, and the godless, on that account, must be put to confusion (Trig., p 1064).

Quenstedt: Whatever lawlessness there ever is in a rational agent, this is to be ascribed entirely to the free will of the creature himself, which is deficient when acting on its own accord. — The rational agent or creature which possesses reason and the ability to know those things which the law that has been given either commands or forbids is the cause of sin properly so called, namely, the will of the devil and of man. This rational being ought to be considered to be the cause of sin not by reason of some actual influence but by reason of some defect [i.e., some failure to act positively]. For sin has a deficient rather than an efficient cause (*TDP*, II, II, I, Thes. VI, p 49 ).

Note: Quenstedt’s use of the term “deficient cause” regarding the origin of sin expresses Augustinian thought that was found useful by both Lutheran and Reformed theologians. Cf. R. Muller, *Dictionary*, p 62: “Since God created all things good, there can be no evil thing that exists as the efficient cause (*causa efficiens*) of sin. Sin must therefore arise, not out of the efficiency of some evil existent agent, but rather out of a deficiency in the willing of something by an otherwise good agent. Thus, the *causa peccati* is a deficient, and not an efficient, cause, a deficient willing rather than an efficient willing, i.e., a willing of something not as it ought to be willed. Neither the will itself, as created, nor the object of its willing is evil.”

### **III. Original sin is the inherited and inborn disposition according to which man is void of original righteousness and filled with evil concupiscence.**

#### **1. Scripture is the source of the teaching on original sin.**

##### **a) Scripture speaks of sin as an innate condition as well as sinful actions. The condition is called “original sin” or “inherited sin,” while the actions are called “actual sin.”**

Romans 7:8,13,17,18,21,23 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.<sup>13</sup> Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! But in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it produced death in me through what was good, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.<sup>17</sup> As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me (ἡ ἐνοικοῦσα ἐν ἐμοὶ ἁμαρτία).<sup>18</sup> I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature (ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου). For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.<sup>21</sup> So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me (ἐμοὶ τὸ κακὸν παράκειται).<sup>23</sup> I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members (ἐν τῷ νόμῳ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τῷ ὄντι ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν μου).<sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death (ἐκ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ θανάτου τούτου)

Romans 6:6 For we know that our old self (ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος) was crucified with him so that the body of sin (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας) might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.

Note. This term “original sin” or “inherited sin” does not occur in Scripture. The Augsburg Confession introduced the German name *Erbsünde*. Luther and others referred to this sinful condition variously as *Natursünde*, *Personsünde*, *wesentliche Sünde*, and the like. (Similarly, the term “actual sin,” *wirkliche Sünde*, is an ecclesiastical rather than a biblical term.)

Augsburg Confession II, 1-3: Also they teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit. They condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that original depravity is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ’s merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason (Trig., p42).

Formula of Concord, Ep., I, 20: Now, this original sin is called by Dr. Luther nature-sin, person-sin, essential sin, not because the nature, person, or essence of man is, without any distinction, itself original sin, but in order to indicate by such words the distinction between original sin, which inheres in human nature, and other sins, which are called actual sins (Trig., p782).

Formula of Concord, T.D., I, 53: Luther himself explains that by nature-sin, person-sin, essential sin he means that not only the words, thoughts, and works are sin, but that the entire nature, person, and essence of man are altogether corrupted from the root by original sin (Trig., p874).

Note: Another clarification in terminology may be kept in mind. The term *peccatum originis originans* refers to Adam’s fall while the term *peccatum originis originatum* refers to inherited sin.

Bellarmino: If anyone therefore asks us what original sin is in the proper sense of the term, we will answer by making a distinction in this way: If sin is taken for an action conflicting with the law, original sin is the first disobedience of Adam.... But if sin is taken for that which resides in man after the act and from which the same man is called a sinner although he does not sin, original sin is the lack of the gift of original righteousness, or the habitual aversion and deflection of the will (*Disput.*, Tom. IV, Lib. V, Cap. XVII, p 189).

- b) Aside from Scripture, no other source is sufficient to reveal original or inherited sin. Human observation, including self-examination, will confirm the widespread and pervasive corruption of mankind, but cannot determine or comprehend the origin or real nature of the condition.**

Romans 2:15 [The Gentiles] show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

1 John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**c) Scripture is clear in revealing that the corruption of the human nature after the fall is real, universal, and total.**

**1) The Bible teaches that human nature is now corrupt and sinful. This truth is nevertheless opposed in varying degrees by Pelagian, Semi-pelagian, and synergistic thought.**

**-a) Typical Bible statements would include these.**

Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Genesis 8:21 The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

John 3:5,6 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

Ephesians 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

**-b) Typical statements of those who oppose this truth would include these.**

Pelagius (ca. 412 AD): Everything good and evil, concerning which we are either worthy of praise or of blame is done by us, not born with us. We are born not in our full development, but with a capacity for good and evil. We are begotten without virtue as much as without fault (*Pro libero arbitrio*, quoted by Augustine, *De peccato originale*, XIII, 14).

Synod of Orange (441 AD): Through the Fall of the first man the free will was weakened and reduced, not extinguished. . . . For natural man has a remote power and imperfect strength and therefore can do nothing by himself; but if that power is perfected and strength is added, he can do something good. . . . How is the will free to do what it pleases before grace is given, if it cannot do good? I reply: the will is free, but its freedom is so to speak bound and hindered. It is released, however, and expedited when through God's prevenient grace the very power of doing good is conferred on it (*ibid.*, lib VI, cap. XV, 6 & 7 p 394).

Roman Catholic axioms: The natural powers (i.e., the religious, moral nature of man) after the Fall are intact. . . . Nothing is sin

unless it is voluntary (Cited by Bellarmine, *Disput.*, tom. IV, de. amis. grat. et stat. pecc . lib V, cap XV, 2, p 185).

Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274): Man is able to do good from his natural powers alone (cited by Bellarmine, *ibid.*, cap XV, 3, p 185).

Gabriel Biel (d. 1495): The unregenerate are able to obtain justification through works of penance (cited by Bellarmine, *ibid.*, cap XXVI, 23, p 364).

Timothy Ware: Most Orthodox theologians reject the idea of “original guilt.” . . . Humans (Orthodox usually teach) automatically inherit Adam’s corruption and mortality, but not his guilt; they are guilty only in so far as by their own free choice they imitate Adam. Many western Christians used to believe that whatever a person does in the fallen and unredeemed state, since it is tainted by original guilt, cannot possibly be pleasing to God. . . Orthodox would hesitate to say this. And Orthodox have never held (as Augustine and many in the west have done) that unbaptized babies, because tainted with original guilt, are consigned by the just God to the everlasting flames of hell. (*The Orthodox Church*, p 224).

Zwingli: Whether we want to or not, we are forced to admit that original sin, as it is in the sons of Adam, is not sin in the proper sense of the term. For it is not a crime against the law. Therefore in the proper sense of the term it is a disease and condition (*Fidei Ratio ad Carolum Imperatorem*, art. IV).

Schmalz: That original sin is a mere fable which the Lutherans and others foster as a foreign offspring, as it were (*Contra Franzium*; cited by H. II, p 397).

Erickson: Until the first conscious or responsible moral action or decision by a person, there is no imputation of the Adamic sin, just as there is no imputation of Christ’s righteousness until there is a conscious acceptance of that work. . . . There is a time of moral responsibility, or an “age of accountability,” and sin is not reckoned prior to that (*How Shall They Be Saved?* p 250).

## 2) **The Bible teaches that such corruption is universal.**

1 Kings 8:46 When they sin against you—for there is no one who does not sin—and you become angry with them and give them over to the enemy, who takes them captive to his own land, far away or near . . . .

Psalm 14:2,3 The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God.<sup>3</sup> All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Psalm 143:2 Do not bring your servant into judgment, for no one living is righteous before you.



Proverbs 20:9 Who can say, “I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin”?

Romans 3:9-12,22,23 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. <sup>10</sup> As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup> All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.” <sup>22</sup> This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Galatians 3:22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

**3) The Bible teaches that human nature is thoroughly rather than superficially corrupt. Inherited sin is no slight or insignificant flaw as Strigel taught.**

**-a) As the image of God was not a *donum superadditum* (*supernaturale*), so original sin is not an *accidens leviculum*.**

Ezekiel 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

Romans 7:18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

Romans 8:7 The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Formula of Concord, T.D.,I, 21: [We reject] that original sin is only external, a slight, insignificant spot sprinkled or a stain dashed upon the nature of man, or *corruptio tantum accidentium aut qualitatum*, i. e., a corruption only in some accidental things, along with and beneath which the nature nevertheless possesses and retains its integrity and power even in spiritual things (Trig., p 864).

Meisner: Original sin is not a slight accident (nonessential characteristic). . . . For it does not leave the nature uncorrupted, but it

deeply infects all the powers and faculties of a man to such an extent that the mind is blind in spiritual matters, the will is turned away (from good), and every thought is by nature inclined only to evil. We condemn therefore all who extenuate sin, and we wish and permit it to be emphasized in every way, provided only that that emphasis does not violate the analogy of faith (*Anthologia sacra*, dec. I, disp. VI, qu I, XV, p 161).

**-b) At the same time, although original sin is a deep-rooted evil, it is not a part of the essence or substance of mankind, as Flacius wrongly asserted.**

John 1:3 with 1 Timothy 4:4 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. . . . For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.

Romans 7:18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Formula of Concord, Ep., I, 19: We reject and condemn also as a Manichean error the doctrine that original sin is properly and without any distinction the substance, nature, and essence itself of the corrupt man, so that a distinction between the corrupt nature, as such, after the Fall and original sin should not even be conceived of, nor that they could be distinguished from one another even in thought (Trig., p 782). Cf. Also T.D., I, 48-62, Trig. p 874 ff.

Flacius: Men have been essentially changed from the image of God into the image of the devil. Their substance has been essentially changed and perverted by Satan (*Clavis scripturae*, see Quenstedt, *TDP*, sect. II, qu X, p 131).

Meisner: If [Flacius] did not err in the matters themselves, nevertheless he stubbornly and contentiously defended that most absurd phrase which is completely contrary to the analogy of faith and which is by no means to be tolerated in him.—An inhabitant and that in which he lives are not one and the same, but they always are actually different (on Ro 7). (*Anthologia sacra*, dec. I, disp. VI, qu. 1, XV, p 161).

**4) The Bible teaches that this deep corruption is being transmitted in propagation.**

**-a) Bible passages that reveal this truth include the following:**

Genesis 5:3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

Job 14:4 Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!

Psalm 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Psalm 58:3 Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.

Romans 5:12,19 Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. <sup>19</sup> 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.

Formula of Concord, T.D., I, 7: And even at the present day, in this corruption of nature, God does not create and make sin in us, but with the nature which God at the present day still creates and makes in men original sin is propagated from sinful seed, through carnal conception and birth from father and mother (Trig., p 860).

**-b) Roman Catholics declare the Virgin Mary to be an exception to this truth, but the Bible does not allow this.**

Council of Trent, Sess. V: Nevertheless this holy synod declares that it is not its intention to include in this decree, when it speaks about original sin, the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.

Pius IX: We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that the most blessed Virgin Mary in the first moment of her conception by a singular grace and privilege of the omnipotent God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ the Savior of the human race, was preserved pure of every taint of original guilt, has been revealed by God and therefore must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful (*Ineffabilis Deus, Apostolic Constitution*, Dec. 8, 1854).

Vatican II : The usage prevailed among the holy Fathers whereby they called the mother of God entirely holy and free from all stain of sin... Adorned from the first instant of her conception with the splendors of an entirely unique holiness, the Virgin of Nazareth is, on God's command, greeted by an angel messenger as "full of grace" (cf. Lk 1:28)... Rightly therefore the holy Fathers see her as used by God not merely in a passive way, but as cooperating in the work of human salvation through free faith and obedience. For, as St. Irenaeus says, she, "being obedient, became the cause of salvation for herself and the whole human race." Hence in their preaching not a few of the early Fathers gladly assert with him: "The knot of Eve's disobedience was untied by Mary's obedience. What the virgin Eve bound through

her unbelief, Mary loosened by her faith” (*Doc.*, p 88, see also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 964, 968).

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Pius XII: Accordingly ... by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Apostles, Peter and Paul, and by Our own authority We pronounce, declare and define that the dogma was revealed by God, that the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, after completing her course of life upon earth, was assumed to the glory of heaven both in body and soul. Therefore, if anyone, which may God forbid, should dare either to deny this, or voluntarily call into doubt what has been defined by us, he should realize that he has cut himself off entirely from the divine and Catholic faith (*Munificentissimus Deus*, 1950, see also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 966).

Genesis 3:15 (Vulgate): She will crush his head.

Luke 1:47 My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Romans 3:10 As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one.”

**5) The Bible teaches that the inherited corruption remains within people until death.**

**-a) No one has the ability to rid himself of this corruption.**

Jeremiah 13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

John 3:5,6 Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.”

Romans 7:14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin.

