

Redemption 304: Priesthood & the Kinsman Redeemer



biblestudying.net

Brian K. McPherson and Scott McPherson

Copyright 2012

Priesthood and the Kinsman Redeemer – Part 1

Introduction

This study is intended as a supplement to our basic Redemption Study. The basic Redemption Study outlines biblical teaching on how Christ atones for sin. A great deal of the content of that study comes from the New Testament description of Christ's work in redemption. In contrast, this study will provide a backdrop for Christ's work by examining earlier biblical presentations of the related concepts of redemption and priestly intercession. We should note that the material contained in this study was originally developed as several, separate studies with overlapping and related content. Here we have re-organized the content of those studies into a single, coherent presentation. This accounts for the occasional redundancy that occurs when content that has already been discussed is recovered in a later section which depends to some extent on the repeated material.

A few notes can also be made before we proceed into the study. First, one of the main themes that will become apparent and consistently discussed as we delve into the biblical texts is God's constant plan for an enduring kinsman-priesthood for the purposes of redemption. We will not say much about this concept now as we hope to let the biblical text itself describe and develop it as we proceed.

Second, we will often rely on historical context from the other books of Moses to help us understand material from Genesis. The figures and events of Genesis lived and took place perhaps as much as 2,000 years before the Exodus itself. Therefore, it may seem inappropriate to use texts written by Moses regarding the Exodus and the giving of the Mosaic Law to help us interpret accounts from before the Flood. However, such a hermeneutic practice is justified given that all of these books are composed by a single author, Moses.

Since the same person transcribed Genesis and Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy, we are right to use material from the later four books to help us understand material in the first book. This is especially the case when linguistic, content, and thematic parallels appear in passages of Genesis and one or more of these other books. The exegetical basis for this approach is also solidly grounded in the fact that the original audience for Genesis is the same as that of Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Likewise, the Israelites at the time of the Exodus were the original audience for the Book of Genesis. Moses composed

Genesis with the understanding of his contemporary Israelites in mind. As any competent author and certainly as any inspired author, he would have used terms and concepts familiar to his audience. This provides a solid framework for us to be aware of and willing to consider aspects of Genesis in light of the historical context, language, terms, and experience of the Israelites at the time of the Exodus.

Since all five books have both the same author and the same audience and were transcribed at the same time, then the last four books can and should be connected to Genesis where and when correspondence appears. This is because we can soundly assume that Israelites at the time of Moses would have made these connections themselves since, to them, connections between their experiences and those recounted in Genesis would not have been obscured as if the texts came from different periods, were written by different authors, or were first received by different audiences with a different understanding from the Israelites at the time of the Exodus.

Likewise, of all the things that occurred from creation to the Exodus, Genesis only contains some of them. Why were these select accounts included while others weren't? Was Moses just being arbitrary in his choices of what to use? Did he just include a bunch of disparate material? Even if some are willing to consider such possibilities, it hardly seems reasonable that God was inspiring Moses regarding what to include in an arbitrary or incidental way. We have good reason then to conclude that the particular choices and accounts that are contained in Genesis are included because of their poignant relevance to things that the Israelites were experiencing and to things that God wished to be preserved for understanding as history continued. Therefore, when a connection between material in Genesis appears related to content from elsewhere in Moses' writings, we have sufficient cause to consider that the correspondence is intentional and to ponder the meaning that can be derived through contexting Genesis with information contained in the other four books of the Pentateuch.

These are helpful realizations because, unlike the tedious detail we encounter in Moses' other four books, statements in Genesis are often given without much additional explanation. This can leave the reader of Genesis without much to go on in terms of what sense to make of unexplained content that Moses chose to include and wondering why Moses chose to include it. But if we consider that Moses included it because it connected to something contained elsewhere in his writings which he expected his audience to see, then we can perhaps begin to appreciate teachings that we may previously have missed, but which God and Moses intended to preserve and communicate.

