



THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

5.1-5.3

5.1 *The Origin of Man*

The word **anthropology** is derived from two Greek words: *anthropos*, meaning “man,” and *logos*, meaning “word” or “doctrine.” Hence, anthropology is the doctrine of man. The study of anthropology covers the subjects of the origin of man, his fall, and the results of his fall.

The Bible doctrine of anthropology is the study of man from a Scriptural perspective. True anthropology must begin and end with the Word of God. Biblical anthropology teaches two main facts: (1) Man was created by God in His image, and (2) man is a sinner by nature. These two facts are in direct opposition to the teachings of modern, non-Christian anthropologists. They usually base their studies of man and his culture on two un-Scriptural premises: (1) Man evolved from the animals, and (2) man is basically good.

Because of his false premises, the non-Christian anthropologist will discourage all attempted changes in a people's culture. By contrast, the missionary (one of the best true anthropologists) will discourage a particular custom that is condemned in God's Word. The anthropologist can never understand man until he first understands God and His revelation of true anthropology.

5.1

The creation of man

“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.” Gen. 2:7

1. God created man.

Although Adam and Eve were the last of God's creation, in order of importance they were first. **Adam** (meaning “man”) and **Eve** (meaning “mother of all”) were the crowning glory of God's creation.

The creation of man from the dust of the ground was a masterwork that only the omnipotent God could accomplish. No wonder the psalmist David could exclaim:

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.” Psa. 139:14

Nothing can compare to the wonder of the human body that God created. Nothing that man has ever made can compare to the glory of God's masterpiece. No computer can compare to the human brain, no camera to the human eye. When man builds an artificial heart, he can do no better than use the human heart as his pattern.

2. God created man in His own image.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Gen. 1:26-27

It is clear that this passage does not mean that man has a physical resemblance to God, for "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). It has to do with man's moral nature. Man is a "shadowed image" of his Maker. Like God, man has intellect, emotion, and will. Man can think, use language, determine his direction, and make choices.

God views man's likeness to Him very seriously. He bases the institution of capital punishment upon that fact.

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Gen. 9:6

God has a high regard for the sanctity of human life. God does not look with favor upon those who insist upon their right to take the life of another human being. How ironic that the same people who legislate for a woman's right to kill her unborn child will also picket outside a prison on the night of an execution with placards reading, "Thou shalt not kill."

3. God created man with a God-consciousness.

The Scripture reveals that the man God created was a three-part being: **body**, **soul**, and **spirit**.

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23

Man is both a *material being* (body) and an *immaterial being* (soul and spirit). Only man has a spirit. It is that part of his being that differentiates him from all other living things. His spirit was made for fellowship with God. Only man has within himself a consciousness of God.

Body = Unconscious existence (A tree is alive but unconscious.)

Soul = Conscious existence (An animal, as well as man, is alive and conscious of the physical world.)

Spirit = God-conscious existence (Only man is conscious of the eternal or the spirit world.)

As a three-part being (body, soul, and spirit), man is indeed made “in the image of God.”

Man was made for fellowship with his Creator. There is a vacuum in the human life that can be filled only by God. Man has always tried to fill that vacuum with the pleasures and things of this world, but they cannot satisfy. A person can find peace and happiness only when that void is filled with the presence of the One Who made him in **His** image.



Man was created in the image of God.

4. God gave man much responsibility.

“And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.” Gen. 2:8

In the perfect environment of the Garden of Eden, Adam had much responsibility. He was to have a close working relationship with other living things. Man was to “have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth” (Gen. 1:26). God had commanded him to “subdue” the earth (Gen. 1:28).

He was to take care of the garden as well as name the animals.

“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.” Gen. 2:15

“And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them.” Gen. 2:19

5. God created man with a free will.

“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Gen. 2:16-17

Because God had given to man so many blessings, man was accountable to God for his actions. It is a principle of God’s Word that with opportunity comes responsibility (Luke 12:47-48). Because of the special

relationship God had with man, He expected more from man than from the animals.

But why did God put a forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden? Was He “tempting” man to sin? We know that God does not tempt anyone (James 1:13). God placed one tree in the Garden to allow Adam and Eve the freedom of choice. God does not want to force His will upon anyone. God desires man to love Him by choice, not by force.

There were many trees from which Adam and Eve were allowed to eat. We often concentrate on the “negatives” (the things we cannot do in life), when we ought to thank God for *all* of His wonderful blessings (positive things) that come to us daily.