**-b) Original sin continues to dwell also in Christians.**

Romans 7:17,21,23 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. <sup>21</sup> So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. <sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the

sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Apology II (I), 35: Here our adversaries inveigh against Luther also because he wrote that “Original sin remains after baptism.” They add that this article was justly condemned by Leo X. But His Imperial Majesty will find on this point a manifest slander. For our adversaries know in what sense Luther intended this remark that original sin remains after baptism. He always wrote thus, namely, that baptism removes the guilt of original sin, although the material, as they call it, of the sin, *i.e.*, concupiscence, remains. He also added in reference to the material that the Holy Spirit, given through baptism, begins to mortify the concupiscence, and creates new movements [a new light, a new sense and spirit] in man (Trig., p 112).

Council of Trent, Sess. V: The question is whether concupiscence which remains in the regenerate after baptism and repentance is truly and properly sin. The holy synod declares that this concupiscence which the Apostle sometimes calls sin the Catholic Church has never understood to be called sin in the sense that it truly and properly is sin in the regenerate, but because it comes from sin and inclines to sin.—If anyone, however, thinks differently, let him be damned.—In baptism the essence of original sin is removed; therefore the remnants after baptism, namely, concupiscence, are not truly sin. For when the essence is removed, the thing itself is removed.

Catechism of the Catholic Church: Although it is proper to each individual, original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam’s descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it; subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin – an inclination to evil that is called “concupiscence.” Baptism, by imparting the life of Christ’s grace, erases original sin and turns a man back toward God, but the consequences for nature, weakened and inclined to evil, persist in man and summon him to spiritual battle. (Par. 405) By our first parents’ sin, the devil has acquired a certain domination over man, even though man remains free. (Par. 407)

Chemnitz: For (Paul) says according to the inner man.... Likewise: I delight in the law of God; with the mind I serve the law of God. These things, unless we want to pelagianize openly, cannot be attributed to unregenerate man (*Loci*, pars I, loc. VII, *de peccato originis*, cap VII, II, p 229).

2. **Original sin presents a double aspect. It is described negatively (as the absence of righteousness) and positively (as the presence of evil desires).**
  - a) **Described negatively, original sin denotes the absence of original righteousness and thus the ability to express it. This is the *sine* referred to in our Confessions.**

Psalm 53:3,4 Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one. <sup>4</sup> Will the evildoers never learn—those who devour my people as men eat bread and who do not call on God?

Romans 3:10 As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one.”

Romans 8:7 The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Ephesians 2:1,5 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins. <sup>5</sup>[God] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Colossians 1:21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.

Augsburg Confession II, 1-2: They teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God (*sine metu Dei*), without trust in God, and with concupiscence (*cum concupiscentia*); and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit (Trig., p 42). (See also Apology II (I) 7-13, Trig., p 106)

Augsburg Confession XVIII, 1-4: Of Free Will they teach that man’s will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness, and to work things subject to reason. But it has no power, without the Holy Spirit, to work the righteousness of God, that is, spiritual righteousness; since the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2, 14; but this righteousness is wrought in the heart when the Holy Spirit is received through the Word (Trig., p50).

Formula of Concord, T.D., I, 22-25: [We reject] that original sin is not a despoliation or deficiency, but only an external impediment to these spiritual good powers, as when a magnet is smeared with garlic-juice, whereby its natural power is not removed, but only hindered; or that this stain can be easily washed away, as a spot from the face or pigment from the wall. They are rebuked and rejected likewise who teach that the nature has indeed been greatly weakened and corrupted through the Fall, but that nevertheless it has not entirely lost all good with respect to divine, spiritual things, and that what is sung in our churches, “Through Adam’s fall is all corrupt, Nature and essence human,” is not true, but from natural birth it still has something good, small, little and inconsiderable though it be, namely, capacity, skill, aptness or ability to begin, to effect, or to help effect something in spiritual things. For concerning external, temporal, worldly things and transactions, which are subject to reason, there will

be an explanation in the succeeding article. These and contrary doctrines of like kind are censured and rejected for the reason that God's Word teaches that the corrupt nature, of and by itself, has no power for anything good in spiritual, divine things, not even for the least, as good thoughts; and not only this, but that of and by itself it can do nothing in the sight of God but sin, Gen. 6, 5; 8, 21 (Trig., p864).

**b) Described positively, original sin denotes the innate predisposition to evil, often called concupiscence. This is the *cum* referred to in our Confessions.**

Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Genesis 8:21 The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

Romans 7:8,21,23 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead.<sup>21</sup> So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me.<sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Galatians 5:17,24 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.<sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

James 1:14 But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

Augsburg Confession II, 1-2: They teach that since the fall of Adam all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God (*sine metu Dei*), without trust in God, and with concupiscence (*cum concupiscentia*); and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit (Trig., p 42).

Apology II (I),14: These were the reasons why, in the description of original sin, we made mention of concupiscence also, and denied to man's natural strength the fear of God and trust in Him. For we wished to indicate that original sin contains also these diseases, namely, ignorance of God, contempt for God, the being destitute of the fear of God and trust in Him, inability to love God. These are the chief faults of human nature, conflicting especially with the first table of the Decalog (Trig., p 108).

Apology II (I), 24,25: Of the same import is the definition which occurs in the writings of Augustine, who is accustomed to define original sin as

concupiscence [wicked desire]. For he means that when righteousness had been lost, concupiscence came in its place. For inasmuch as diseased nature cannot fear and love God and believe God, it seeks and loves carnal things. God's judgment it either contemns, when at ease, or hates, when thoroughly terrified. Thus Augustine includes both the defect and the vicious habit which has come in its place. Nor indeed is concupiscence only a corruption of the qualities of the body, but also, in the higher powers, a vicious turning to carnal things. Nor do those persons see what they say who ascribe to man at the same time concupiscence that is not entirely destroyed by the Holy Spirit, and love to God above all things (Trig., p 110).

Gerhard: That corruption of our nature which embraces the inclination and impetus of all the powers of the soul toward evil we call a positive quality, not as though some power of acting were in and through itself sin, but because that power of acting in man is only inclined and disposed to sin... Meanwhile we do not prohibit that a fine distinction be made between that power of acting itself and the evil quality of that power (*Loci*, tom. IV, loc. X, sec. LXXXVIII, p 331).

**c) The absence of righteousness and presence of evil desires are not two parts or components of inherited sin, but the same condition viewed from different angles.**

Quenstedt: And so the essence of original sin embraces 1) the absence or lack of the original righteousness which ought to be present; 2) the placement or presence of evil concupiscence and the coming of a contrary character and evil quality, or the corruption of the whole nature (*TDP*, II, II, II, qu XI, thes. p 135).

Hollaz: Spiritual death, the root of all evil, is the immediate consequence of the first apostasy or sin... This spiritual death brought with it the loss of the divine image, the most profound corruption of the whole human nature and the loss of the free will in spiritual matters (*Examen*, pars II, cap. III, qu. 9, p 556).

Brochmand: That original sin includes besides the loss of original righteousness a congenital inclination of the nature to evils of every kind these passages of the Scriptures most plainly teach, Gn 6:5; 8:21; etc. (*Systema*, art XI, cap. V, III, p 442).

**d) The sinful nature of concupiscence has been wrongly minimized in the history of the church. The Church of Rome has consistently done this. Theological modernism, liberalism, and much of Evangelicalism have often done the same.**

Terms used by Roman Catholicism to denote concupiscence include: "wound of nature, weakness, disease" (*vulnus naturae, infirmitas, morbus*). They also define evil desire as "an appetite lacking the bridle of original righteousness" (*sensualitas freno originalis iustitiae destituta*).

Bellarmino: The Lutherans correctly admit the common definition of original sin, namely, that it is the loss of original righteousness... Their error is that those things which the Catholics describe as wounds of nature, weaknesses, diseases remaining from original sin, such as ignorance, difficulty in doing good, concupiscence, they insist are truly and properly original sin. . . . A third



error is proposed which is common to all Lutherans and Calvinists: The whole controversy is about whether the corruption of nature and especially concupiscence is by itself and by its very nature original sin in the proper sense of the word.... For the adversaries contend that it is, the Catholics, however, deny it; since they teach that when the will has been cleansed through justifying grace, the remaining diseases not only do not make men guilty, but they are not able to make men guilty since they do not have the true character of sin. (He calls the main question) whether it is a positive quality or not, and whether this evil itself is properly and essentially original sin. . . . They affirm both, and we deny both. We assert: the corruption of the nature is not original sin, not only because it is not imputed, but also because it cannot be imputed since it is not of itself and by its very nature sin. . . . Concupiscence in the regenerate is not sin, is not imputed, and does not make people guilty (*Disputat.*, tom IV, de amis grat, lib V, cap IV, I, p 155, 156).

Council of Trent, Sess. V Decree 5: For God hates nothing in the regenerate.... This holy synod confesses and believes that concupiscence or inclination remains in the baptized. Since this was left for the purpose of exercise, it is not able to harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it through the grace of Christ Jesus.

Tillich: Original sin is neither original nor hereditary; it is the universal destiny of estrangement which concerns every man (*ST*, II, 56). Reinterpretation is also needed for the term “original” and “hereditary” with respect to sin. But in this case reinterpretation may demand rejection of the terms (*ST*, II, 46).

### **3. Original sin makes us guilty before God. Inherited sin is imputed to us and we are held responsible for it.**

#### **a) The Bible presents guilt as imputed sin. The sinner is held accountable to God for sin and is subject to divine punishment.**

##### **1) Terms in both the OT and NT express the idea of the sinner being accountable to God for sin.**

**חַטָּאת:** guilt (m.,f.,adj.,vb.)

Jeremiah 51:5 For Israel and Judah have not been forsaken by their God, the LORD Almighty, though their land is full of *guilt* before the Holy One of Israel.

2 Chronicles 24:18 They abandoned the temple of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and worshiped Asherah poles and idols. Because of their *guilt*, God’s anger came upon Judah and Jerusalem.

Leviticus 5:2,3 If a person touches anything ceremonially unclean—whether the carcasses of unclean wild animals or of unclean livestock or of unclean creatures that move along the ground—even though he is unaware of it, he has become unclean and *is guilty* [vb.].<sup>3</sup> Or if he touches human uncleanness—anything that would make him unclean—even though he is unaware of it, when he learns of it he *will be guilty* [vb.].

**τις**: iniquity; punishment.

Exodus 20:5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, *punishing* the children *for the sin* [visiting the iniquity] of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.

Leviticus 5:17 “If a person sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands, even though he does not know it, he *is guilty* [bears iniquity] and will be held responsible.

Isaiah 1:4 Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with *guilt*, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him.

Isaiah 6:7 With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your *guilt* is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

**ὀφειλημα**: debt

Matthew 6:12 Forgive us our *debts*, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

**ὑπόδικος**: guilty (subject to judgment or punishment)

Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held *accountable* to God. (only here in N.T.)

**ἔνοχος**: guilty

Matthew 5:21,22 You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, “Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be *subject* to judgment.”<sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be *subject* to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, “Raca,” is *answerable* to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, “You fool!” will be *in danger* of the fire of hell.

Mark 3:29 Whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is *guilty* of an eternal sin.

Mark 14:64 “You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” They all condemned him as *worthy* of death.

1 Corinthians 11:27 Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be *guilty* of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

Hebrews 2:15 and free those who all their lives *were held* [ἔνοχοι ἦσαν] in slavery by their fear of death.

James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is *guilty* of breaking all of it.

2) **The Bible also uses various expressions to denote the imputation or non-imputation of sin.**

2 Samuel 3:8 Abner was very angry because of what Ish-Bosheth said and he answered, “Am I a dog’s head—on Judah’s side? This very day I am loyal to the house of your father Saul and to his family and friends. I haven’t handed you over to David. Yet now *you accuse me of an offense* [תִּפְקֹד עָלַי עוֹן] involving this woman!

2 Samuel 19:19 [He] said to him, “May my lord *not hold me guilty* [אַל-יִחַשְׁב־לִי עוֹן]. Do not remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind.”

Psalms 32:1,2 Blessed is he whose transgressions are *forgiven* [נָשׂוּי], whose sins are *covered* [כִּסּוּי].<sup>2</sup> Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does *not count against him* [לֹא יִחַשְׁב] and in whose spirit is no deceit.

Psalms 130:3 If you, O LORD, *kept a record of sins* [עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמֵר], O Lord, who could stand?

Jonah 1:14 Then they cried to the LORD, “O LORD, please do not let us die for taking this man’s life. *Do not hold us accountable* [אַל-תִּתֵּן עָלֵינוּ] for killing an innocent man, for you, O LORD, have done as you pleased.”

Romans 4:6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God *credits* [λογίζετα] righteousness apart from works.

Romans 3:23 All have sinned and *fall short* [ὕστεροῦνται] of the glory of God.

Hollaz: Guilt (*culpa*) is moral foulness or deformity resulting from an act not in harmony with the law and unbecoming for a rational creature and clinging to a sinner as a shameful blemish. . . . Liability of guilt (*reatus culpa*) is an obligation by which a man on account of an act not in harmony with the moral law is held bound as it were under sin and stain so that from that act he is considered and called a detestable sinner (*Examen*, pars II, cap 4, qu 10-12. p 542ff.).

Gerhard: The liability (*reatus*) properly and accurately speaking is not the punishment itself of sin but the obligation to punishment by which a man is made liable, that is, subject to the wrath of God (*Loc. de peccat. Sec 89*).

