

Original Sin?

Sunday, May 5, 2019

I AM NOT UTTERING A FINAL PRONOUNCEMENT NOR EXPRESSING AN ESTABLISHED DOCTRINE, BUT I AM RESEARCHING TO THE LIMIT OF MY ABILITY, I AM DISCUSSING THE MEANING OF THE SCRIPTURES AND I DO NOT CLAIM TO HAVE UNDERSTOOD THAT MEANING WHOLLY OR PERFECTLY, ON MANY POINTS I HAVE A PRELIMINARY IDEA



FROM THE WORKSHOP OF "FAITH FOR THE HOPEFUL"
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Introduction

Most of you reading this have a particular impression of Original Sin from church Dogma fed to you by your Sunday School teacher when you were very young. You were told Eve ate an apple from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and thereby she disobeyed God. And that Adam also ate from the tree and disobeyed God. And because of this they were punished by God and put out of the Garden of Eden into the world where they had to work the land and make babies. What

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they had done introduced evil into the World, Reformers say.

This introduction of evil was what Augustine called ‘Original Sin.’

The Protestant reformers such as Luther and Melanchthon latched onto this idea of Augustine, and claimed that all people born in this world suffered as a result of what Adan and Eve did. All people were ‘born in sin.’ Jesus came along and died on the cross to pay for this sin, and any person who accepts that this is what happened, is forgiven the original sin, and can go on to salvation.

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The reformers said that this ‘fall’ is why people are so evil. They are born that way. Until they are saved through baptism by water and by accepting Jesus as their personal savior, they will remain evil people. The result is that all evil people i.e. those who are not ‘saved’ will go into eternal damnation or hell. Only the ‘born again’ Christian will be able to enter heaven, they say.

It’s a fairy story

This story is myth. It was taken from a story written by a man called Ezra in about 440 BCE. He wrote the Garden of Eden story for the Israelites so they

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could understand where they came from, and why they had been mistreated by the Gentiles all these years. Adam, he said was the first Jew created by Hashem (יהוה in their Bible.) And, he said, all true Jews can trace their ancestry back to Adam. Ezra had said nothing about Adam committing any sin in Eden. Whatever he had done was part of Hashem's plan for the Jews. Hashem put them out of the Garden into the World. This marks year one on the Hebrew calendar. Adam and Eve were supposed raise a Nation that would spread the knowledge of the Tree of Good and Evil throughout the world. There was

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no Original Sin and no need for any savior to redeem them.

Augustine and the Church took the story and recast it. Hashem became ‘The Lord God,’ who was the Father of Jesus. The Lord God was appalled at what Adam had done in disobeying Him, and in his wrath the Lord God banished Adam and Eve for their sins. This caused sin to enter the World, and all people from that day on were stained with Original Sin, and could not re-enter Paradise when they died.

Then 3700 years later the Lord God sent His Son to Earth to redeem the people. Jesus sacrificed himself on the

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cross to pay for the sins of the whole world. This made it possible for certain chosen people to enter Paradise when they died. Do you accept this rewrite of the Hebrew scripture? There was no sin as far as Hebrews are concerned.

But see how far this story has progressed in the minds of the Reformers.

Calvin

The reformer Jean Gauvin (Calvin) actually taught that the decision about who will be saved was God's alone, and there was nothing a man could do to change that decision. Man was pre-

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destined to either go to heaven or hell. The pity was that no-one knew whether they had been chosen or not. Here is what he said:

Compare the following from that miserable sod John Calvin:

"What can we expect in the face of God, we miserable ones who are oppressed by such a great load of sins and soiled by an infinite filth, except a very certain confusion such as his indignation brings? Though it fills man with terror and crushes him with despair, yet this thought is necessary for us in order that, being divested of our own righteousness, having given up faith in our own power, being rejected from all expectation of life, we may learn from the understanding of our poverty, misery, and

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infamy, to prostrate ourselves before the Lord and, by the acknowledgment of our iniquity, powerlessness, and utter ruin, give him all glory of holiness, might, and deliverance.”

And

“Man's spirit is so alienated from the justice of God that man conceives, covets, and undertakes nothing that is not evil, perverse, iniquitous, and soiled. Because the heart, totally imbued with the poison of sin, can emit nothing but the fruits of sin. Yet one must not infer therefrom that man sins as constrained by violent necessity. For, man sins with the consent of a very prompt and inclined will. But because man, by the corruption of his affections, very strongly keeps hating the whole righteousness of God and, on the other hand, is

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fervent in all kinds of evil. it is said that he has not the free power of choosing between and evil—which is called free will.”

And this is the man who is the most influential teacher of Presbyterianism and Anglicanism. He doesn't sound like a Holy Man to me. Why would anyone listen to him rather than to Jesus?