6. God created man with intelligence.

It has been suggested that Adam was the most intelligent man who ever lived. Sin had not yet taken its toll on the intelligence of Adam. He had a fully developed God-created language with which to name all the animals God brought to him (Gen. 2:19–20). Adam’s longevity (930 years—Gen. 5:5) would allow him to increase in knowledge to a superior level. His leisure time would allow him to make great mental advances. The universal language of his time would allow him and his descendants to learn from each other more easily than in our multilingual society. (From the genealogical records of Genesis 5, we learn that Adam and Methuselah were contemporaries. They could have shared with each other the knowledge gleaned over hundreds of years.)

7. God created man with a helpmeet.

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Gen. 2:18

The word “meet” means “fit.” God gave Adam a helper “fit” for him, or suitable for him. Today we often speak of a wife as her husband’s “helpmeet.”

“Observe . . . that Adam was first formed, then Eve (1 Tim. 2:13). . . .

If man is the head, she is the crown; a crown to her husband, the crown of visible creation. The man was dust refined, but the woman was dust double-refined, one removed further from the earth. . . . [Observe] that the woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam, not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected and near his heart to be beloved.”

—Matthew Henry

8. God created man an immortal being.

Man was created to live forever. Every man has within him a never-dying soul that will spend an eternity somewhere. God's primary purpose in the creating of man was His own personal joy. God's desire is for this creation to exist forever.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Rev. 4:11

God created man's spirit so that it will never cease to exist. The Scripture is full of references concerning the immortal, "eternal" nature of our immaterial being.

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Eccles. 12:7

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. 25:46

"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." Rom. 2:7

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." 1 Cor. 15:53-54

5.2

5.2 The Origin of Sin on Earth

Most cultures have an account of the origin of sin. If the Bible had not given God's account of the fall of man, the whole idea would have been left to conjecture.

It is in God's Word that we learn of sin's reality as well as find the only accurate account of exactly how sin entered the human race.

A. The events preceding the fall of man

1. God's command is given.

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Gen. 2:16-17

God reminded Adam of all the blessings he enjoyed as His creation. He then commanded him to accept one limitation to his freedom. The command should have been an easy one to obey in view of Adam's sinless condition and the bountiful blessings of God all around. He easily could have obeyed, but he did not.

2. God's goodness is questioned.

"And the serpent said . . . For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Gen. 3:4-5

Nothing much has changed over the centuries, for mankind still believes that God institutes laws to make people miserable. However, God's restrictions have always been designed for our welfare.

"And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day." Deut. 6:24

"After God had so bountifully offered proof of His goodness, our first parents behaved as though the Devil intended only good and God intended only ill." —Franz Delitzsch

3. God's Word is questioned.

"And he [the serpent] said . . . Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Gen. 3:1

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die." Gen. 3:4

It is not until we read Revelation 20:2 that God reveals what we have suspected already:

"That old serpent . . . is the Devil, and Satan." Rev. 20:2

The Devil has not changed his method of attack since the Garden of Eden. He tempts man to disobedience by getting him to question God's Word. The skeptic of today echoes Satan's mocking question, "Hath God said?"

It is possible that Eve also added to the Word of God ("neither shall ye touch it"—Gen. 2:17; 3:3). However, the Bible rarely gives us every detail of the conversations between man and God. God probably said much more to both Adam and Eve than is recorded in Genesis 2-3.

B. The events describing the fall

1. God's will is rejected.

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat." Gen. 3:6

Eve gave in to the three sources of temptation described in 1 John 2:16:

Eve's Temptation

1 John 2:16	Gen. 3:6
Lust of the flesh	"good for food"
Lust of the eyes	"pleasant to the eyes"
Pride of life	"to be desired to make one wise"

2. God's warning is fulfilled.

a. God's warning was fulfilled in Adam and Eve.

As Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, they immediately died spiritually (they were separated from God). Their soul did not die, nor did their body die. Only their spirit died. They hid themselves from the presence of God (Gen. 3:8) as God came to the Garden in the cool of the day.

"And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" Gen. 3:9

"Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" Gen. 3:11

God in His omniscience did not need to ask either question. His questions were designed to bring Adam and Eve to face their sinful conditions. Their response is typical of mankind. Each in turn blames someone else for his sin (Gen. 3:12–13).

"The woman" (Adam blames Eve.)

"The serpent" (Eve blames the serpent.)

"The woman . . . thou gavest" (Adam blames God.)

A person will never be saved nor will a Christian really mature spiritually until he quits blaming God for his problems and begins accepting the responsibility for his own actions.

b. God's warning is fulfilled in all mankind by three types of death.