Baier: For guilt (*culpa*) essentially is a certain relationship resulting from sin considered in relation to the standard of moral rectitude or law; and liability (*reatus*) essentially implies an obligation by which someone is

held bound under sin through sin itself so that he truly is and is called a sinner. This obligation itself, however, is also a relation to the law or rule resulting from sin through which a man is made liable for sin. Nor does there appear to be a difference between liable of sin and guilty or liable of guilt (*reum peccati, culpabilem, culpa reum*)(*Compendium*, pars II, cap II, sec 8, p 308).

**3) Guilt is independent of the sinner's consciousness.**

Psalm 19:12 Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

Psalm 50:21,22 These things you have done and I kept silent; you thought I was altogether like you. But I will rebuke you and accuse you to your face. <sup>22</sup> Consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you to pieces, with none to rescue.

Leviticus 4:13 If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, even though the community is unaware of the matter, they are guilty. Also verses 22,27.

**4) Guilt may be described as "infinite" since sin is in opposition to the infinite God.**

Psalm 90:11 Who knows the power of your anger? For your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.

Psalm 51:4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

Romans 8:7 The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

Psalm 49:7-9 No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him—<sup>8</sup> the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough—<sup>9</sup> that he should live on forever and not see decay.

Matthew 16:26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

Matthew 18:24,25 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. <sup>25</sup> Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

Ezra 9:6 O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens.

Psalm 38:4 My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.

**b) Original or inherited sin is also imputed to us and we are held accountable for this condition.**

**1) We are by nature excluded from heaven.**

John 3:5,6 Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.<sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.”

Ephesians 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath [τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς].

**2) Adam’s sin was imputed indirectly (*imputatio mediata*) to mankind as Adam transmitted a sinful nature to his descendants (hereditary corruption). Adam was not only the physical head of the human race, but in a sense also served as humanity’s moral head.**

Genesis 5:3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth.

Psalm 51:5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

Ephesians 2:3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Formula of Concord, Ep., I., 11,12: . Therefore we reject and condemn the teaching that original sin is only a *reatus* or debt on account of what has been committed by another [diverted to us] without any corruption of our nature. . Also, that evil lusts are not sin, but concreated, essential properties of the nature, or, as though the above-mentioned defect and damage were not truly sin, because of which man without Christ would be a child of wrath (Trig., p 780).

**3) Adam’s sin may also be said to be imputed directly to mankind by a verdict of God (*imputatio immediata*) (hereditary guilt).**

Romans 5:12,14,18,19 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—<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

<sup>18</sup>Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. <sup>19</sup> 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.

2 Corinthians 5:14 (On the concept of imputation) For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

Quenstedt: "Just as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed through to all men, ἐφ' ᾧ, in whom (namely, in Adam) all sinned" (*TDP*, II, II, sec II, qu VII, p 112).

Note: There is a preferable – and more grammatical – way to understand Romans 5:12. It is plain that ἐφ' ᾧ in Greek refers to a cause. Luther translated it *diweil*. The NIV translates it *because*.

Quenstedt: It was not a matter of good pleasure (i.e., a whim) nor of absolute divine dominion, but of the highest justice and fairness that the sin which Adam as the root and source of the whole human race committed is imputed to us and passed on to us as a liability. And thus we all sinned in Adam as in a common stock, and the first fall is ours, not indeed by propagation but by imputation, not actually but originally (*TDP*, II, II, II, qu VII, thes., p 111).

Baier: It is not necessary, nor perhaps is it advisable to debate rather subtly how God was able to impute the fall of the first people to their offspring who did not yet exist in such a way that on account of it it was necessary for them also to be born without original righteousness and as sinners. For it is enough that the fact has been revealed, although how this can be is not known (*Compendium*, II, II, sec 8, c, p 308).

#### **4) The Bible teaching that inherited sin is imputed as guilt to mankind has been strongly denied by many.**

Julius Wegscheider (d. 1849): But that imputation of Adam's sin which the Apostle Paul, following the Jewish teachers of his time, made the basis of his arguments ought to be relegated to the status of obsolete dogmas (*Instit*, art 18, p 386).

Peter De Rosa: Original sin in us must be sharply distinguished from any personal sins we may commit. The sin and guilt of original sin are not the same as the sin and guilt of actual sins. We are not responsible for original sin; we do not do penance or make satisfaction for it; we are not strictly speaking "enemies" of God by reason of it (*Christ and Original Sin*, p 82).

Rudolph Bultmann: To attribute human mortality to the fall of Adam is sheer nonsense, for guilt implies personal responsibility, and the idea of original sin as an inherited infection is sub-ethical, irrational, and absurd (*Kerygma and Myth*, p7).

Paul Tillich: Reinterpretation is also needed for the term "original" and "hereditary" with respect to sin. But in this case reinterpretation may demand rejection of the terms (*ST*, II, 46).

Ted Peters: Critics have objected to the idea of original sin because (1) the story of a first sin in a primeval garden sounds mythical rather than historical; (2) it is unjust for the present generation to suffer because of the

sin of its ancestors; and (3) too frequently the sexual intercourse necessary for procreation has become the target of those who wish to point to the precise moment at which the disease is passed on. Despite these criticisms, I believe theologians need a concept such as original sin to account for the human experience it articulates. Evil comes to us and we sin—these are basic elements of human experience and are symbolized in Adam and Eve, who represent everyone. Sin is universally human. The idea of original sin is an attempt to provide a workable concept of this universal phenomenon (*God the World's Future*, p 169).

Kenneth Grider: Yet both words in the phrase “original sin” are in themselves misleading as to what is intended. To the altogether uninitiated, the word “original,” coupled with the word ‘sin,’ would suggest the first act of sin—Adam’s act of rebellion in the Garden of Eden. However, ‘original sin’ refers to a state of sin in us due to that original act of sin on Adam’s part. The word “sin” also tends to be misleading. In this phrase it refers to a state, but it is commonly used of an act of disobedience. And we think of being guilty for sin, whereas for this original sin we are not now guilty (because of Christ), and it therefore does not make us culpable (so that, as John Wesley said, no one will ever go into eternal hell for this sin alone).” (*A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology*, p 277)

Owen Kendall White, Jr: In contrast with the orthodox Christian notion that the fall resulted in a condition of human depravity, the Mormon view asserts that the fall was a necessary condition for man to realize his ultimate potential....Mormons generally avoid using “sin” to describe Adam's disobedience to God since it seems too extreme for them....to the Mormon the fall is a fall upward rather than downward. It is an important step in the eternal quest of man. In a recent article, Sterling Sill, a contemporary Mormon ecclesiastical official, wrote: “Adam fell, but he fell in the right direction”(“The Social Psychological Basis of Mormon New-Orthodoxy,” p 101-104. Quoted in Tanner).

Abdalati: The idea of original sin “has no room in the teachings of Islam. Man, according to the Qur’an (30:30) and to the Prophet, is born in a natural state of purity or *fitrah*” (*Islam in Focus*, p 31-32).

## **VI. Actual sins are all acts, words, and thoughts (emotions, desires, impulses, judgments) against God's Law.**

### **1. Scripture distinguishes between innate or inherited sinfulness (original sin) and sins a person commits (actual sin). Scripture does not, however, use the term “actual sin.”**

#### **a) The Bible speaks of sins that people do, commit, work, and so forth.**

Matthew 7:23 Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers (οἱ ἐργαζόμενοι τὴν ἀνομίαν)!”

John 8:34,44 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins (πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) is a slave to sin.<sup>44</sup> You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out (θέλετε ποιεῖν) your father’s desire.

Romans 2:9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil (κατεργάζομαι τὸ κακόν): first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits (ποιεῖ) are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

Galatians 5:16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify (τελέω) the desires of the sinful nature.

James 2:9 If you show favoritism, you sin (ἁμαρτίαν ἐργάζεσθε) and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

**b) The Bible also refers to sinful works and practices (which includes thoughts).**

Galatians 5:19-21 The acts (τὰ ἔργα) of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;<sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions<sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this (τὰ τοιαῦτα πράσσοντες) will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 5:11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds (ἔργα) of darkness, but rather expose them.

Colossians 3:9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices (πράξεις).

Hebrews 6:1 Let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts (ἔργοι) that lead to death, and of faith in God.

Hebrews 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death (ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων), so that we may serve the living God!

2 Peter 2:8 That righteous man [Lot], living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds (ἀνόμοι ἔργοι) he saw and heard.

Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

Romans 7:5 For when we were controlled by the sinful nature, the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in (ἐνεργέω) our bodies, so that we bore fruit for death.



- c) **To maintain a distinction between original and actual sin is therefore valid. At the same time it should be remembered that actual sin begins with the so-called “first feelings, movements, ticklings” (*motus primo primi, primae titillationes*) within sinful mankind, and the progression from original to actual sin is not easily charted.**

James 1:14,15 Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.<sup>15</sup> Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Augustine: Concupiscence is original sin, while desires, which are the expression of concupiscence, are actual sins (Quoted by Peter Lombard, 2 *Sent.* 30.7; *pL.* 192:722B).

Chemnitz: And this difference can be understood still more clearly from that distinction of steps which has been handed down from the ancient teachers: 1) The inclination (*fomes*, literally, tinder), or inherent depravity, which also includes choice; 2) the stirrings (*suggestion*) of the thoughts and feelings, that is, when the original depravity becomes active in some direction; 3) pleasure (*delectatio*); 4) consent (*consensus*); 5) the act itself (*opus*).—Of these steps the first two pertain to original sin, the remaining three to actual sin (*Loci*, IV, p 239). Note: Many theologians would identify the second phase as actual sin.

Chemnitz: Now someone might claim that this distinction is too clumsy, and might sophistically urge that all impulses and acts against the Law of God belong to actual sin by definition. Then it is time to invoke the two ancient rules which state the essential doctrine of original sin without any double talk: (1) Original sin is not an inactive thing (*res otiosa*). (2) In original sin there is always present at the same time actual sins. Thus Luther said in his *Resolutiones* that the tinder or natural state (*fomes*) is actual sin, i.e., the lack of what should be present, and the presence of weakness and desires which should be absent. . . This natural tinder is therefore a most lively and restless origin of actual sins (*Loci*, VII, Cited in *The Doctrine of Man*, p 211-212).

Quenstedt: The word “act” and “actual” in this place is not taken strictly for only outward acts and sins of commission, but broadly, in such a way that it embraces also inward evil feelings, both primary and secondary ones, as well as sins of omission. [He then immediately gives the explanation of the primary feelings:] They call the primary feelings (movements) or even the first primary ones inducements to sin, ticklings of the flesh, arising before they are noticed by the mind, inordinate movements which are sudden or involuntary or which are even apt to creep up against one's will (*TDP*, II, II, I, thes XL, p 63).

- d) **Actual sins include also those acts which natural or unregenerate sinners do which in themselves are neutral or even good.**

Isaiah 1:11-18 “The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me?” says the LORD. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.<sup>12</sup> When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts?<sup>13</sup> Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your evil assemblies.<sup>14</sup> Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul

hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. <sup>15</sup> When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; <sup>16</sup> wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, <sup>17</sup> learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow. <sup>18</sup> Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”

Amos 5:21 I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies.

Malachi 2:13 Another thing you do: You flood the LORD’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands.

Romans 10:2,3 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. <sup>3</sup> Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.

Hebrews 11:6 Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Chemnitz: It must be carefully observed that to the definition of actual sin belong not only actions which of themselves and by their very nature are evil, but everything which does not proceed from faith is sin, Ro 14:23 [Better: He 11:6] (*Loci*, I, VII, B, VIII, p 313).

## **2. With reference to consciousness and deliberation actual sins may be classified as involuntary or voluntary sins.**

### **a) Involuntary sins refer to sins that are not the result of conscious or deliberate activity of the will.**

Romans 7:15-17,19,20 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. <sup>16</sup> And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. <sup>19</sup> For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. <sup>20</sup> Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

Quenstedt: Sin is here called involuntary, not because it is not in the will and does not proceed from the will, but because it does not take place from knowing and willing (*TDP*, II, II, I, thes. LXXI, p 70).

### **1) Usually classified as involuntary sins are sins of ignorance. Different kinds of ignorance may be identified, for example, ignorance or unclarity of the true nature of an act, of the meaning of God’s Law, or difference of attendant circumstances. Some have also distinguished between avoidable sins of ignorance (a diligent person could have gotten the truth) and**

**almost unavoidable or inevitable sins of ignorance (the ministry of the Word is absent or very corrupt).**

Leviticus 4:2 Say to the Israelites: “When anyone sins unintentionally (בְּשִׁגְגָה) and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands . . .

Numbers 15:27 If just one person sins unintentionally (בְּשִׁגְגָה), he must bring a year-old female goat for a sin offering.

Acts 3:17 Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance (κατὰ ἄγνοιαν), as did your leaders.

Ignorance of God’s will

1 Timothy 1:13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance (ἀγνοῶν) and unbelief.

Ignorance of fact

Genesis 29:23,25 But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob, and Jacob lay with her.<sup>25</sup> When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn’t I? Why have you deceived me?” [Is this sin by Jacob?]

Vincible

2 Samuel 15:11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter.

Genesis 19:33 That night they got their father to drink wine, and the older daughter went in and lay with him. He was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up.

