



REVIEW ARTICLE

A SYSTEMATIC STUDY ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF SIN

*Abraham, T.

Student, I M.A. English, Institute of Distance Education, University of Madras, Chennai, India

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 10th July, 2025

Received in revised form

05th August, 2025

Accepted 26th September, 2025

Published online 29th October, 2025

ABSTRACT

Sin is any deviation from God's perfect will and character. Sin is opposite of God. We define in relation to God because he is the perfect source of goodness, love and truth. Here, we are going to focus upon the doctrine of sin and to be more specific about 'Origin of Sin' in a systematic and organized way. The study has been made through the books written about the doctrine of sin and this is purely a textual analysis.

Keywords:

Sin, Theology, Church, Scripture, God.

*Corresponding author: T. Abraham

Copyright©2025, T. Abraham. 2025. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: T. Abraham. 2025. "A Systematic Study About the Origin of Sin". *International Journal of Current Research*, 17, (10), 34974-34976.

INTRODUCTION

The earliest Church Fathers do not speak very definitely about the origin of sin, though there was an idea stating that it originated in the voluntary transgression and fall of Adam in Paradise in the writings of Irenaeus. The Greek Church Fathers of the third and fourth centuries showed an inclination to discount the connection between the sin of Adam and those of his descendants, while the Latin Church Fathers taught with ever-increasing clearness that the present sinful condition of man finds its explanation in the first transgression of Adam in paradise. The teachings of the Eastern Church finally culminated in Pelagianism, which denied that there was any vital connection between the two, while those of the Western Church reached their culmination in Augustinianism which stressed the fact that we are both guilty and polluted in Adam. Semi-Pelagianism admitted the Adamic connection but it only accounted for the pollution of sin. It was during the Middle Ages the connection was recognized and it was sometimes interpreted in an Augustinian, but more often in a Semi-Pelagian manner. Sin originated in the fall, but the fall was not a historical event rather it belongs to superhistory (Urgeschichte). Adam was indeed the first sinner, but his disobedience cannot be regarded as the cause of the sin of the world. The sin of man is in some manner bound up with his creatureliness. The story of paradise simply conveys to man the cheering information that he need not necessarily be a sinner.

Scriptural Data: In Scripture the moral evil that is in the world stands out clearly as sin, that is, as transgression of the law of God.

God's eternal decree certainly rendered the entrance of sin into the world certain, but this may not be interpreted so as to make God the cause of sin in the sense of being its responsible author. This idea is clearly excluded by scripture. "Far be it from God, that He should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that He should commit iniquity," Job 34:10. He is the holy God, Isa. 6:3, and there is absolutely no unrighteousness in Him, Deut. 32:4; Ps. 92:16. He cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man, Jas. 1:13. When He created man, He created Him good and in His image. He positively hates sin, Deut. 25:16; Ps. 5:4; 11:5; Zech. 8:17; Luke 16:15, and made provision in Christ for man's deliverance from sin. In light of all these it is evident that God cannot be regarded as the author of sin. The Bible teaches us that in the attempt to trace the origin of sin, we must even go back of the fall of man as described in Gen. 3, and fix the attention on something that happened in the angelic world. God created a host of angels, and they were all good as they came forth from the hand of their Maker, Gen. 1:31. But a fall occurred in the angelic world, in which legions of angels fell away from God. The primary cause for this is their temptation to be like God and this explains why they tempted man on that particular point as well.