It is in the context of the Fall of man that we first learn about one of the great tragedies of life, and that is death. As a result of his sin, Adam's body began to die physically. His nerve cells began to wear out and die, never to be replaced. His once perfect body became the subject of disease and decay. His blood vessels eventually narrowed, diminishing the crucial flow of blood to all parts of his body. Before his fall he would have lived forever. But now he was a dying man.

But the Bible also teaches us in this context and others that there are three types of death. The word *death* simply means "separation"; therefore, each of the three types of death is marked by the separation of one entity from another.

(1) Physical death

Physical death is the separation of man's material being (his body) from his immaterial being (his soul and spirit). It is the most commonly used form of the word "death" in Scripture. The **resurrection** of Jesus Christ brought the victory over the physical death.

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man [Adam] came death, by man [Christ] came also the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. 15:20–21

All men will die physically. But, you say, what of Elijah, Enoch, and all those living at the time of the rapture? Since death means "separation" from the sinful body, then in a sense Enoch and Elijah did die and the raptured saints will "die."

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9:27

This verse, however, should not be pushed to the limit of requiring a physical death for everyone. This Scripture is a general statement of truth.

(2) Spiritual death

Spiritual death is the separation of the individual from God because of man's sin. Spiritual death entered the world when

Adam sinned, and Adam began to die physically, but he immediately died spiritually. His sin separated him from God.

"And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God." Gen. 3:8

"Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." Gen. 3:23

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God." Isa. 59:2

The **regeneration** (salvation) of an individual marks the end of his spiritual death (separation from God).

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25

(3) **Eternal** (second) **death**

Eternal death is a **second** stage of spiritual death. If an individual refuses to accept God's offer of salvation, he will die eternally; that is, he will be separated from God **forever**.

"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die [eternally] in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die [eternally] in your sins." John 8:24

"And death [the body] and hell [the soul and spirit] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Rev. 20:14–15

Adam brought death to the human race. But the Second Adam, Jesus Christ, brought life (1 Cor. 15:45–47).

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

1 Cor. 15:22

Both the saved and the lost will experience a resurrection (rejoining of his body with his soul and spirit), but the quality of that resurrection will be eternally diverse.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28–29

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

Rev. 20:6

C. The events following the fall

1. God's curses are instituted.

The Biblical use of the word *curse* implies God's withholding of His blessings. Individual and national blessings come to those who obey the Lord, and blessings are removed from those who disobey the Lord (Deut. 28). This removal of God's blessings is referred to as a curse in the Bible.

a. The serpent's curse

Before God's curse was placed upon the serpent he was a very beautiful creature. The Hebrew word for serpent means "a shining one." Since Satan is referred to as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14) he probably appeared as a shining one, a creature superior to Eve. But as the vehicle of the Tempter, the serpent was cursed by God and became a writhing reptile. Part of the curse upon him (eating dust) will not be lifted even during the Millennium, when all other creatures will enjoy an environment comparable to the Garden of Eden.

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and the dust shall be the serpent's meat."
Isa. 65:25

But the curse went beyond the physical change in the serpent. The battle of the ages between God and Satan entered into the human realm.

"And I [God] will put enmity between thee [Satan] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. 3:15

It is clear that it was God who determined to put enmity (a division) between Satan, Eve, and their respective "seed." The seed of the serpent is Satan. The "seed of the woman" is Jesus Christ, the virgin-born Savior whose heel was bruised at Calvary.

The battle lines of the ages have been drawn, Satan and his host on one side and Christ and His host on the other side. The Devil is a defeated foe. The initial battle was won at Calvary, and the final act will be completed when Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire forever and ever.

b. The woman's curse

The curse upon the woman involved increased pain in childbirth and submission to her husband (Gen. 3:16).

c. The man's curse

Although the woman was deceived, the man was not (1 Tim. 2:13–14). Because he “hearkened unto the voice of [his] wife” (Gen. 3:17), he would bear the brunt of the curse for all mankind.

“And unto Adam he [God] said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

Gen. 3:17–19

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

Rom. 5:12

Work was not a part of the curse. The ground was cursed to bring forth weeds and thistles, which meant that man would have to work by the sweat of his brow to get food from the ground. The curse included pain and sweat in that work, but work itself is not a curse. The good sense of accomplishment that accompanies a job well done is rewarding to man.

5.2

d. The ground's curse

Adam's sin affected the ground as well (Gen. 3:17–19). The entire universe was adversely affected by the sin of one man. Only through Christ's death could the world someday be purged of all traces of sin. Christ's death on the cross involved taking each part of the curse upon Himself.