Romans 1:21,25,28 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.<sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

Invincible

Luke 23:34 Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Gerhard: That which arises for the regenerate, without their knowing it and being ignorant of it, from the darkness of the mind, which has not yet been fully removed through the illumination of the Holy Spirit (*Isagoge*, cited by Quenstedt, *TDP*, II, II, I, thes LXXVII, nota I, p 70).

Quenstedt: It is a sin of ignorance because it has overtaken the regenerate against their will from the darkness of the mind which has not yet been fully removed by the illumination of the Holy Spirit (*TDP*, II, II, I, thes LXXVII, nota I, p 70).

**2) Also often classified as involuntary sins are sins of weakness (and sometimes sins of rashness).**

Genesis 9:21 When [Noah] drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent.

Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body ( $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\acute{\iota}$ ) is weak.

Matthew 26: 35, 69-74 But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same.<sup>69</sup> Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said.<sup>70</sup> But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said.<sup>71</sup> Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.”<sup>72</sup> He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!”<sup>73</sup> After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away.”<sup>74</sup> Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately a rooster crowed.

Romans 7:15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

Galatians 2:12,13 Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.<sup>13</sup> The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Quenstedt: Note here furthermore that sins of ignorance and weakness are present in the regenerate together with the grace of God, faith, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Such sins are mortal as far as merit is concerned, but not in fact. For God forgives them because the person is pleasing to God and because repentance follows immediately (*TDP*, II, II, I, thes. LXXVII, p 71).

**3) By subsequent impenitence involuntary sins become voluntary.**

Numbers 35:26-28 But if the accused ever goes outside the limits of the city of refuge to which he has fled <sup>27</sup> and the avenger of blood finds him outside the city, the avenger of blood may kill the accused without being guilty of murder. <sup>28</sup> The accused must stay in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest; only after the death of the high priest may he return to his own property. [Note the case of Shimei, who violated his parole.]

**b) Voluntary sins are those that involve conscious deliberation or willfulness.**

**1) Voluntary sins include those committed willfully or maliciously.**

Numbers 15:29,30 One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether he is a native-born Israelite or an alien. <sup>30</sup> But anyone who sins defiantly (בְּיָד רָמָה), whether native-born or alien, blasphemes the LORD, and that person must be cut off from his people.

Numbers 35:20,21 If anyone with malice aforethought (בְּשׂוֹנְאָה) shoves another or throws something at him intentionally (בְּצַדִּיקָה) so that he dies <sup>21</sup> or if in hostility (בְּאַיְבָה) he hits him with his fist so that he dies, that person shall be put to death; he is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

Hebrews 10:26 If we deliberately (ἐκούσως) keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left.

Quenstedt: Sin is here called voluntary, not because it is with the will and in the will, for thus also involuntary violations would be voluntary, but it is taken here as opposed to that which is done through ignorance and not deliberately (*per ignorantiam et ἀπροαιρέτως*) (TDP, II, II, I, sec I, thes. LXXI, p 70).

**2) Also classified by many as voluntary sins are sins that are the result of intimidation.**

Matthew 26: 35, 69-74 But Peter declared, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the other disciples said the same. <sup>69</sup> Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said. <sup>70</sup> But he denied it before them all. “I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he said. <sup>71</sup> Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.” <sup>72</sup> He denied it again, with an oath: “I don’t know the man!” <sup>73</sup> After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, “Surely you are one of them, for your accent gives you away.” <sup>74</sup> Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, “I don’t know the man!” Immediately a rooster crowed.

Quenstedt: Voluntary sin viewed with respect to the purpose of the will is twofold. For the one kind is that which is committed from pure malice and a will that is altogether free, the other is committed from a will that is influenced by force or fear and surrounding dangers (*TDP*, II, II, I, sec I, thes. LXXVII, p 71).

**3) Voluntary sin brings the grave danger of a fall from grace.**

Psalm 51:10-14 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.<sup>11</sup> Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.<sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.<sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.<sup>14</sup> Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

Romans 8:12,13 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.<sup>13</sup> For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

Quenstedt: The regenerate in so far as they are such do not commit sin that is voluntary and against their conscience, but in so far as they have fallen from the state of grace and cease being regenerate. . . .The most direct and immediate effect in the regenerate is the loss of faith and indwelling grace (*TDP*, II, II, I, sec I, thes. LXI, LXIII, p 67, 68).

Smalcald Articles , Par. III, Art. III, 43,44: It is, accordingly, necessary to know and to teach that when holy men, still having and feeling original sin, also daily repenting of and striving with it, happen to fall into manifest sins, as David into adultery, murder, and blasphemy, that then faith and the Holy Spirit has departed from them [they cast out faith and the Holy Spirit]. For the Holy Spirit does not permit sin to have dominion, to gain the upper hand so as to be accomplished, but represses and restrains it so that it must not do what it wishes. But if it does what it wishes, the Holy Spirit and faith are certainly not present. For St. John says, 1 John 3, 9: Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, ... and he cannot sin. And yet it is also the truth when the same St. John says, 1, 8: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us (Trig., p 490).

- 3. With reference to the spiritual state of the sinning person sin may be classified as venial sin or mortal sin.**
- a) Venial (forgiven or forgivable) sins are not forgivable by their nature. Every sin makes the sinner guilty before God. Venial sins are such because due to the presence of saving faith they have forgiveness inseparably connected with them.**

Exodus 32:33 The LORD replied to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book.”

Deuteronomy 27:26 “Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this

law by carrying them out.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”

Galatians 3:10 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.”

James 2:10 Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

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Psalms 19:12 Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

Psalms 32:5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD”—and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Isaiah 42:3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice.

Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory.

Romans 8:1,33,34 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.<sup>33</sup> Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.<sup>34</sup> Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

1 John 2:1 My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.

Hollaz: Venial sin is every involuntary sin in the regenerate which neither drives out the indwelling grace of the Holy Spirit nor extinguishes faith, but in the same moment in which it is committed has forgiveness inseparably connected with it.—The distinction of sin into mortal and venial is not derived from the merit of the sin: for every sin is of itself and by its nature damnable in a legal court with respect to merit, but 1) from the different condition of the subject or person who sins. For sin is venial in the regenerate, mortal in those who either never were regenerated or who, having been overcome by the power of the flesh, have fallen from the state of grace. 2) From God's evaluation according to the gospel: because God, a reconciled and gracious Father, does not impute to the regenerate sins of weakness and ignorance for guilt and punishment. 3) From the outcome: mortal sin hurls the sinner headlong into a state of wrath, death, and condemnation, so that, if he should die in that state and without repentance, he would be altogether condemned. Venial sin, however, because it has forgiveness as an inseparable companion (*quia veniam individuum comitem habet*), is able to coexist with the grace of God and saving faith.—The causes of remission or non-imputation are: the mercy of God, the satisfaction and intercession of Christ, the efficacious working of the Holy Spirit, the daily repentance of the regenerate (*Examen*, 547).

Note. Venial sins must not be confused with involuntary sins. Every venial sin is

involuntary, but not every involuntary sin is venial. Involuntary sin of unbelievers is mortal.

**b) Mortal sins are so called because due to the absence of saving faith spiritual death is inseparable from them.**

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders<sup>10</sup> nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>11</sup> And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Galatians 5:19-21 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;<sup>20</sup> idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions<sup>21</sup> and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

1 John 5:16-18 If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray about that.<sup>17</sup> All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.<sup>18</sup> We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him.

Augustine: I, however, say that this is sin unto death: to give up faith, which works through love, until death (*De spiritu et littera*, cap. 28).

**c) False teachers have wrongly taught that certain sins are *per se* either venial or mortal rather than seeing the spiritual state of the sinner as the determining factor.**

Bellarmino: [Catholics] teach by common consent that certain sins from their very nature, without respect to predestination or reprobation or the state of the regenerate or unregenerate, are mortal, certain ones are venial. The first make a person unworthy of God's friendship and subject to eternal death. By the latter a person is made subject only to temporal punishment and fatherly chastisement (*De amis. grat. et stat. pecc.*, tom. IV, lib. I, cap. III, p 35).

Note: They enumerate seven mortal sins, traditionally called the Seven Deadly Sins: *Superbia, avaritia, luxuria, ira, gula, invidia, acedia* (pride, greed, extravagance, anger, gluttony, envy, satiety or indifference).

Bellarmino: [Identifying sins that are venial for the Catholic Church] A.) Those that are venial because of the kind of sin. These are those which have something evil and inordinate as their object, but which are not opposed to the love of God or one's neighbor—an idle word, too much laughter. B.) Those that are venial because of the imperfection of the deed. Sins may indeed be mortal because of the kind of sin; but they are rendered venial because of the imperfection of the deed. a) Some of these sins are venial because they overtake a person suddenly.



They are not completely voluntary, e.g., a sudden feeling of lust, anger, envy. b) Others of these sins are venial because of the smallness of the matter, such as the theft of one penny would be, which neither harms one's neighbor appreciably nor is of such a kind that it can destroy friendship among equals. (Ibid., p 33)

Catechism of the Catholic Church: For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must together be met: Mortal sin is sin whose object is grave matter and which is also committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent. . . The gravity of sins is more or less great: murder is graver than theft. One must also take into account who is wronged: violence against parents is in itself graver than violence against a stranger. . . . One commits venial sin when, in a less serious matter, he does not observe the standard prescribed by the moral law, or when he disobeys the moral law in a grave matter, but without full knowledge or without complete consent (Paragraphs 1857, 1858, 1862).

Socinus: One act of sinning cannot have that power that of itself it brings death to the person (who commits it) and when one speaks about sin unto death, the discussion is not about one sin but about the habit of sinning. (From *Kommentar zum 1 Joh.*, cited in Quenstedt, *TDP*, II, II, sec II, qu. XIII, p 148).

The Arminian Confession (1622): Certain sins are such that they deserve to be called slight lapses rather than crimes, through which according to the gracious covenant of God and his fatherly kindness a person is not excluded from the hope of eternal life (Cap 7, p 6; cited by Quenstedt, *idem.*).

Note: Human reason is prone to disregard the fact that sin in itself is a violation of God's holiness.

**4. Another way of classifying sins is to distinguish between sins of commission and sins of omission. Sins of omission are real sins just as sins of commission are.**

Matthew 23:23 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

Luke 12:47 That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows.

James 4:17 Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

**V. Two actual sins deserve our special attention: The sin of hardness of heart (obduracy) and the sin against the Holy Spirit.**

- 1. The sin of hardness and the divine judgment of hardening consist of a hardening of the sinner's heart against the word and will of God.**
  - a) Scripture uses various metaphorical terms, which elsewhere often refer to physical processes.**

Note: In reading the lists, note the difference of four kinds of passages:  
1) prophecies of the hardening of the heart, 2) statements of the condition of hardness, 3) human action of hardening the heart, 4) divine action of hardening the heart.

- **קָטַף**: to fetter, brace up (LXX, σκληρύνω) in the qal of a condition, the hardness of the human heart; in the piel as a causative, of the divine action of hardening.

Exodus 4:21 The LORD said to Moses, “When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will *harden* his heart so that he will not let the people go.”

Exodus 7:13,22 Yet Pharaoh’s heart *became hard* and he would not listen to them, just as the LORD had said.<sup>22</sup> But the Egyptian magicians did the same things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh’s heart *became hard*; he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

Exodus 8:19 The magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh’s heart *was hard* and he would not listen, just as the LORD had said.

Exodus 9:12,35 But the LORD *hardened* Pharaoh’s heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said to Moses.<sup>35</sup> So Pharaoh’s heart *was hard* and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

Exodus 10:20,27 But the LORD *hardened* Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go.<sup>27</sup> But the LORD *hardened* Pharaoh’s heart, and he was not willing to let them go.

Exodus 11:10 Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the LORD *hardened* Pharaoh’s heart, and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country.

Exodus 14:4,8,17 “And I will *harden* Pharaoh’s heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD.” So the Israelites did this.<sup>8</sup> The LORD *hardened* the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly.<sup>17</sup> “I will *harden* the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen.”

Joshua 11:20 For it was the LORD himself who *hardened* their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Jeremiah 5:3 O LORD, do not your eyes look for truth? You struck them, but they felt no pain; you crushed them, but they refused correction. They *made* their faces *harder* than stone and refused to repent.

- **קָשָׂה** : to harden (LXX, σκληρύνω); the causative is hiphil.

Exodus 7:3-4 But I will *harden* Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt, <sup>4</sup> he will not listen to you.

Deuteronomy 2:30 But Sihon king of Heshbon refused to let us pass through. For the LORD your God had *made* his spirit *stubborn* and his heart obstinate in order to give him into your hands, as he has now done.

2 Kings 17:14 But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked (וַיִּקְשׁוּ אֶת־עַרְפֹּתָם) as their fathers, who did not trust in the LORD their God.

2 Chronicles 36:13 He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God's name. He *became stiff-necked* and hardened his heart and would not turn to the LORD, the God of Israel.

Nehemiah 9:16,17,29 They, our forefathers, *became* arrogant and *stiff-necked*, and did not obey your commands. <sup>17</sup> They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They *became stiff-necked* and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to their slavery. But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore you did not desert them. <sup>29</sup> You warned them to return to your law, but they became arrogant and disobeyed your commands. They sinned against your ordinances, by which a man will live if he obeys them. Stubbornly they turned their backs on you, *became stiff-necked* and refused to listen.