Roman Catholics

The Roman Catholics had a different understanding. For them the Original Sin was that the children of Adam were born missing two virtues, and so all their descendants were also missing two virtues which prevented

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them from being good enough to enter the Kingdom of God. The crucifixion of Jesus allowed a Christianity to regain these virtues and so enter the Kingdom of God.

You are probably familiar with one or other of these ideas. And you believe that only by being baptized in water as an adult, confessing your sinfulness, and asking Jesus to forgive your sins, will you be able to enter Heaven.

Other Religions disagree

You might be surprised to learn that the Jews don't believe in Original Sin. Neither do the Mormons, nor the

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Muslims, nor many Protestant sects in America.

I am sure that some of you don't understand this Original Sin business and think that Jesus was sacrificed to pay for **your** sins (and the sins of the whole world.)

Babies and sin

There are Religions that teach that babies are born sin-free, and that man is naturally good, and does bad things because he makes bad choices. Most Eastern Religions teach this, as do Jews and Mormons.

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What is the truth? Are babies essentially evil at birth or are they good?

The Roman Catholics say that babies are not evil but are missing two essential virtues of holiness and justice which they need in order to be saved to Heaven. As soon as a person is baptized into the Church he will have access to these two virtues, and so he can go on to salvation and Heaven. Roman Catholics baptize the babies on the eighth day to make sure that these two virtues are available to them as soon as possible.

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Protestants have a different understanding. It is that the stain of this Original Sin can only be removed by Jesus after a person confesses his/her sins as an adult, and he/she accepts Jesus as a personal savior. This usually takes place at age 12 or 13.

In all Religions which teach Original sin, it was the fault of Adam's fall, and all men must suffer from his action.

The Garden in perspective

Let's step back and put the story of the Garden of Eden into perspective.

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According to Jewish scripture although the Elohim (multiple gods) made the world and the first inhabitants, the Garden of Eden and the two trees were made by a god called Hashem which in Jewish books is written יהוה. Hashem also made Adam from the dirt beyond the Garden, and brought him into the Garden where Hashem made Eve from Adam's rib.

Adam Jews and Arabs

Adam was the progenitor of all semitic peoples, i.e Jews and Arabs today, according to rabbis. The Tree of

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Life in the Garden contains the laws of Hashem called Torah by Jews. This Torah was withheld from Adam and only given to his descendants via Moses at Mount Sinai.

For the Jews, the expulsion of Adam and Eve into the world was a blessing for mankind, not a punishment for sin. Mormons agree with this. In Mormonism the God who made Adam was Jesus, who is the God of this World only. Jesus had planned to move Adam to the World from the Garden in order to populate the world and to provide food via agriculture means rather than

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picking berries from trees, which is about all they could do in Eden.

The incident with the serpent and the tree of knowledge was in order for man to learn that he was in charge of his destiny and had free will to obey Jesus or not. Until he was presented with the temptation of the fruit on the tree, he had no understanding of choice. All Adam had been doing was what Jesus told him to do, in fact Adam thought he was a god himself. Jesus wanted Adam to come to understand he was separate from god, and could make his own decisions. He had free-

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will or as the Mormons say, ‘free agency.’

God Jesus created the serpent and told him how to beguile Eve into eating the fruit, and then presenting Adam with a choice of whether to eat and become wise, or refuse and obey Hashem’s command to him. Thanks to God Jesus, Adam made the right choice. If Adam had not eaten the fruit, from the tree of knowledge and instead ate from the tree of Life, he would have become immortal, and he would have remained in Paradise for eternity.

But though the Religions agree that Adam did eat from the tree against the

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command of Go., Jews, Mormons and many Christian Fathers did not accept the Original Sin theory of Augustine (5th century.)

No-one before the 4th century had any idea of Original Sin. There had been a lot of discussion about how evil came into the World. You can read dozens of early books on this topic.

But let us look at the big picture—the rest of the world beyond Paradise.

The Brits came before Adam

3000 years before Adam was born people were living in communities and

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farming the land. Archaeologists have evidence that 14 million people were on the Earth at the time that Adam was born. In Briton people were living in stone houses herding sheep, and burying their dead in religious sites. The foundations of Stonehenge were being built when Adam was born. In the Indies, people were making intricate jewelry. In China they were growing rice already.

So whatever was happening in the Garden of Eden was not affecting those people.

The rabbis say that only the Jewish people and Arabs can claim to descend

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from Adam. Gentiles come from other sources. If you remember in Genesis Cain married a woman from the Land of Nod and quickly built the city of Enoch. So there were people outside of Eden mentioned in scripture.