When we look into the origin of sin in the history of mankind, the Bible teaches us that it began with the transgression of Adam in paradise, and therefore with a perfectly voluntary act on the part of man. The tempter came from the spirit world with the suggestion that man, by placing himself in opposition to God, might become like God. Adam yielded to the temptation and committed the first sin by eating of the

forbidden fruit. It is clear that because of this first sin committed by Adam he became the bond-servant of sin. Sin is considered to have carried the quality of permanent pollution with it, and a pollution which, because of solidarity of the human race, would affect not only Adam but all his descendants as well. Adam sinned not only as the father of human race, but also as the representative head of all his descendants; and therefore, the guilt of sin was placed to their account, so that they all become liable to the punishment of death as it is clearly mentioned as in *Rom. 5:12*: “*Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.*”

The Nature of the First Sin: From a purely formal point of view, man's first sin consisted in his eating of the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. The tree may have been a date or a fig tree, or any other kind of fruit tree. There was nothing injurious about the fruit of the tree as such. It would not have been sinful, if had not said, “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat.” The tree was called so because eating it would impart a practical knowledge of good and evil; but this is hardly in keeping with the Scriptural representation that man by eating it would become like God in knowing good and evil, for God does not commit evil so he does not have a practical knowledge of it. The tree was so called because it was destined to reveal whether man's future state would be good or evil; and to know whether man would allow God to determine for him what was good and evil, or would undertake it for himself. The main purpose of this command given by God to man was just a for the purpose of testing the obedience of man. It was a test of pure obedience, since God did not in any way seek to justify or to explain the prohibition. Adam had to show his willingness to submit his will to the will of his God with implicit obedience.

The first sin of man was a typical sin, that is, a sin in which the real essence of sin clearly reveals itself. The essence of that sin lay in the fact that Adam placed himself in opposition to God, that he refused to subject his will to the will of God, to have God determine the course of his life; and that he actively attempted to take the matter out of God's hand, and to determine the future for himself. Man, who had absolutely no claim on God, and who could only establish a claim by meeting the condition of the covenant of works, cut loose from God and acted as if he possessed certain rights as over against God. Naturally different elements can be distinguished in his first sin. In the intellect it revealed itself as unbelief and pride, in the will, as the desire to be like God, and in the affections, as an unholy satisfaction in eating of the forbidden fruit.

The First Sin Occasioned by Temptation: The fall of man was occasioned by the temptation of the serpent, who sowed in man's mind the seeds of distrust and unbelief. Though it was undoubtedly the intention of the tempter to cause Adam, the head of the covenant, to fall, yet he addressed himself to Eve, probably because she was not the head of the covenant and therefore would not have the same sense of responsibility, she had not received the command of God directly but only indirectly, and would consequently be more susceptible to argumentation and doubt and finally, she would undoubtedly prove to be the most effective agent in reaching the heart of Adam. The high expectations thus engendered induced Eve to look intently at the tree, and the longer she looked, the better the fruit seemed to her. Finally, desire got the upper hand, and she ate and also gave unto her husband, and he ate.

Frequent attempts have been made and are still being made to explain away the historical character of the fall. Some regard the whole narrative in Gen. 3 as an allegory, representing man's self-depravation and gradual change in a figurative way. Barth and Brunner regard the narrative of man's original state and of the fall as a myth. Creation and the fall both belong, not to history, but to super-history (*Urgeschichte*), and therefore both are equally incomprehensible. The story in Genesis merely teaches us that, though man is now unable to do any good and is subject to the law of death, this is not necessarily so. It is possible for a man to be free from sin and death by a life in communion with God. Such is the life portrayed for us in the story of paradise, and it prefigures the life that will be granted to us in Him of whom Adam was but a type, namely, Christ. But it is not the kind of life that man now lives or ever has lived from the beginning of history. Paradise is not a certain locality to which we can point, but is there where God is Lord, and man and all other creatures are His willing subjects. The paradise of the past lies beyond the pale of human history. Others who do not deny the historical character of the narrative in Genesis, maintain that the serpent at least should not be regarded as a literal animal, but merely as a name or a symbol for covetousness, for sexual desire, for erring reason, or for Satan. Still others assert that, to say the least, the speaking of the serpent should be understood figuratively. But all these and similar interpretations are untenable in the light of Scripture. The serpent was a fit instrument for Satan, for he is the personification of sin, and the serpent symbolizes sin in its cunning and deceptive nature, and in its poisonous sting by which it kills man.