Job 9:4 His wisdom is profound, his power is vast. Who has resisted him (מִי־הִקְשָׂה אֵלָיו) and come out unscathed?

Psalms 95:8 Do not *harden* your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert.

Proverbs 28:14 Blessed is the man who always fears the LORD, but he who *hardens* his heart falls into trouble.

Proverbs 29:1 A man who remains *stiff-necked* after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.

Jeremiah 7:26 They did not listen to me or pay attention. They were *stiff-necked* and did more evil than their forefathers.

Jeremiah 19:15 This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Listen! I am going to bring on this city and the villages around it every disaster I pronounced against them, because they *were stiff-necked* and would not listen to my words."

- **קָשָׂה** : to harden (LXX, σκληρύνω); causative is hiphil.

Isaiah 63:17 Why, O LORD, do you make us wander from your ways and

*harden* our hearts so we do not revere you? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes that are your inheritance.

- **כָּבֵד**: to be heavy; insensitive (LXX, βαρύνω); causative is hiphil. Used also of physical things.

Exodus 7:14 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pharaoh’s heart is *unyielding*; he refuses to let the people go.”

Exodus 9:7,34 Pharaoh sent men to investigate and found that not even one of the animals of the Israelites had died. Yet his heart was *unyielding* and he would not let the people go.<sup>34</sup> When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials *hardened* their hearts.

Exodus 10:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, for I have *hardened* his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them.”

1 Samuel 6:6 Why do you *harden* your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When he treated them harshly, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way?

Genesis 48:10 Now Israel’s eyes *were failing* because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.

Isaiah 59:1 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too *dull* to hear.

- **יָמַס**: to stiffen; be stout (LXX, κατισχύω); causative is piel.

Deuteronomy 2:30 But Sihon king of Heshbon refused to let us pass through. For the LORD your God had made his spirit stubborn and his heart *obstinate* in order to give him into your hands, as he has now done.

2 Chronicles 36:13 He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God’s name. He became stiff-necked and *hardened* his heart and would not turn to the LORD, the God of Israel.

Deuteronomy 15:7 If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be *hard-hearted* or tightfisted toward your poor brother. [ἀποστρέφω, ed, Rahlfs: ἀποστ’ ρξεις]

- **יָמַן**: to be fat; unreceptive (LXX, παχύνω)

Isaiah 6:10 Make the heart of this people *calloused*; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.

- **παχύνω**: to thicken, fatten

Matthew 13:15 For this people's heart has become *calloused*; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.

Acts 28:27 For this people's heart has become *calloused*; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'

- **σκληρύνω**: to make firm, harden

Acts 19:9 But some of them *became obstinate*; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

Romans 9:18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he *hardens* whom he wants to harden.

Hebrews 3:8,13,15; 4:7 Do not *harden* your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert. <sup>13</sup> But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be *hardened* by sin's deceitfulness. <sup>15</sup> As has just been said: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not *harden* your hearts as you did in the rebellion."<sup>7</sup> Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not *harden* your hearts."

- **πωρόω**: to petrify; harden; make insensitive (vb., n.)

Mark 8:17 Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts *hardened*?" Also Mark 6:52

John 12:40 He has blinded their eyes and *deadened* their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.

Romans 11:7 What then? What Israel sought so earnestly it did not obtain, but the elect did. The others were *hardened*.

2 Corinthians 3:14 Their minds were *made dull*, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

Mark 3:5 He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their *stubborn* hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.

Romans 11:25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a *hardening* in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

Ephesians 4:18 They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the *hardening* of their hearts.

- b) **The sin of hardening the heart may be committed by heathen who are entirely under the law. A three-fold process appears to be characteristic: (1) Acts of resistance to the law and to conscience lead to (2) habit formation and weakened conscience and (3) result in a state of insensibility.**

Exodus 4-11: The sin of hardening of the heart of Pharaoh and the Egyptians. Notice the text contains four kinds of passages: 1) prophecies of the hardening of the heart, 2) statements of the condition of hardness, 3) human action of hardening the heart, 4) divine action of hardening the heart. Divine hardening does not begin until Exodus 9:12, the 6<sup>th</sup> plague.

Exodus 4:21 The LORD said to Moses, “When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But *I will harden his heart* so that he will not let the people go.”

Exodus 8:19 The magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But *Pharaoh’s heart was hard* and he would not listen, just as the LORD had said.

Exodus 8:15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, *he hardened* his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

Exodus 9:12,35 But *the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart* and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said to Moses.<sup>35</sup> So Pharaoh’s heart *was hard* and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

1 Samuel 6:6 Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When he treated them harshly, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way?

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Deuteronomy 2:30 But Sihon king of Heshbon refused to let us pass through. For the LORD your God had made his spirit stubborn and his heart obstinate in order to give him into your hands, as he has now done.

Joshua 11:20 For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses. [Read in the light of Genesis 15:16, In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure.]

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Romans 1:28,32 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.<sup>32</sup> Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

- c) **The sin of hardening may also be committed by people who are exposed to and in contact with the gospel. By repeated despising of the gospel faith may be lost and spiritual insensibility may result. This hardening against the gospel appears to be a step toward the sin against the Holy Spirit.**

Psalm 95:8 Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert.

Isaiah 5:1-7 I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. <sup>2</sup> He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit. <sup>3</sup> “Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. <sup>4</sup> What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad? <sup>5</sup> Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled. <sup>6</sup> I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.” <sup>7</sup> The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah are the garden of his delight. And he looked for justice, but saw bloodshed; for righteousness, but heard cries of distress.

Isaiah 6:9-11 He said, “Go and tell this people: “‘Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.’” <sup>10</sup> Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.” <sup>11</sup> Then I said, “For how long, O Lord?” And he answered: “Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged.” [Read in the light of Isaiah 1:3, The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.]

Matthew 13:14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

Mark 4:12 They may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!

Romans 11:8 As it is written: “God gave [Israel] a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear, to this very day.”

Note: When considering the apparent close connection between the sin of hardness and the sin against the Holy Spirit among those exposed to the gospel, the proximity of texts in Matthew 11-13 may be useful:

Matthew 11:16-19 To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: <sup>17</sup> “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.”

<sup>18</sup>For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon.”

<sup>19</sup>The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Here is a glutton and

a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and ‘sinners.’”

Matthew 12:31 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

Matthew 13:3,10-15 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed...”<sup>10</sup> The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”<sup>11</sup> He replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.<sup>12</sup> Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.<sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables: “Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.<sup>14</sup> In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.<sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’”

Quenstedt: The subject of hardening first of all are those to whom the will of God was revealed in the Word, whether they have fallen away having had the benefit of regeneration or were never affected by it, Jn 12:40; but secondly those to whom the will of God revealed in the Word was not made known, who commit hardening when they suffocate whatever natural light remains in them, Ro 1:20,24,28 (*TDP*, II, II, I, Thes. CXVI, p 89).

Quenstedt: The object or *materia circa quam* (the thing with which this sin is concerned) is the gospel, according to Jn 12:37–40, and the law; and the latter, the written moral law in the case of those who are in the church; but the law of nature in the case of unbelievers, Ro 2:12–17 (*TDP*, Thes. CXVII).

Quenstedt: The essence of this sin consists in incurable disobedience joined with violent resistance and opposition to God. (*TD.*, Thes. CXVIII).

Quenstedt: The effects of hardening are on the one hand various—and those (consisting in) the most terrible evil deeds—and on the other hand eternal damnation. (*ibid.*, Thes. CXIX).

- d) **Hardening is also a judgment of God inflicted on self-hardened sinners to prevent their salvation. This is more than God merely permitting the hardening but involves a judicial act that has the intended effect of hardening. In cutting off people’s time of grace God is not arbitrary. He hardens those who first harden themselves.**

Isaiah 6:10 Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed. [“*this* people” – the faithless vineyard of the Lord, Isaiah 5:1-7]

Matthew 13:11-15 He replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them.<sup>12</sup> Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has



will be taken from him. <sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables: “Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. <sup>14</sup> In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: ”“You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. <sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.”

John 12:39,40 For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: <sup>40</sup> “He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.”

Romans 9:18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

Psalms 81:11,12 But my people would not listen to me; Israel would not submit to me. <sup>12</sup> So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own devices.

Romans 1:24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie <sup>12</sup> and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Quenstedt: [God hardens] a man by leaving him to himself, by deserting him, by abstaining from illuminating him, by withdrawing whatever grace remains, by handing him over to the power of Satan. (*TDP*, II, II, I., Thes. CXIV, nota, p 88).

Calov: When therefore God is said to harden, this must by no means be understood actively or effectively, as if God sends the hardening or effectively cooperates in the hardening, but (it must be understood) I. permissively, because of his permission, as it is said in Is 63:17, “You have caused us to err,” i.e., you have permitted it, as it is explained in Ps 81:13. II. opportunely, because of the opportunity which the wicked seize from those things which God does. ... III. by way of abandonment, on account of desertion, because his grace deserts the wicked. ... IV. by way of deliverance, on account of his giving them over to a reprobate mind and into the further power of Satan (Ro 1:28) (*Bibl. Illustr., N.T.*, tom. I, p 162).

**e) God makes use of hardened sinners for his gracious purposes.**

Romans 9:17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”

Romans 11:9-11 And David says: “May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them. <sup>10</sup> May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see, and their backs be bent forever.” <sup>11</sup> Again I ask: Did they

stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.

Joshua 2:8-11: Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof<sup>9</sup> and said to them, “I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.<sup>10</sup> We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.<sup>11</sup> When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

1 Samuel 6:6 Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When he treated them harshly, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way?

**f) The sin and judgment of obduracy is revealed not that we strive to determine if or to assume that any person living is under this judgment. Rather we are to watch and pray.**

Matthew 26:41 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.

Romans 11:20 They were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but be afraid.

Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Luke 11:4 Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us. And lead us not into temptation.

Formula of Concord, T.D., XI, 57-59: Likewise, when we see that God gives His Word to one kingdom or realm, but not to another nation; removes it from one place and allows it to remain at another; also, that one is hardened, blinded, given over to a reprobate mind, while another, who is indeed in the same guilt, is converted again, etc.,—in these and similar questions Paul [Rom. 11, 22ff ] fixes a certain limit to us how far we should go, namely, that in the one part we should recognize God’s judgment for he commands us to consider in those who perish the just judgment of God and the penalties of sins. For they are well-deserved penalties of sins when God so punishes a land or nation for despising his Word that the punishment extends also to their posterity, as is to be seen in the Jews. And thereby by the punishments God in some lands and persons exhibits his severity to those that are his in order to indicate what we all would have well deserved, and would be worthy and worth, since we act wickedly in opposition to God’s Word and often grieve the Holy Spirit sorely, in order that we may live in the fear of God, and acknowledge and praise God’s goodness, to the exclusion of, and contrary to, our merit in and with us, to whom he gives his Word, and with whom he leaves it, and whom he does not harden and reject

(Trig., p 1081).

Formula of Concord, T.D., XI, , 84-86: Accordingly, even Pharaoh (of whom it is written, Ex. 9, 16; Rom. 9, 17: In very deed for this cause have I raised you up, to show in you my power, and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth) perished, not because God had begrudged him salvation, or because it had been his good pleasure that he should be damned and lost. For God is not willing that any should perish, 2 Pet. 3, 9; He also has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live, Ezek. 33, 11. But that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, namely, that Pharaoh always sinned again and again, and became the more obdurate, the more he was admonished, that was a punishment of his antecedent sin and horrible tyranny, which in many and manifold ways he practiced inhumanly and against the accusations of his heart towards the children of Israel. And since God caused his Word to be preached and his will to be proclaimed to him, and Pharaoh nevertheless willfully reared up straightway against all admonitions and warnings, God withdrew his hand from him, and thus his heart became hardened and obdurate, and God executed his judgment upon him; for he was guilty of nothing else than hell-fire. Accordingly, the holy apostle also introduces the example of Pharaoh for no other reason than to prove by it the justice of God which he exercises towards the impenitent and despisers of his Word; by no means, however, has he intended or understood it to mean that God begrudged salvation to him or any person, but had so ordained him to eternal damnation in His secret counsel that he should not be able, or that it should not be possible for him, to be saved (Trig., p 1091).

**2. The sin against the Holy Spirit may be defined as a willful, determined, or malicious rejection of the gospel. It is a final hardening against the gospel.**

**a) Scripture mentions this sin by name and also plainly refers to it.**

Matthew 12:31,32 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.<sup>32</sup> Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Mark 3:28-30 I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them.<sup>29</sup> But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.”<sup>30</sup> He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.”

Luke 12:10 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death (*ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον*). I am not saying that he should pray about that.

Hebrews 6:4-6 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who

have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit,<sup>5</sup> who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age,<sup>6</sup> if they fall away (*καὶ παραπεσόντας*), to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again (*ἀνασταυροῦντας*) and subjecting him to public disgrace.