You must understand that Adam was the ancestor of Semitic peoples. He is not the ancestor of Gentiles.

That brings us to the god who made Adam. This god has the name Hashem in Jewish scripture. Hashem did not appear on the scene until Ge 2:4, long after the Elohim had created the majority of the World and intelligent.

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‘creatures’ who were the ancestors of the rest of us who are not Semitic.

Eden was not for Gentiles

Whatever happened in Eden doesn’t apply to Gentiles.

So that brings us back to the question of Original Sin. If there had been such a ‘fall’ it would only apply to the descendants of Adam, not to us. But the rabbis say there was no such thing as Original Sin because Adam did not commit a sin, he only chose to go against the command of Hashem, that Hashem had foreseen and had

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planned. It was a good thing that Adam did.

But Cain was a bad child, and his children were bad, like Lamech. In the great flood all his evil descendants were drowned.

But Seth was a good son and all Semitic peoples are descended from Seth, whose descendants were not drowned in the flood. This is rabbinic teaching. And if you remember the lineage of Jesus comes through Seth.

If Adam was the cause of sin in the World, it affected the Semitic people only, as they inherited Adam's genes. So

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how could Adam's fall have affected the Gentiles?

How would the people who were farming in Briton when Adam 'fell' have been affected by that event? And were all the people born before Adam's time sinless?

No, that doesn't make sense. The only rational answer is that there was no such thing as Original sin. Augustine dreamt up the idea in the 5th century. Why did he do it.

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Christian Leaders and Demons

Most of the people who have created Christianity were themselves trying to deal with their own demons. Many of them who were sworn to celibacy were having sexual problems, and were dealing badly with the temptations. Jesus had told his Apostles to remain celibate. He said that only male virgins were going to enter the Kingdom of God. The Bishops took this to apply to all clergy. No clergy was to defile himself with a woman, or they would be out of a job.

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Some clergy like Augustine admitted to terrible cravings in his book City of God, and he blames these desires on Adam who committed sin first and passed his sinfulness down to him.

Luther in the 16th century had similar temptations. He was a Roman Catholic priest and couldn't stop lusting after women. His solution was to accept his sinfulness as a fact of life and ask Jesus to hide the truth from God!

Tyndale who wrote the King James Version was a friend of Luther. He too suffered from evil thoughts, he was declared a heretic even before he left England for Germany, and was again

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declared a heretic and strangled to death and burnt for his heresy.

And if you look into Calvin's history, you will find that he too had to deal with demons.

All these people who have influenced Christianity were struggling to find an answer to why they were acting badly, and they blamed Adam for it.

If you remember Paul cried out 'why is it that I do bad things when I want to be good?' His answer was that the evil was always inside him trying to make him do bad things.

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What we have been taught about evil comes from sinful people—not from Holy men

The Apostles were all good people, and they didn't have these problems of wanting to sin all the time. Jesus told them to 'be perfect.' And they were holy compared to the lot who came after them. Apostles were holy men whose lives was focussed on the love of one another and of the Father.

Those that followed were not so holy, and rather than admit that they were making bad choices which caused them to experience evil, they blamed their own bad behavior on something evil

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within themselves. Paul called it a thorn in his side.

What causes Evil

Evil happens when people make bad choices. Evil means going against the Will of God. Man has free will and can choose whether to listen to God or not.

Man is inherently from birth ‘good.’

Bad choices make him do the wrong things and he will suffer for it. Don’t blame your bad behavior on anyone else.

Why then do Christians say that Jesus died for their sins?

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Though Roman Catholics say that Jesus was crucified because it was the only way to erase the stain of Original sin, the Reformers teach that it was necessary for Jesus to **die** in order to pay for each individuals sins, whenever they sin.

According to Reformed churches, and Evangelicals, Jesus actually **died** on the cross, and it was His death that paid for the sins of the whole world past present and future.

Did He need to die?

None of the Creeds of the traditional Church states that Jesus

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‘died’ on the cross. He was crucified and suffered and was put in the tomb for three days and was resuscitated and taught His Apostles afterwards. There was no mention of an actual death.

Resurrection according to Philip Jesus’s Apostle, was the awakening of a man to the knowledge of the Father, and to his own relationship with the Father. Resurrection had to occur before a man could die, not something that happened after his death.

The crucifixion of Jesus was to demonstrate to his followers what sort of deprivation and pain they might go through in order to join the Father in

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the Kingdom of God. They might be tortured and put on the cross like Him—that is what he warned them about. Many of the Bishops were martyred for the Faith.

Jesus was asking them ‘how far will you go in order to join the Father in the Kingdom of God ?

So Jesus crucifixion was in part an example to the whole world of how much suffering a good man must put up with in order to enter the Kingdom of God.