It has been suggested that the fact that man's fall was occasioned by temptation from without, may be one of the reasons why man is salvable, in distinction from the fallen angels, who were not subject to external temptation, but fell by the promptings of their own inner nature. Nothing certain can be said on this point, however. But whatever the significance of the temptation in that respect may be, it certainly does not suffice to explain how a holy being like Adam could fall in sin. It is impossible for us to say how temptation could find a point of contact in a holy person. And it is still more difficult to explain the origin of sin in the angelic world.

The Evolutionary Explanation: Naturally, a consistent theory of evolution cannot admit the doctrine of the fall, and a number of liberal theologians have rejected it as incompatible with the theory of evolution. It is significant that many conservative theologians conceive of the story of the fall as a mythical or allegorical representation of an ethical experience or of some actual moral catastrophe at the beginning of history which resulted in suffering and death. This means that they do not accept the narrative of the fall as a real historical account of what occurred in the garden of Eden. As the human race develops, the ethical standards become more exacting and the heinousness of sin increases. A sinful environment adds to the difficulty of refraining from sin.

The Results of the First Sin: The first transgression of man firstly had the immediate concomitant of the first sin, and therefore hardly a result of it in the strict sense of the word, was the total depravity of human nature. The contagion of his sin at once spread through the entire man, leaving no part of his nature untouched, but vitiating every power and faculty of body and soul. This utter corruption of man is clearly taught in Scripture, *Gen. 6:5*; *Ps. 14:3*; *Rom. 7:18*. Total depravity here

does not mean that human nature was at once as' thoroughly depraved as it could possibly become. In the will this depravity manifested itself as spiritual inability. Immediately connected with the preceding was the loss of communion with God through the Holy Spirit. This is but the reverse side of the utter corruption mentioned in the preceding paragraph. The two can be combined in the single statement that man lost the image of God in the sense of original righteousness. He broke away from the real source of life and blessedness, and the result was a condition of spiritual death, Eph. 2:1,5,12; 4:18. The change in the actual condition of man also reflected itself in his consciousness. There was, first of all, a consciousness of pollution, revealing itself in the sense of shame, and in the effort of our first parents to cover their nakedness". And in the second place there was a consciousness of guilt, which found expression in an accusing conscience and in the fear of God which it inspired. Not only spiritual death, but physical death as well resulted from the first sin of man. Having sinned, he was doomed to return to the dust from which he was taken, Gen. 3:19. Paul tells us that by one man death entered the world and passed on to all men, Rom. 5:12, and that the wages of sin is death, Rom. 6:23. The change also resulted in a necessary change of residence. Man was driven from paradise, because it represented the place of communion with God, and was a symbol of the fuller life and greater blessedness in store for man, if he continued steadfast. He was barred from the tree of life, because it was the symbol of the life promised in the covenant of works.

CONCLUSION

Thus, we saw that how sin was viewed from a historical perspective and from the scripture point of view. We analyzed the nature of sin and came to know that sin was first brought into the human race by temptation. Then, we moved on to view the evolution of sin and finally we drew certain observations and inferences about the first sin.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my mother, relatives and friends who has been a constant support throughout the years gone and the years to come. I would like to thank Dr. S. Samuel Rufus sir for encouraging me in utilising my faculty of writing which has remained dormant inside me and also for being a constant support for all my writings published so far and for encouraging me to publish my writings back in the year 2023 while I was pursuing my second year in B.A. English Language and Literature (Aided) from the Department of English (Aided), Madras Christian College (Autonomous), Chennai. I would also like to thank the Department of English, Institute of Distance Education, University of Madras, Chennai which has helped me structure my thoughts and express them in a systematic manner.

REFERENCES

- Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. 1st Edition, GLH Publishing, 2022, pp. 181-188.
C. Ryrie, Charles. *Basic Theology*. 5th Edition, Good Shepherd Books, 2023, pp. 237-269.
Nielson, Jon. *Knowing God's Truth*. 1st Edition, Crossway, 2023, pp. 95-118.