Hebrews 10:26-31 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left,<sup>27</sup> but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.<sup>28</sup> Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.<sup>29</sup> How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?<sup>30</sup> For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.”<sup>31</sup> It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

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Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Isaiah 63:10 Yet they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. So he turned and became their enemy and he himself fought against them.

**b) In their contexts the Bible references to this sin indicate that the sinners had experienced the work of the Holy Spirit or had tasted the sweetness of the gospel. This blasphemy is not committed in ignorance.**

Matthew 12:24-29 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.”<sup>25</sup> Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand.<sup>26</sup> If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?<sup>27</sup> And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges.<sup>28</sup> But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.<sup>29</sup> Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house.”

Hebrews 5:11-12, 6:1-6 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn.<sup>12</sup> In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!<sup>1</sup> Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,<sup>2</sup> instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.<sup>3</sup> And God permitting, we will do so.<sup>4</sup> It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit,<sup>5</sup> who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age,<sup>6</sup> if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

Hebrews 10:22-27 Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. <sup>25</sup> Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. <sup>26</sup> If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, <sup>27</sup> but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

Gerhard: For it must be noted that this kind of sin is charged by Christ against the Pharisees who, although they were constrained by the force of the truth preached by him and convicted in their consciences by its illumination, nevertheless raged against him with such malicious impiety that they did not blush to ascribe his doctrine and miracles to Satan. The Epistle to the Hebrews describes those sinning against the Holy Spirit in such a way that those who were previously illuminated tasted also the heavenly gift and, having been made sharers of the Holy Spirit, also tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, nonetheless afterwards fall away and thus crucify for themselves again the Son of God and hold him in contempt; likewise that by voluntary apostasy they trample underfoot the Son of God and consider the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified an unholy thing and heap abuse on the Spirit of grace (*Loci*, V, 85).

**c) We conclude, therefore, that this sin is not a speaking against the person of the Holy Spirit but against his saving work through the gospel. This sin involves a willful or malicious rejection of the gospel.**

Quenstedt: The word “Spirit” is not taken here essentially, as it is a common term for all three persons of the Deity, but it is taken personally for the third person of the Deity. Nevertheless, reference is made not so much to the person itself of the Holy Spirit, as if this sin were committed directly against his person, as to his office and benefit, in so far, namely, as he strives to illuminate men through the doctrine of the Gospel.... Therefore here the Holy Spirit is understood as viewed in his office, and it is called a sin against the Holy Spirit in part by reason of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, in part by reason of his testimony (*TDP*, II, II, I, Thes. XCVII, qu XVII, p 161).

Note: This truth also clarifies the reason why speaking against the Son of Man is judged less severely. Also, the Son of Man in his state of exinanition might remain unrecognized.

Meisner: And these were those eight principal requirements of the sin against the Spirit. ... 1) it concerns doctrine, 2) and that doctrine is understood, 3) and it proceeds from a full knowledge of the mind [hence children are excluded], 4) from extreme malice of the will, 5) and it denies the truth which has been understood, 6) it blasphemes the truth which has been denied. 7) it opposes the truth which has been blasphemed, 8) together with the opposed truth it throws away and tramples under foot all the means of salvation. But from the collection of these requirements such a definition can be formed: The sin against

the Holy Spirit is a malicious and voluntary denial of the known truth, a blasphemous and opposition to and rejection of all the means of salvation (*Anthropologia sacra*, dec. I, disp. X, qu. II, art. 42, p 330).

Dannhauer: The sin against the Holy Spirit is a premeditated apostate, blasphemous rejection of the office of the Holy Spirit in a man who has been sufficiently illuminated, convinced, (and is) free (not under compulsion). As a final result it is unpardonable (and) continues to the end (*Hodospohia christ. seu theol. pos. ph. XI*, p 1418).

Quenstedt: Although according to the opinion of most of our theologians the sin against the Holy Spirit can be perpetrated also with respect to the doctrine of the divine law, nevertheless that (sin) strikes chiefly and most powerfully against the doctrine and truth of the gospel (*TDP*, II, II, I., thes. XCVIII, p 81).

**d) The sin against the Holy Spirit is therefore unforgivable not because Christ's atoning sacrifice is insufficient to cover it, nor because the gospel has lost its power to save.**

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

1 John 2:2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

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Isaiah 55:10,11 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,<sup>11</sup> so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

**e) The sin against the Holy Spirit is unforgivable because the sin by its very nature is malicious opposition to the gospel and a forfeiture of gospel blessings.**

Hebrews 6:7,8 Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God.<sup>8</sup> But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

**f) Scripture speaks of this sin to warn people who are in an immediate or more remote danger of committing it.**

1 Samuel 15:23 Rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king.

Nehemiah 9:26 But they were disobedient and rebelled against you; they put your law behind their backs. They killed your prophets, who had admonished them in order to turn them back to you; they committed awful blasphemies.

Acts 7:51 You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

- g) The Bible's strong words of warning expose the insidious nature of resisting the Holy Spirit in order to check the sin in its initial stages and to prevent the terrible sin lest God inflict the judgment of hardness (obduracy) and thereby preclude the possibility of repentance.**

Hebrews 6:9-12 Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case—things that accompany salvation.<sup>10</sup> God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.<sup>11</sup> We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.<sup>12</sup> We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Hebrews 10:35-39 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.<sup>36</sup> You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.<sup>37</sup> For in just a very little while, “He who is coming will come and will not delay.<sup>38</sup> But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.”<sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

Note: While we use this teaching for self-examination purposes and to warn others, we do well to hesitate in accusing people of having already committed it. Luther warned, “Do not rashly charge anyone with this sin. These are poor, burdened consciences which the devil is driving to despair by causing them to think they have committed the unpardonable sin” (Cited in F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, I, p 575, quoting St.L X:1209).

Note: A person who is in danger of committing the sin against the Spirit does not care about his condition. A man whose conscience is assailed by fear of having committed it certainly is not guilty of it. Proclaim to such a person the universal and all-powerful gospel of God's grace.

- f) Ministering to a world in which many are hardened against the gospel, the preacher must be “hard” enough to persist in preaching law and gospel without giving up.**

Ezekiel 3:7-11 But the house of Israel is not willing to listen to you because they are not willing to listen to me, for the whole house of Israel is hardened and obstinate.<sup>8</sup> But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are.<sup>9</sup> I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious house.<sup>10</sup> And he said to me, “Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you.

<sup>11</sup> Go now to your countrymen in exile and speak to them. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says,’ whether they listen or fail to listen.”

Isaiah 6:10-13 Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.” <sup>11</sup> Then I said, “For how long, O Lord?” And he answered: “Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, <sup>12</sup>until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken. <sup>13</sup>And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land.”

**VI. As a result of original sin mankind by nature has no free will or “free choice” (*liberum arbitrium*) in spiritual matters. By free will or free choice we mean the ability to choose without restraint between alternatives and the ability to act according to one’s choice.**

**1. It is important to define “free will” or “freedom of choice” in this matter. The following points are made to offer clarifications and minimize confusion.**

**a) God alone has absolute free will (*libertas ab obligatione*). Any creature can be only relatively free.**

Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Job 9:12 If he snatches away, who can stop him? Who can say to him, “What are you doing?”

Job 40:2 Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!

Job 41:1,10,11 Can you pull in the leviathan with a fishhook or tie down his tongue with a rope? <sup>10</sup> No one is fierce enough to rouse him. Who then is able to stand against me? <sup>11</sup> Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me.

Isaiah 45:9 Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, “What are you making?” Does your work say, “He has no hands?”

Romans 9:18,20,21 God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden. <sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, “Why did you make me like this?” <sup>21</sup> Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?

**b) The relative freedom that human beings have as creatures is variously called “freedom from coercion” (*libertas a coactione*) and “freedom from necessity” (*libertas a necessitate*). At the same time**



**humanity remains subject to certain necessities, e.g., of natural laws (*necessitas physica*), of the consequent (*necessitas consequentis*), and of consequences (*necessitas consequentiae*). (See page 97 on these terms.)**

Genesis 1:28,29 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”<sup>29</sup> Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.”

Genesis 9:2,3 The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands.<sup>3</sup> Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

Quenstedt: Freedom from coercion is common to man and the animals, but freedom from necessity man has in common only with God and the angels (since it presupposes personality). . . . An intelligent being has a free will, and indeed an infinite or divine being has it in a most excellent and perfect manner, a finite being, whether angelic or human, in a more imperfect manner (*TDP*, II, III, I, sec. I, thes. XXI, p 175).

- c) **Human beings may also have other kinds of relative freedom that are not part of our discussion here. Freedom from sin (*libertas a peccato*), freedom from pain or misery (*libertas a miseria*), or freedom from coercion in externals or adiaphora (*libertas a vi et coactione*) are freedoms that apply to believers or to their glorified state, but do not apply to natural man after the fall.**

Romans 6:18 You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Romans 8:2 Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

Revelation 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

1 Corinthians 7:37 But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing.

- d) **The freedom of choice under discussion here has been called the freedom from internal necessity. This involves a freedom of choice among various objects, modes of procedure, etc., and a freedom to will and do – or not to will and do.**

Chemnitz: There is a great diversity among ecclesiastical writers, some asserting, some denying free will. Indeed the same writer often in different

places seems to say contradictory things about free will, now affirming it, then denying it. This diversity cannot be more conveniently settled than by a grammatical explanation of the word. For if the term “free will” is taken in its most common sense, to say that man has a free will is nothing else than (to say): 1) that he is rational, or has a mind and a will; 2) that in addition to natural feelings and actions about which there is neither a deliberation of the mind nor a choice of the will man has voluntary feelings for the exercise of which the judgment of the mind and the desire of the will concur; 3) that in vices or virtues as actions are called either good or bad an intelligent mind is required and a will which either yields to or opposes this judgment (*Loci*, VI, III, ii., p 230).

Quenstedt: The essence of free will consists in the neutral state of the will, both that which has to do with specification (i.e., making a choice) as well as the other which has to do with the doing of the act. That is, it consists in such neutrality and freedom that the will is not necessarily determined toward one thing but in accordance with its liberty, when all the things necessary for acting are present, it is able to do this or that, to choose one thing and reject another (*libertas contrarietatis*) which is the freedom of specification (*libertas specificationis*); to do something or not do it, which is the freedom of acting (*libertas exercitii*) (*TDP*, II, III, II, qu I, p 183).

Quenstedt: Free will is therefore nothing else than the active ability of the will by which, when all the requirements for acting are present, it is in a neutral position both as far as a choice is concerned and as far as the doing of the act is concerned (*TDP*, II, III, I, thes. XXI, p 175).

## 2. Original or inherited sin has limited the activities of the natural human will to external matters and to sinful matters.

- a) **The fall into sin did not destroy the faculty of will itself. Humans are still rational beings with an essential freedom of will. Through the fall, however, mankind’s mental faculties are weakened along with his physical constitution.**

Quenstedt: The subject of free will in general is an intelligent being. In particular, as far as it pertains to man, the subject is either the entire subject (*subjectum quod*) or the subject in a certain respect (*subjectum quo*). The entire subject is a whole man; the subject in a certain respect is either indirect or direct. The indirect subject is the rational soul; the direct is essentially the will, antecedently and in a preparatory way the mind (*TDP*, II, III, I, thes. XIIX (sic), p 175).

Richard Muller: Lutherans and Reformed agree that the faculty of the will, the *voluntas*, is itself free and that the bondage into which humanity has fallen is not a bondage of the faculty of will as such. No human being is compelled to sin; the will is thus free from external restraint (*coactio*) and from an imposed necessity. The human predicament is therefore defined neither as the loss of the faculty of will nor of the inward freedom, or *libertas*, of the will. What has been lost is the freedom of choice, specifically, the ability freely to choose the good and freely to avoid that which is evil. . . . The fall, therefore, can be conceived as removing the basic indifference of the will toward sin, with the result that all choices of the will become sinful and the free choice of the good is no longer a

possibility (*Dictionary*, p 176-177).

- b) Fallen mankind has freedom of choice to a degree in external matters, e.g., in matters of self-preservation, sociology, government, science, and art. This limited freedom to make choices regarding civic righteousness is not to be confused with, nor is it preparatory to, but is actually opposed to the righteousness of God.**

Romans 1:19-21 What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. <sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Romans 2:14-15 When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, <sup>15</sup> since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

Romans 10:3 Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Isaiah 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Quenstedt: Experience testifies and Scripture grants that there is concerning such objects some freedom of the will in the unregenerate, but on account of various impediments it is very weak and feeble, Ro 1:19,20; 2:14,15; 10:3; Php 3:6 (*TDP*, II, III, I, thes. XXIX, p 177).

Chemnitz: For on that account this restriction is always added: (man) has some freedom in outward things; to some extent he is able to achieve outward discipline; some choice must be granted (*Loci, de libero arbitrio*, cap. III, p 173).

Chemnitz: Because therefore in spiritual matters there is no freedom of the will which has not been freed: so that freedom is not taken away entirely from the will even in external matters, this doctrine is handed down concerning freedom of the will in outward discipline. This discipline is, however; carefulness in governing the outward actions and coercing the outward members according to the precepts of the decalog: even if inner feelings either are not present or do not consent.... It is most manifest ... that there is left in men, even the unregenerate, some ability of the mind to perceive and judge those things which are subject to reason and the senses (*Loci, de libero arbitrio*, cap. II, p 171).