Jesus never said He was going to the cross to pay for anyone else’s sin. At that time the rabbis taught that the

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death of any Jew paid for his sins in this life. A Jew could not pay for another Jew's sin. Jesus believed the same things—it was the Law, which could not be changed.

The idea of Original Sin came from a Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church who could not understand why he wanted to do bad things. Paul had asked that same question.

There were dozens of ideas among Bishops about why some people wanted to be good and others bad. Paul said the devil made him do it, it wasn't his fault!

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Augustine said that Adam's sin was passed down to him and caused him to sin, it wasn't his fault he liked the altar boys.

Why would you listen to people who were sinners? Listen to Jesus and the Apostles.

The truth is that men are essentially good at birth and they learn how to be bad from parents, teachers, and friends. Today, they learn how to be bad from television and the internet.

Anyone can learn how to be good by listening to Jesus. 'Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven,' Jesus said.

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Original Sin? —It never happened.

Waeshael

Anderson SC

Elohim and Hashem

“**ELOHIM**” is the transliteration of the original Hebrew word אלהים that occurs in Ge 1:1 “In the beginning אלהים began to create (or created) ...

The Rev. William Tyndale, ¹ who wrote most of the New Testament in AD 1520, wrote the word ‘God’ wherever **ELOHIM** occurred in the Hebrew ‘bible.’

¹ William Tyndale was a Roman Catholic Priest. You should know that 83% of the King James Version uses his words. He was strangled and burned at the stake for heresy.

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In Ge 2:4 a god makes Adam from dust, but this is not Elohim, it is יהוה or **HASHEM**.

HASHEM is a less powerful god than **ELOHIM**, according to rabbis. Hashem is mentioned more often than Elohim as he name of god. Tyndale translated **HASHEM** not as ‘god’ but as LORD (all caps) in the King James Version.

Now, **HASHEM** is later mentioned as being the ‘god of Abraham Isaac and Jacob.’ **HASHEM** was at Sinai with Moses and gave him the **Oral Torah**.

Moses told his key advisors what Hashem had said. They passed it on to

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the religious leaders. Prophets took over the responsibility from Moses of memorizing and teaching Torah. No one wrote anything down. The Prophets were ‘walking books.’

According to **HASHEM**, the Earth had been made ² specifically to reveal Torah to mankind. The Israelite men were chosen by **HASHEM** to teach Torah to the world.

The ‘chosen people’ failed to bring Torah to gentiles, and even neglected teaching their own children.

²The rabbis say that Elohim made the Universe, including Earth.

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HASHEM expected all mankind to accept Torah. This is also the Jewish hope. Rabbis say that until the entire world has accepted Judaism with **HASHEM** as its only god, the Messiah will not come. Christians who look forward to the return of the Messiah must first become Jews, or the Messiah will not come.

Who is Elohim?

The Deity (or deities) who are called **ELOHIM** in the Hebrew Bible, are called ‘God’ in the King James Version.

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In this article, I have replaced the word “God” from the KJV Old Testament with its original Hebrew word “**ELOHIM.**”³

What can be read in Genesis ch:1 are actions of Deities called **ELOHIM** who are creating the Earth and the Sky.

Rabbis say that the word **ELOHIM** may sometimes refer to **Angels**, like **Michael** and **Gabriel**. The suffix ‘el’ meaning ‘god.’ Here in Ge 1:1 Angels may be the instigators of the creative effort. Or they might be gods.

³ Elohim is the plural of Eloa which means a Deity. I have also replaced ‘LORD’ from the King James Version with ‘Hashem.’

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You may have trouble accepting multiple gods, because someone in your SS class has said there is only ONE god. What they meant is that there is only ONE god for your particular Religion to worship. Each Religion has its own idea of what God is. The major Religions seem to disagree with one another.

- The Muslim God Allah hates Christians. So does Hashem the god of Judaism. In fact the Jews and Muslims have laws that severely punish Christian evangelists proselytizing in their lands.

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- The Roman Catholic ‘god’ is a Trinitarian god, an invisible amalgam of three hypostases or personalities called The Father, The Son (Christ) and Holy Spirit. The Father is unknowable and invisible to man, and can only be ‘seen’ by understanding Jesus. The Son is the Christ which is the Word of God incarnate in the body of Jesus then and the resurrected body of Jesus, now. The Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost which dwells in all good men, is love between the Father and The Son. The relationship between them is defined by the Athanasian Creed

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Many Religions accept The [Athanasian formula.](#)

- (see END NOTES)

God defined by other Religions

For a detailed discussion on the gods of the Jews and the Christians read the book on this site called **The Father and The Son.** Also the Book **On Prayer.**