Curse of Sin	Christ Taking That Curse
Ground Cursed	Gal. 3:13
Sorrow	Isa. 53:3
Thorns	Matt. 27:29
Sweat	Luke 22:44
Death	John 15:13; 19:30

2. God's plan of salvation is introduced.

But in the midst of all this tragedy there is a subtle reference to triumph. The first mention of God's wonderful plan of salvation is

found in Genesis 3:15. Even before God places His curses upon mankind, He promises that a Savior will come into this world to redeem us from the curse of the fall.

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen. 3:15

"The Bible is not a history of the world or even of man, but a history of the redemption of man from the sin into which he fell in the garden of Eden. This explains why the whole story of creation is summed up in one chapter of the Bible, and why so little is said about the history of the nations of the earth except Israel."

—James M. Gray

D. The Scriptural significance of the fall

1. Original sin: definitions

- a. Original sin is the first human sin.
- b. It is the sin of the human race.
- c. It is the sin in which each man and woman is conceived. (Ps. 51:5)
- d. It is the sin nature of man.

Man sins because he is a sinner by nature; and because of his nature, he will continue to sin throughout his life.

2. Original sin: explanations

- a. Man actually did sin in Adam.

"Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Rom. 5:12

- b. Each of us would have done exactly as Adam did.

God placed Adam in a perfect environment and gave him every opportunity to succeed against temptation. But one of the lessons of the first three chapters of Genesis is that the environment does not change the man. Adam sinned in spite of his environment. Judas sinned although he walked for three years with the Son of God. During the Millennium (an environment of peace) people will still rebel. Given the same set of circumstances, each of us would have rebelled against God. The environment does not change the man.

- c. Adam was chosen by God to give mankind the best opportunity possible to overcome temptation.

Adam was our best chance to reject sin. Given the opportunity we would have sinned much earlier than Adam did.

- d. Since in Adam we are all represented, so likewise all men can be represented by the second Adam, the Son of man.

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. 5:19

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
1 Cor. 15:22

5.3 The Seriousness of Sin

We live in a day in which man minimizes the seriousness of sin. Man calls it "error"; God calls it sin. Man calls it "sickness"; God calls it sin. We need to learn to see sin from God's perspective. If our sin was serious enough to require the death of Christ on the cross, we as Christians should never treat sin lightly.

"But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." Rom. 7:13

5.3

A. Sin is serious in God's sight.

1. Sin is a transgression of the law.

To transgress means to go beyond, to overstep the boundaries, or to exceed the limits imposed upon us by God. We must always remember that God's laws are given to us for our own good. Surely the One who made us knows what will bring us consistent joy and happiness.

"And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day." Deut. 6:24

But in spite of this truth, man often determines that God's way is not best. Man has determined to transgress (violate) God's moral law.

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4

God also reveals in His Word that, by means of one sin, man is guilty of transgressing the entire law of God.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." James 2:10–11

If a person breaks one of God's laws, he is guilty of breaking the entire law of God. To illustrate this truth: A boy with a pellet gun takes his new "toy" and accidentally shoots a hole through his neighbor's picture window. The safety glass does not permit the complete destruction of the window, but there is obviously a hole in this large piece of glass. The boy feels he needs to make restitution. As he views the window with his neighbor standing by, he concludes that a new piece of glass the size of the pellet hole could not be worth more than a few dollars. He offers that amount to his neighbor to cover the expense of his error, but the whole glass must be replaced, not just the pellet hole. Thus this young man is "guilty of all" of the window although he has offended in only one point (pellet). Likewise, our sin has also made **us** responsible for the whole law.

"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." James 2:10

2. Sin is coming short of God's standard.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23

A group of men need to cross a great gulf that is 30 feet across and more than 500 feet deep. The only way they will be able to cross the chasm is by jumping from one side to the other. Some of these men are able to jump as far as 15 feet, but they come short and fall to their deaths. Others can jump as far as 20 feet, but they also fall short of the standard necessary for life. Suppose one man jumped 28 feet. Even this jump would be insufficient for him to bridge the chasm. All would fall short. The man who jumped 28 feet would have no reason to brag to the men who jumped only 15 feet. Their destiny was the same.

God's standard is perfection. It does not matter if a person claims to be "better" than another person. All of us have missed God's standard. The only way we can keep from falling short is to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for our eternal destiny.

3. All sin is wicked in God's sight.

It is the tendency of human nature to "categorize" sin. Surely lying is not as wicked as murder, we think. But from God's perspec-

tive **all** sin is bad. Even the “smallest” of sins will keep a person from heaven. And even the “smallest” of sins had to be placed upon Jesus Christ at Calvary. We need to get God’s perspective of sin and eliminate man’s perspective. God treats all sin very seriously.