Heerbrand: There is left in the mind the ability to distinguish between honorable and shameful things in civil actions. And the will is able to some extent to control the power of movement and provide outward discipline. Likewise, an unregenerate man is able by the powers of his free will to hear and meditate on

the Word of God, but not to understand it properly (*Compendium, de libero arbitrio*, p 98).

Quenstedt: There are two hemispheres of objects with which the will of man in the state of corruption is occupied, the one lower, the other higher. The lower hemisphere embraces 1) sacred and divine things in so far as these are by nature to be known and done, likewise outward sacred things or pedagogical actions, which are natural; 2) natural things in the strict sense of the term; 3) civil (political) matters; 4) economic matters; 5) artistic and scientific matters. . . . In particular, the object of the mind are all things which can be known by nature, especially, that which is known about God (Ro 1:18ff; Ac 17:27). But the object of the will is a sense of shame concerning shameful deeds and a natural love of what is outwardly honorable and all things which can be performed and done by nature, and especially the things of the law, Ro 2:14,15, (which concern outward discipline or an outward desire for virtue). . . . Also a man who is not yet regenerated has to some extent within his power outward sacred actions, which outwardly contribute to spiritual actions and therefore are called pedagogical or leading to conversion but are neither a part of the conversion itself of the man nor a cause of it. Of that kind are going to church, hearing the Word of God, discussing it, and reading the books of Scripture (*TDP*, II, III, I, Thes XXVIII, Thes. V, Thes. VI).

Augsburg Confession XVIII, 1-2: Of free will they teach that man's will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness, and to work things subject to reason (*Trig.*, p50).

Formula of Concord, T.D., II, , 53: This Word man can externally hear and read, even though he is not yet converted to God and regenerate; for in these external things, as said above, man even since the Fall has to a certain extent a free will, so that he can go to church and hear or not hear the sermon (*Trig.*, p 900).

- c) **Fallen mankind has full or perfect freedom of choice in sinful matters. That is, he delights in sin and, subject only to creaturely limitations, may choose which sins he will commit. This "freedom" is identical with slavery to sin.**

John 8:34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."

Romans 1:32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 6:20 When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.

Chemnitz: He sins willingly and with pleasure, and he is not unwillingly such a person (i.e., a sinner) (*Loci, de libero arbitrio*, cap. II, p 173).

Heerbrand: The will is free only with respect to sin and evil (*Compendium, de libero arbitrio*, p 100).

Quenstedt: In the state of corruption there is in the will of man not only freedom of contradiction or exercise, but also freedom of contrariety or specification, not indeed that which is concerned with a choice between spiritual good and evil, for this was lost through the fall, but that which is concerned with a choice between this and that spiritual evil in particular (*TDP*, II, III, I, thes. XXVI, p 176).

Gerhard: Therefore freedom of the will exists in man together with slavery to sin, for he both sins and is unable not to sin, and nevertheless he sins freely and delights in sinning (*Loci*, tom V, cap II, art. XXIX, p 99).

**3. In inner spiritual matters, however, natural man after the fall has no free will whatsoever.**

**a) Original sin has given to the human will a definite direction opposed to God's will.**

Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Ezekiel 11:19 I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Romans 3:11 There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

Romans 8:7 The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

**b) Original sin has destroyed fallen mankind's ability to do good in God's eyes. Therefore human achievements always fall short of the mark because they lack both the proper motivation and the required quality.**

Romans 7:18,23 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>23</sup> but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Isaiah 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Matthew 7:18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear

good fruit.

Romans 3:10,12 As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one;  
<sup>12</sup>All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

Romans 10:3 Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness.

Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Gerhard: If the question is asked concerning the freedom to do what is right or concerning the ability to take an equal stand toward one or the other, namely, choosing or repudiating good or evil, we say that it has perished.... For after the fall the image of God was lost; at the same time also that ability to choose good was lost.... Therefore in place of that freedom has come that unbridled drive toward evil, in such a way that after the fall in corrupt and as yet unregenerated men ... there is only a free will toward evils because corrupt men and those who have not yet been regenerated can do nothing but sin (*Loci*, tom V, loc XII, cap I, art IV, p 87).

**c) In particular, natural human beings have no free will or free choice to seek or to cooperate with God’s grace in conversion.**

**1) This truth is clearly and repeatedly revealed in Scripture.**

Isaiah 65:1 I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, “Here am I, here am I.”

Luke 6:43,44 No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. <sup>44</sup> Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars.

John 3:6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Romans 3:11 There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

Romans 10:20 And Isaiah boldly says, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”

1 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 12:3 Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:1 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins.

Colossians 1:21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

Colossians 2:13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.

Chemnitz: In this place we understand “spiritual matters” to mean to begin, to achieve, to retain, and to preserve in the mind, the will, the heart, and the rest of our powers those things which the law and the gospel set before us (*Loci, de libero arbitrio*, cap. II, art. XXIX, p 99).

Quenstedt: In these purely spiritual actions just mentioned we assert that there are no powers either in the mind or in the will of unregenerate man. (*TDP*, II, III, I, loc IV, Thes. XXX, XXXI, p 255).

Chemnitz: The human will is not able without the Holy Spirit by its own powers either to begin inner and spiritual movements nor to produce and effect inner obedience of the heart, nor to persevere in, complete, or consummate a course that has been started (*Loci, de libero arbitrio*, cap. V, p 175).

## 2) **The entire work of conversion is ascribed to the Spirit.**

Jeremiah 32:39 I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them.

Ezekiel 36:26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Ephesians 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Ephesians 2:5 [God] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Calov: A man contributes nothing to his conversion, nor is he able to contribute anything ... but he is purely passive (*Apodixis art. fidei, de salut. consequendae modo*, art. V, p 259).

Luther: Free will after the fall into sin is a mere term and when it does what is in itself, it sins mortally (*De servo arbitrio*, B, XIX, p 105).

Meisner: Natural man does not wish nor is he able to wish to convert himself to God (*Anthropologia sacra*, dec. III, disp. XXII, thes. I, p 57).

Formula of Concord, T.D., II, 7,9: In spiritual and divine things the intellect, heart, and will of the unregenerate man are utterly unable, by their own natural powers, to understand, believe, accept, think, will, begin, effect, do, work, or concur in working anything, but they are entirely dead to what is good, and corrupt, so that in man's nature since the Fall, before regeneration, there is not the least spark of spiritual power remaining, nor present, by which, of himself, he can prepare himself for God's grace, or accept the offered grace, nor be capable of it for and of himself, or apply or accommodate himself thereto, or by his own powers be able of himself, as of himself, to aid, do, work, or concur in working anything towards his conversion, either wholly, or half, or in any, even the least or most inconsiderable part; but that he is the servant and slave of sin, John 8, 34, and a captive of the devil, by whom he is moved, Eph. 2, 2; 2 Tim. 2, 26. Hence the natural free will according to its perverted disposition and nature is strong and active only with respect to what is displeasing and contrary to God.<sup>91</sup> For, first, although man's reason or natural intellect indeed has still a dim spark of the knowledge that there is a God, as also of the doctrine of the Law, Rom. 1, 19ff, yet it is so ignorant, blind, and perverted that when even the most ingenious and learned men upon earth read or hear the Gospel of the Son of God and the promise of eternal salvation, they cannot from their own powers perceive, apprehend, understand, or believe and regard it as true, but the more diligence and earnestness they employ, wishing to comprehend these spiritual things with their reason, the less they understand or believe, and before they become enlightened and are taught by the Holy Spirit, they regard all this only as foolishness or fictions (Trig., p 882).

Formula of Concord, T.D., II, 24: But before man is enlightened, converted, regenerated, renewed, and drawn by the Holy Spirit, he can of himself and of his own natural powers begin, work, or concur in working in spiritual things and in his own conversion or regeneration just as little as a stone or a block or clay. For although he can control the outward members and hear the Gospel, and to a certain extent meditate upon it, also discourse concerning it, as is to be seen in the Pharisees and hypocrites, nevertheless he regards it as foolishness, and cannot believe it. And in this respect he acts even worse than a block, inasmuch as he is rebellious and hostile to God's will, unless the Holy Spirit is efficacious in him, and kindles and works in him faith and other virtues pleasing to God, and obedience (Trig., p 890).



3) **The total inability of natural man's free will in spiritual matters, conversion in particular, is denied by advocates of Pelagianism, Semipelagianism, and Synergism.**

Pelagius: We distinguish three things and arrange them in a certain order. We put in the first place “possibility,” in the second “willing,” in the third “being.” The possibility [of doing good] we assign to nature, the willing to our will, and the being to actual realization. The first of these, possibility, is properly assigned to God, who conferred it on his creatures. But the other two, willing and being, are to be referred to the human agent, since they have their source in the divine will. . . . When we say that it is possible for someone to be without sin, we are even then praising God by acknowledging the gift of the possibility which we have received (*Pro libero arbitrio*, quoted by Augustine, *De gratia Christi*, IV, 5.)

Augustine, summarizing the position of the Pelagians: The beginning of faith comes from us, the increase and completion of faith comes from God (*De praedest. sanct.*, cap. II, tom. VII, col 1233).

Durandus (Dominican, d. 1332): The corrupt nature does not lack healing grace, but only assisting grace (Cited in Hoenecke, II, p 478).

Council of Trent, Sess. VI, Can. 4,5: If anyone says that the free will of man, moved and aroused by God, does not cooperate by assenting to God who arouses and calls, by which man disposes and prepares himself for obtaining the grace of justification, and that it is not able to dissent if it wishes but like some inanimate thing does nothing at all and is purely passive, let him be damned. . . . If anyone says that the free will of man after the fall of Adam has been lost and extinguished, or that it is a thing that is a mere name, yes, a name without a thing, and finally a figment introduced into the church by Satan, let him be damned.

Chemnitz, summarizing the position of the Council of Trent: For they (i.e., the Catholics) think that in the mind and will of an unregenerate man from his first birth in this corruption there are naturally still some inborn powers or certain abilities for divine or spiritual actions: but the ability of these powers and the movement and use of these powers is suppressed and retarded in the unregenerate through sin. But the grace of God and the efficacy of the Spirit does not simply effect and work in those who are reborn some new power, force, ability or power to begin and achieve spiritual movements and actions which they did not have before conversion or renewal from their natural powers, but grace only breaks their chains and frees them from their bonds so that the natural ability which was bound, suppressed and hindered before is now able, having been aroused by grace, to exercise its powers in spiritual matters (*Examen, de lib. arb.*, cap. II, can. IV, V, p 113).

Note: Ambiguities in the above canons will be apparent. Many variations of thought and manner of expression concerning the question of free will and the extent of free will in fallen mankind have prevailed in church history.

Melanchthon's Variata to the AC XVIII, to the Apology II, and to his Loci: In the altered Augustana he says: We are *helped* by the Holy Spirit in achieving spiritual righteousness in ourselves; and the Holy Spirit *helps* our hearts in achieving inner movements.

In the altered Apology he says: We affirm, nevertheless, that free will and reason can do nothing *alone* in spiritual matters. Additions to #3\_: Spiritual righteousness is effected in us when we are *helped* by the Holy Spirit.

Additions to #9 . . . unless the Holy Spirit governs and *helps* our hearts. . .

In Examination of those to be Ordained he says: In conversion these causes concur: 1) the Word of God; 2) the Holy Spirit, whom the Father and the Son send that he may kindle our hearts; 3) and *our will* assenting and not resisting the Word of God.

In The Loci: Free will is the *ability to apply oneself to grace (facultas applicandi se ad gratiam)*, that is, it hears the promise and tries to assent. Since the promise is universal and there are no contradictory wills in God, it is necessary that there be in us some reason for the difference, why Saul is rejected and David is accepted, i.e., it is necessary that there be some dissimilar action in these two.

Iowa Synod theologians: But such preceding feelings and movements in the life of the soul are to a large extent hidden from us human beings, while they are well known to the omniscient God (See Pieper I, p 74).

Richard Lenski: A purpose of grace is thus combined with one of judgment. Which is to prevail in the end is decided by the heart of those upon whom the truth is thus brought to act with its power (*Commentary on John*, p 714).

Formula of Concord, T.D., II, 75-78: [We expose, censure, and reject] secondly, the error of the gross Pelagians, that the free will, from its own natural powers, without the Holy Spirit, can turn to God, believe the Gospel; and be obedient to God's Law from the heart, and by this its voluntary obedience can merit the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. 3. Thirdly, the error of the Papists and scholastics, who have proceeded in a somewhat more subtle manner, and have taught that man from his own natural powers can make a beginning of doing good and of his own conversion, and that then the Holy Spirit, because man is too weak to bring it to completion, comes to the aid of the good begun from a person's own natural powers. 4. Fourthly, the doctrine of the Synergists, who pretend that man is not absolutely dead to good in spiritual things, but is badly wounded and half dead. Therefore, although the free will is too weak to make a beginning, and to convert itself to God by its own powers, and to be obedient to God's Law from the heart, nevertheless, when the Holy Spirit makes a beginning, and calls us through the Gospel, and offers His grace, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal salvation, that then the free will, from its own natural powers, can meet God, and to a certain extent, although feebly, do something towards it, help and cooperate thereto, can qualify itself for, and apply itself to, grace, and apprehend accept it, and believe the Gospel, and can also cooperate, by its own powers, with the Holy Spirit, in the continuation and maintenance of this work. 78] Over against this, however, it has been shown at length above that such power, namely, *facultas applicandi se ad gratiam*, that is, to qualify one's self by

nature for grace, does not proceed from our own natural powers, but alone from the operation of the Holy Spirit (Trig., p 908).

