

Blaming God for Sin

By Paul R. Blake

One dear sister wrote to me: "Tonight's lesson was on the Fear of GOD and I am now confused about the where evil comes from that influences our life. I tried to explain it as the result of sin that first entered with the wrong choice of Eve and then Adam."

You are correct in your conclusions that evil gained access to the human race by the sins of Adam and Eve. Evil existed in the form of the serpent who tempted, lied, and cast aspersions on God before Eve took the fruit. Evil was around before humankind sinned in the Garden. However, before humans participated in sin, evil had no influence on their lives.

This reflects the great debate that has existed since the second century AD: Augustinian supremacy of Divine Will versus Pelagius' accountability of man. "St. Augustine" argued that nothing happens without God's will and control; therefore, if I

sin, God is ultimately responsible. Pelagius reasoned that man is a free moral agent, and chooses to do right or wrong, even though God wills that he do what is right. Pelagius is closest to the truth. Augustine's writings later formed the basis of Calvinism (Total inherited depravity of man, Unconditional salvation, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, Perseverance of the saints). These tenets formed the modern doctrines of "once saved, always saved," "salvation by faith only," and "rapture theology."

The apostle Paul teaches in Romans 5:12-19, that through Adam, sin entered the world, and sin brought death with it. Furthermore, he says that through Christ's righteous deed (sacrifice on the cross) remission of sins entered and by remission of sins came life.

In Romans 6:11-23, Paul reasons that we choose to let sin or righteousness rule in our lives. We decide whether we will follow the leadership of sin or the guidance of righteousness. We are not forced to choose sin, but after the choice is made we must live with the consequences until we choose to serve righteousness.

Romans 7:10-25 contains the explanation of why we sin in spite of knowing the will of God. He describes our nature as being dual (having two parts), a spiritual (righteous, God-loving) man and a fleshly (carnal, worldly) man. Our will, aided by our reasoning, decides which man within us will have the dominance. If we permit the fleshly man to rule, we will want to do right, but find ourselves doing wrong instead. The only way to resolve this struggle is through Jesus Christ (7:24-25), and by choosing to serve the spiritual nature in us.

Galatians 5:16-17 tells us to choose the spirit, and we will not do works of the flesh. If we do not choose the spiritual man, we will constantly equivocate between the spirit and the flesh.

God is often blamed for sin, suffering, et cetera, simply because He created all things, including those things misused to one's own harm. Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 says "For everything there is a season..." and concludes with "He hath made everything beautiful in its time." When we use all things in their proper place, all things are good. When we misuse things, anything can become sin. Sexual intercourse in marriage is wonderful (Heb. 13:4); outside of marriage it is filthy. Alcohol in medicine is good (1Tim. 5:23); outside of medicine it is sin. Earning a living is good (1Tim. 5:8); materialism is sin. By our choice to use or misuse what God has given, we determine sin's control in our lives.

Are God's commandments to blame? Romans 7:9-14 shows that God's commands are not responsible for our sin. We are accountable based on how we react to God's commands. The original word for sin literally translated means "to miss the mark." When we fail to obey a command or to properly use what God has made, we "miss the target." We have fallen short of what is expected by the One who designed us and our capabilities.

Where does sin come from? James 1:12-15 states: "Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

What plain statements are made?

- 1) God does NOT tempt man to sin.
- 2) Man is tempted by his OWN desires.
- 3) Man sins when he yields to his own desires.
- 4) Man is capable of resisting temptation.

Therefore we conclude that man alone is responsible for sin.

Sin cannot be from GOD, because all things from GOD are good (James 1:17). Fire is good for giving light, cooking food and heating home, but it will also be used on Judgment Day. He is a just GOD; wrong choices cause judgment to come upon humankind, and bad judgments result from wrong choices. God is not the author of tribulation.. God would be an impotent Deity indeed if all He could do was bless and reward. He has ALL power, including that of punishing unrepentant sinners (Rom. 11:22, 12:19). Hebrews 10:26-31 tells us that one earns punishment for willful, rebellious sin.

Sin is the source of pain, suffering, sorrow and punishment (1Chron. 4:9-10; Rom. 6:21, 23, 8:1-2). Man sins, not God. Man chooses to sin, God doesn't force him. God makes all things good, man corrupts it (Ecc. 7:29).

Buttermilk or Booze?

"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first" (Luke 11:24-26).

A man who drank heavily was converted to Christ and lived victoriously for several weeks. One day as he passed the open door of a tavern, the pungent odor drifting out aroused his old appetite for liquor. Just then he saw this sign in the window of a nearby cafe: "All the buttermilk you can drink -- 25 cents!" Dashing inside, he ordered one glass, then another, and still another. After finishing the third he walked past the saloon and was no longer tempted. He was so full of buttermilk that he had no room for that which would be injurious to him. The lesson is clear: to be victorious over our evil desires, we must leave no opportunity for them to repossess us. (From Bible Illustrator)

23 Days Left

"But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' (Luke 12:20). When John Reynoso escaped from the State Penitentiary in Fort Madison, Iowa, he did not take into account that his mother would turn him in. "Prison officials," said Mrs. Reynoso, "escorted my son back to the Penitentiary twenty four hours after his escape." What is truly sad about this situation is that John Reynoso had only twenty-three days left to serve when he fled from a work detail. He now faces an additional five years for his escape.

One might say, "What a fool that man was, risking five years for twenty-three days." Nevertheless, consider how many risk eternal life for that which is infinitely shorter. Many risk the glorious mansions of heaven for "the pleasures of sin for a season." Some would rather "sleep in" on Sunday mornings than worship God as He commanded. Let us not trade eternal life for "satisfying our own selfish desires." Let us faithfully serve God that we might escape eternal damnation.