

Chapter 1

THE NATURE OF MAN

The key to understanding our need for salvation is to comprehend the nature of man in relation to sin. When Christians consider sin they most often think of their own personal sin. As Christians, we believe our transgressions are forgiven by Christ's sacrificial death on the cross for us ([see here](#)).

This chapter deals with sin before we were Christians necessitating the need for salvation that God kindly provided through Christ. However, understanding sin in the unbelieving state is not just about personal sin but we must consider also imputed and inherited sin.

Failure to realize the completely fallen sinful nature of man has led many to believe mistakenly that as humans we can objectively evaluate scripture and Christ's sacrifice and choose ourselves to come to faith. This is called Arminianism



However, as believers, we must look at what Scripture says, which should always be our guide.

ORIGINAL STATE OF MAN

God made Adam and Eve, after **His own image** (Genesis 1:26). They both were originally without sin, in action and form (morphologically), and so could approach our holy God. However, after Adam sinned they could no longer come near to God who banished them from the Garden of Eden. Adam's sin had catastrophic effects on mankind leading to three different types of sin.

IMPUTED SIN

Because Adam sinned, God considers (meaning of the word, imputed) all unbelievers as sinners directly from the first man's transgression (Romans 5:12-14). Consequently, by the one man, Adam, sin is imputed to each man. However, God in His grace, by the one man Jesus Christ (please see Chapter 2) provided grace to all men as a second Adam (Romans 5:15-21).



INHERITED SIN

When Adam sinned the whole race fell morphologically (total corruption [depravity]) becoming a sinful creature by nature who could not approach God (Ephesians 2:3). This change in Adam's form (mind and body) after he sinned is transmitted generation to generation to each of us, inheriting his sinful nature. As a result, because of a fallen and depraved state, unbelievers cannot understand or pursue God and none of their works are good before Him (Romans 3:10-12).

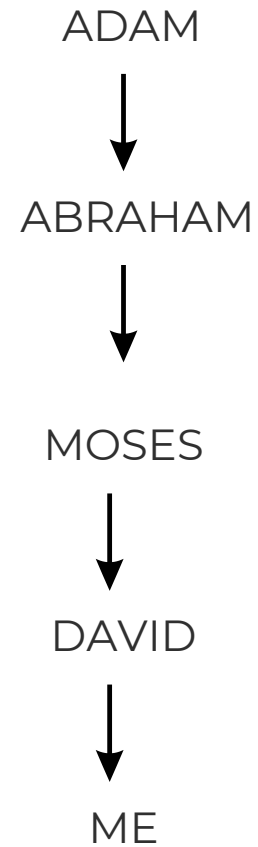


PERSONAL SIN

This is the sin unbelievers do individually for which we are responsible before Christ for our actions (Romans 3:23-26; 1 John 1:5-10).

INHERITED SIN

Sin is transmitted from our parents



IMPUTED SIN

Sin is transmitted from Adam to each person

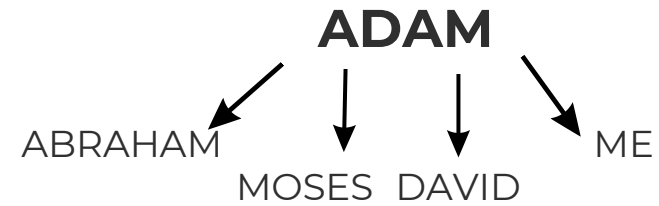


Figure 1.1 Imputed vs. Inherited Sin
Modified Version from Ryrie, 1999

RESULTS OF SIN

The results of sin are unimaginably bad in an unbeliever's life.

1 SEPARATION FROM GOD

God is righteous and cannot be in the presence of sin. Therefore, because man is fallen, with an inherited corrupt nature and personal sin, he is separated from God.

Accordingly, there is enmity (hatred, lack of peace) between man and God (Colossians 1:20-21; Ephesians 2:15-17). There is no cure except by reconciliation of man to God by faith through the blood of Jesus Christ by faith. Consequently, without the satisfaction of God's required judgment man faces eternity apart from God.

2 BOUND BY SIN

Man is controlled by sin from three sources (Ephesians 2:1-3):

- **His own lust** - An unbeliever has a limited ability to say no to their own lust and it is restrained perhaps only by social pressure and societal laws.
- **The world** – The unbeliever's actions are controlled generally by the ever-changing political and relative moral culture of the world.
- **Satan** – As an unbeliever, a person cannot say 'no' to the devil's influence.

3 DESERVED PUNISHMENT

Because of man's fallen and sinful nature and rebellious actions, a just punishment was deserved. The punishment required was death of the sinner by the most holy God (2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:11-15; Hebrews 9:15-24).

4 TOTAL CORRUPTION

As noted above, when Adam fell, his mind and body changed in such a way to become sin itself.

This change has been transmitted to all of his descendants so all of mankind is by nature sin itself and so cannot approach the holy God in the unsaved state.

Further, he is not able to understand or seek after God or know what is good. (Romans 3:10-12; Ephesians 2:1-3).



GOD'S ANSWER

Despite being guilty of sin on multiple levels God graciously sent His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins. Because of Christ's perfect nature, He was a sufficient offering to pay the price for all our sins, once for all time (Romans 3:23-26, Hebrews 10:10-18). This gracious forgiveness is accessed by faith alone in Christ's sacrifice on the cross (see here).

We are completely dependent upon God to bring us to salvation by His grace through faith in Christ's substitutionary death on the cross and resurrection. None of our works or efforts are satisfactory to bring us to God (Romans 3:10-12).

ACCOUNTING OUR SIN THROUGH THE AGES

BEFORE THE LAW

Between Adam and the law given to Moses.

Romans 5:12-14 and Ephesians 2:3 teaches that personal sin was not counted between Adam and the giving of the Old Testament law. However, death still reigned because of Adam's original sin and our fallen corrupt nature (imputed and inherited sin, respectively).

AFTER THE LAW

- *Jews under the Old Testament* – in addition to inherited and imputed sin, personal sin against the Old Testament law was counted by God against individual Jews (Romans 5:12-14).
- *Gentiles in the Old Testament* – personal sin was not counted against individual Gentiles (non-Jews) in Old Testament times (Acts 17:30-31).

AFTER THE LAW

Personal sin by Jew or Gentile in the Old Testament was passed over by the forbearance of God until the time of Christ. This was so that those chosen to believe would not be punished before Christ's sacrificial death on the cross (Romans 3:24–26, 29).

SIN DURING CHRIST'S TIME ON EARTH

Sin that was committed in the gospel times (when Christ was on earth) by unbelieving Jews.

This was counted against them as individual sin because they failed to believe in the Messiah for their salvation despite His presence with them and the proofs that He offered (e.g., fulfilling prophecy, Old Testament scriptures, the miracles, the testimonies of John the Baptist, and God, His teaching, John 1:19-28, 3:18; 5:36-39).

AFTER CHRIST'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION

After Christ's death and resurrection, God offers forgiveness for all sins (personal, inherited, and imputed) through Christ.

As stated in 2 Corinthians 5:21, God made Christ, the One who knew no sin, to take our sin for us, that we might have His righteousness before God through His death and resurrection.

SUMMARY

Man is completely fallen because of Adam's sin. As a result, man's body and mind are ruinously corrupt beyond repair, without an ability to understand or seek after God or to do good. Further, no work was sufficient to satisfy a holy God. Therefore, man remains separated and deserves death from a just God.

However, God, being loving sent His Son to die on the cross for us as punishment for sin to allow us access to the Living God. Thanks be to God for His grace, given to us through his precious Son, Jesus Christ.

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REFERENCES:

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