**VII. Punishment is described in Scripture as compensation for sin and guilt, that is, as suffering imposed on the guilty as an equivalent penalty for sin.**

**1. Scripture describes punishment as an alternative for the repayment of a debt incurred.**

**a) In general terms the Bible refers to punishment as a penalty or payment imposed to bring about restoration and redemption if the payment is a full equivalent of the debt.**

Exodus 21:23-25 You are to take life for life, <sup>24</sup> eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, <sup>25</sup> burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

Matthew 5:26 I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Matthew 18:25,30,34 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. ...<sup>30</sup> But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. <sup>34</sup> In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

Jeremiah 2:19 “Your wickedness will punish you; your backsliding will rebuke you. Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me,” declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

Quenstedt: For the law forces us either toward obedience or punishment (*TDP*, II, II, I, thes. XI, nota, p 51).

**b) Specifically, the Bible speaks of Christ’s atoning work as a bearing of our deserved punishment that results in redemption, justification, and peace. Punishment satisfies God’s uncompromising justice and confirms his majesty.**

Deuteronomy 27:26 Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out.

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

Romans 3:23 All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Isaiah 53:4-6,10-12 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he

was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. <sup>10</sup> Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup> After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup> Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Romans 5:18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Romans 3:25-26 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—<sup>26</sup> he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Baier: Punishment properly so called is the suffering of a loss or of an evil, which is contrary to the inclination of the subject, contracted because of guilt and to be undergone for the sake of vindicating guilt and compensating for the injury done to another (and in this case indeed to God) (*Compendium*, pars II, cap I, art 15, d., p 294).

Hollaz: Divine punishment is a disagreeable evil by which God, the offended judge, takes vengeance for preceding and not yet remitted guilt, a) in order to demonstrate his righteousness, b) and to assert his majesty and the authority of the law and preserve it from contempt (*Examen*, pars II, cap. II, qu 19, p 546).

## **2. Scripture does not present punishment as a remedial or corrective action designed to better the guilty.**

- a) **The view that punishment is to serve the restoration or improvement of the punished has been advocated by philosophers and theologians. When linked to the punishment of hell, this view inevitably leads to a universal restoration theory (ἀποκατάστασις).**

Aristotle: But there is a difference between revenge and punishment; the latter is inflicted in the interest of the sufferer, the former in the interest of him who inflicts it, that he may obtain satisfaction (*Rhetoric*, 1369b, 13).

F. V.Reinhard: All of God's punishments, i.e., all evils which in this life follow upon vice, are according to the teaching of Scripture entirely of a beneficial nature and have the purpose of improving the sinner. It is undeniable that the

chief purpose of punishment must be the improvement of the one punished (*Dogmatik*, p 130, 3).

William Barclay (d. 1978): I am a convinced universalist. I believe that in the end all men will be gathered into the love of God. In the early days Origen was the great name connected with universalism. I would believe with Origen that universalism is no easy thing. Origen believed that after death there were many who would need prolonged instruction, the sternest discipline, even the severest punishment before they were fit for the presence of God. Origen did not eliminate hell; he believed that some people would have to go to heaven via hell. He believed that even at the end of the day there would be some on whom the scars remained. He did not believe in eternal punishment, but he did see the possibility of eternal penalty. And so the choice is whether we accept God's offer and invitation willingly, or take the long and terrible way round through ages of purification (*A Spiritual Autobiography*, p 65-66).

**b) The Bible, however, consistently emphasizes that real improvement of the sinner through conversion and sanctification is produced by the gospel, not by the law (punishment).**

John 15:5 I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Galatians 5:22,23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control.

Titus 2:11,12 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. <sup>12</sup> It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.

Titus 3:8 This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

Galatians 3:21 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.

**c) Disciplinary benefits, moreover, come from divine, fatherly chastisement administered to believers, not punishment inflicted on the impenitent wicked.**

1 Corinthians 11:32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

Hebrews 12:5,6,10,11 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, <sup>6</sup> because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." <sup>10</sup> Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. <sup>11</sup> No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness

and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Formula of Concord, T.D., VI, 24: For the old Adam, as an intractable, refractory ass, is still a part of them, which must be coerced to the obedience of Christ, not only by the teaching, admonition, force and threatening of the Law, but also oftentimes by the club of punishments and troubles, until the body of sin is entirely put off, and man is perfectly renewed in the resurrection, when he will need neither the preaching of the law nor its threatenings and punishments, as also the gospel any longer; these belong to this mortal and imperfect life (Trig., p 968).

Note: Scripture does not sharply distinguish the terms for punishment and chastisement, and the difference between punishment and chastisement, though real, is not always easy to distinguish as God works in our lives. The believer is both old Adam and new man. To the old Adam God's activity is punishment and to the new man it is chastisement.

**3. Scripture acknowledges that punishment may serve as a deterrent to sinners and a warning against further sinning. But this is not the primary purpose of punishment.**

**a) Scripture clearly affirms that punishment may serve as a deterrent.**

Deuteronomy 8:11, 19-20 Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. <sup>19</sup> If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. <sup>20</sup> Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 13:10-11 Stone him to death, because he tried to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>11</sup> Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.

Ecclesiastes 8:11: When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.

Jeremiah 7:12-14 “Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel. <sup>13</sup> While you were doing all these things,” declares the LORD, “I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer. <sup>14</sup> Therefore, what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears my Name, the temple you trust in, the place I gave to you and your fathers.”

Romans 13:3-5 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. <sup>4</sup> For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. <sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

1 Corinthians 10:6-10 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. <sup>7</sup> Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.” <sup>8</sup> We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. <sup>9</sup> We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. <sup>10</sup> And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

**b) Yet the primary emphasis on punishment is to satisfy justice, to be a compensation for sin and guilt.**

Exodus 21:23-25 You are to take life for life, <sup>24</sup> eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, <sup>25</sup> burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

Matthew 5:26 I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Matthew 25:41,46 Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” <sup>46</sup> Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Note: To make deterrence the chief purpose and justification of punishment would often change justice into cruelty, as the punished become mere examples for others. Also, how could hell, for example, serve as a deterrent?

**4. Punishments may be classified according to certain categories.**

**a) Punishments may be classified according to the way they are carried out, that is, they may be the natural result of the sin or God may more directly intervene.**

Romans 1:24, 26-27 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. <sup>26</sup> Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. <sup>27</sup> In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

Galatians 6:7,8 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. <sup>8</sup> The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Acts 5:1-11 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. <sup>2</sup> With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet. <sup>3</sup> Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? <sup>4</sup> Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it

was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God." <sup>5</sup> When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. <sup>6</sup> Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. <sup>7</sup> About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. <sup>8</sup> Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." <sup>9</sup> Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." <sup>10</sup> At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. <sup>11</sup> Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

Acts 12:21-23 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. <sup>22</sup> They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." <sup>23</sup> Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

- b) **Punishments may be classified according to their duration, that is, whether they are temporal (in health, wealth, honor, peace, family, etc.) or eternal.**
- c) **A distinction may also be made between punishments of loss or forfeiture (*poena damni aut mali*) and punishments of feeling (*poena sensus*, e.g., torment, shame). These aspects of punishment, however, must not be separated.**
  - 1) **The Roman Catholic teachings of the *limbus infantum* or *limbus infantorum* and the *limbus patrum* assume a punishment of loss of the beatific vision but not of punishment of feeling the torment of hell.**
  - 2) **Rationalists have also assumed a *poena sensus* but not *damni* in eternity, saying that sinners, although bettered by hell punishment, will yet continue to feel a setback on account of their belated repentance. Such ideas really advocate an eternal punishment which is not punishment and eternal salvation which is not salvation.**

Ezekiel 18:22 None of the offenses he has committed will be remembered against him. Because of the righteous things he has done, he will live.

Ezekiel 33:16 None of the sins he has committed will be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he will surely live.

Isaiah 43:25 I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.

Jeremiah 31:34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from



the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”

## **VIII. The human conscience is a consciousness of a person’s relation to God.**

**Through the conscience a sinner realizes his guilt and feels his punishment as fully merited.**

### **1. Conscience is more than the intellectual faculty of judging the correctness or ethical value of an act or condition. It is essentially a religious ability that evaluates acts or conditions in their relation to God.**

Romans 2:14-15 When Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law,<sup>15</sup> since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

Job 27:6 I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live.

Romans 13:5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

1 Peter 2:19 It is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God (*διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ*).

1 John 3:21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God.

### **2. The conscience not only evaluates acts or conditions in their relation to God but also testifies to a person regarding his relation to God.**

#### **a) An evil or guilty conscience testifies to a sinner of his guilt and his inability to make atonement.**

Psalms 32:3-4 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.<sup>4</sup> For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

Isaiah 57:20-21 But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud.<sup>21</sup> “There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”

Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience (*ἀπὸ συνειδήσεως πονηρᾶς*) and having our bodies washed with pure water.

Acts 24:16 I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man. (*ἀσκάῳ ἀπρόσκοπον συνείδησιν ἔχειν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοὺς ἀνθρώπους.*)

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1 Timothy 4:2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose

consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

**b) A good or clean conscience comes through faith in Christ Jesus and testifies that the sinner has been given peace with God.**

1 Timothy 1:19 [You may fight the good fight] holding on to faith and a good conscience (ἔχων πίστιν καὶ ἀγαθὴν συνείδησιν). Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.

1 Timothy 3:9 They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience (ἐν καθαρᾷ συνειδήσει).

Hebrews 9:14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences (καθαριεῖ τὴν συνείδησιν ἡμῶν) from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

2 Corinthians 1:12 Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace.

Hebrews 10:2 If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins (ἔχειν ἔτι συνείδησιν ἁμαρτιῶν).

Hebrews 13:18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience (ὅτι καλὴν συνείδησιν ἔχομεν) and desire to live honorably in every way.

1 Peter 3:21 This water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God (συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν). It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**3. Aside from good/clean and evil/guilty consciences, other classifications of conscience may be used.**

**a) With reference to single acts, we may speak of an antecedent or a consequent conscience. The former reflects knowledge or feeling prior to an act and the latter evaluates past activity.**

Matthew 14:9 The king was distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he ordered that her request be granted

Romans 13:5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

Acts 23:1 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day."

Romans 2:15 They show that the requirements of the law are written on their

hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

Romans 9:1 I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 3:16 Do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

**b) With reference to conformity to God's standard, we may speak of four different kinds of consciences.**

**1) There is a correct, accurate conscience.**

Romans 1:21,25 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. <sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Romans 2:18,21 If you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law . . . <sup>21</sup> you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?

**2) There is an erring, inaccurate conscience that errs due to ignorance or weakness.**

Acts 3:17 Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.

1 Corinthians 8:7 But not everyone knows this. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.

1 Timothy 1:13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief.

Titus 1:15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted (*καὶ ὁ νοῦς καὶ ἡ συνείδησις μεμίανται*).

**3) There is a probable conscience that considers one thing as more advisable than another for conscience's sake. It would be sin to neglect the preferred path or to treat options lightly. Prayerful study is the proper conduct.**

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

**4) There is a doubting, uncertain conscience that wavers in the lack of sureness of how to proceed.**

Romans 14:23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith [πίστις, assurance, conviction] is sin.

1 Corinthians 8:12 When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

Apology, XII (V), 89: Consciences, however, do nothing from faith when they perpetually doubt whether they have remission. [For it is not possible that there should be rest, or a quiet and peaceful conscience, if they doubt whether God be gracious. For if they doubt whether they have a gracious God, whether they are doing right, whether they have forgiveness of sins, etc.] How can they in this doubt call upon God, how can they be confident that they are heard? Thus the entire life is without God and faith and without the true worship of God. This is what Paul says, Rom. 14, 23: Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. And because they are constantly occupied with this doubt, they never experience what faith is. Thus it comes to pass that they rush at last into despair, die in doubt, without God, without all knowledge of God. Such is the doctrine of the adversaries, the doctrine of the Law, the annulling of the Gospel, the doctrine of despair (Trig., p 277-278).

Quenstedt: Sin against conscience is fourfold. 1) For it is committed either against a correct conscience, when a man in what he does or fails to do does not follow but despises the dictate of conscience, even though he agrees with the divine law. 2) Or it is committed against an erring conscience when a man in what he does or fails to do turns aside from the dictate of his conscience imbued with error. 3) Or it is committed against a probable conscience when some one offends against the dictate of the mind which urges that for probable causes something should be done or not done here and now. 4) Or it is committed against a doubtful conscience when some one does or fails to do that about which he is in doubt whether it should be done or not done (*TDP*, II, subject in H. II, 431).

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Luther: There is nothing more tender in heaven or on earth and nothing that can less easily suffer abuse than conscience. It is said that an eye is very delicate; but conscience is much more tender and sensitive. For that reason we see again and again how the apostles dealt very carefully with consciences (*St. L.*, XI, 1677).