- a. God killed Ananias and Sapphira for lying. (Acts 5:1–10)
- b. God killed Uzzah for disobedience to His law concerning the touching of the Ark of the Covenant. (2 Sam. 6:1–11, cf. Num. 4:15)
- c. God killed 70,000 men because of David’s sin in numbering the people. (1 Chron. 21:1–14)
- d. God removed Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden because of their sin of eating the forbidden fruit. (Gen. 3:23–24)

4. All sin has a terrible price.

“For the wages of sin is death.” Rom. 6:23

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Rev. 20:14–15

Sin has resulted in each individual’s being separated from God. The end result of sin is separation from God eternally. That is called the **second death**. The only way to avoid the second death is by experiencing a **second birth**.

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

John 3:3

B. The Christian’s sin is serious in God’s sight.

1. The Christian does sin.

Although salvation is wonderful, it does not exclude the Christian from the presence of sin in his life. At Calvary Jesus Christ saved us from the **penalty** of sin.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” Rom. 8:1

But we will not be free from the presence of sin until we get to heaven.

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

1 John 1:8–10

Can the Christian Attain Sinless Perfection?

On the surface, 1 John 5:18 might seem to teach that the Christian will not sin:

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not."

1 John 5:18

When a person is saved, he receives a new, divine nature; he is partaker of the divine nature that

cannot sin (2 Pet. 1:4). The part of us that is the new nature which we receive at the new birth cannot sin because it is from God. However, his old sinful nature remains with him until he dies, and he is very much prone to sin. So there will be no sinless perfection until we get to heaven.

2. The Christian's sin is forgiven.

How can the sins we have not yet committed be already forgiven? The answer to that question is in the form of another question: How many of your sins were in the future when Christ died on the cross? All of our sins were placed upon Christ at Calvary—past, present, and future sins.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Pet. 2:24

"And he [Jesus Christ] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2

Then why should the Christian confess his sin, if it is already forgiven?

The worst part of our sin is the broken fellowship with God which we experience.

"If we say that we have fellowship with him [God], and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." 1 John 1:6

Confession of our sin to God is really agreeing with God about our sin; it is acknowledging our sin to God. The Christian must confess his sin in order to renew his broken fellowship with God.

The Bible is full of beautiful passages that vividly describe what happens when sin is confessed.

"He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

Psa. 103:10–12

"For thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." Isa. 38:17

"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isa. 43:25

Note: What a blessing to know that God forgives me for His own benefit as well as for mine!

"Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Mic. 7:19

"Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Heb. 8:12

3. The Christian's sin has serious effects.

a. It results in **loss of fellowship** with God.

"If we say that we have fellowship with him [God], and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." 1 John 1:6

b. It results in the **loss of joy**.

David's sin resulted in a terrible loss of the joy which normally accompanies salvation. In David's great confession in Psalm 51, he cries out for the lost joy.

"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit." Psa. 51:12

c. It results in the **loss of full appreciation of God's love**.

"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." 1 John 2:5

d. It results in the **loss of peace and happiness**.

"Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." Rom. 4:6–7

e. It results in **loss of power in prayer**.

"that your prayers be not hindered" 1 Pet. 3:7

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
1 John 3:22

f. It results in **frustration**.

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7:18–24

g. It results in **God's chastisement**.

As Christians, we will never be **punished** in Hell for our sin, for all the punishment of our sin was placed upon Jesus at Calvary. If we have accepted His payment for our sins, we will never have to pay for it ourselves. God will not punish two individuals for the same sin. However, the Christian can be **chastised** for his sin. (Read Heb. 12:5–11.)

5.1

1. What word means "the doctrine of man"?
anthropology
2. True/False—Man physically resembles God.
false
3. Which part of a man's being is his God-consciousness?
spirit
4. What does the word *meet* mean in reference to Eve as Adam's *help-meet*?
fit

5.2

1. What type of death did Adam and Eve die after they ate of the forbidden fruit?
spiritual death
2. What brings victory over physical death?
the Resurrection
3. What brings victory over spiritual death?
regeneration
4. What death is permanent, that is, it can never be eliminated?
eternal (second) death
5. Is the "second resurrection" for the saved or the unsaved?
the unsaved

6. What word is used for God's removal of His blessings from an individual or nation?

curse

7. True/False—Work was a part of the curse upon man.

false

8. True/False—Original sin was the sin of Satan in rebelling against God.

false

5.3

1. Sin is a ____?____ of the law.

transgression

2. True/False—Today the Christian is being saved from the presence of sin.

false

3. Explain the difference between punishment and chastisement.

See Section 5.3, pp. 173–174.

6.1