For instance, what are we to make of Cain and Abel's presentation of offerings before the Lord in Genesis 4? While the immediate and surrounding passages give some cues regarding these actions of Cain and Abel, there is no substantive exposition of these events. However, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy provide a great deal of information regarding making offerings before the Lord. And Israelites receiving Genesis from Moses at the same time

they experienced and received the information recorded in Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy would have been able to interpret Genesis 4 in light of related material in these other books. We can therefore do the same and follow the understanding of the original audience and the intent of the author just as we would with any other biblical text.

With these factors in mind, we will continue into the main body of this study. Our investigation will span four major sections. They are as follows:

Section One: Redemption and the History of Mankind's Fall into Sin

Section Two: Early Knowledge of the Priestly Redeemer

Section Three: Melchizedek and the Pre-Levitical Order of Priests

Section Four: Priestly Service in the New Testament

Section One: Redemption and the History of Mankind's Fall into Sin

Introduction

As the title indicates, this first section of our study will focus on issues related to the history of mankind's fall into sin and how biblical teaching on this history relates to God's plan to redeem mankind from the resulting consequences of their sin. Understanding the manner by which mankind entered into the need for redemption is closely connected to how God redeems them from sin and its consequences.

It is important to approach the historic fall of mankind into sin from two points of view, the conceptual and the historical. The conceptual view takes into consideration questions such as: What are the definitions? What is the mechanism? Does the model make sense? And to be sure, any model of the fall of mankind into sin has to work on this conceptual, or theoretical, level. But the model also has to fit with the actual history, the record of how these events unfolded, specifically the narratives in the book of Genesis, particularly those leading up to and concluding with the Flood. It is not sufficient to have a working conceptual model of how the fall into sin *would* or *could* operate, if that conceptual model doesn't fit with or match the facts in the recorded account.

This historical consideration leads to some early questions that we will also examine over the course of this section of our study, including: How did the Old Testament and New Testament Jews interpret the early history of scripture, including the fall of mankind into sin? Did they interpret passages on this subject as indicative of a federal, "all-at-once," inherited guilt and curse model (as in Calvinism)? Or did they interpret these passages in some other way in accordance with some other model for how mankind fell into sin? Answering these questions through a scriptural investigation will comprise an essential part of this study.

This study will also return once again to the debate between Calvinism and Freewill theology. The Calvinist model of the fall of mankind into sin is readily described in the Calvinist concepts of a "federal system" associated with the doctrines of "original sin" and "total depravity," in which all offspring of Adam are imputed with the guilt and punishment of their father Adam from the moment of conception, even before they sin. For Calvinism, this explains the fall of mankind into sin in terms of the "total depravity" doctrine. In Calvinism, man inherits a depraved nature from Adam, which renders each individual pre-determined to choose sin. And so, the descent of the entire human population into sin is explained and caused directly by Adam's sin. One theme that we will see throughout this section of our study is that (in addition to its failure to work as a conceptual model) Calvinism also suffers from short-comings inherent to this "federal" concept at the core of its "original sin" and "total depravity" doctrines. However, it is not sufficient to merely critique the Calvinist model. And consequently, this study will also start from scripture to build the correct model of the fall of mankind into sin and when the evidence is weighed, the result is a Freewill model in which doctrines such as "federalism," "original sin," and "total

depravity” are shown to be entirely foreign to the historical record and foreign to the historical interpretation of mankind’s fall into sin as understood by both Old and New Testament Jews.

Our Redemption study discusses how Jesus had to live and die without sin in order for God to introduce resurrection into this world (because a sinless man's death is unjust, prompting God to reconcile it by bringing that man back to life). However, a non-Calvinistic understanding of the fall of mankind into sin invites questions related to the possibility of humans who die without having sinned. For instance, if Abel, potentially Enoch, and others as well as unborn children or infants live and die without committing a sin, then would any or all of their deaths require the introduction of resurrection, removing Jesus' uniqueness in this regard? And, if dying innocent of sin is the only requirement for redeeming mankind, wouldn't the deaths of such persons potentially remove the need for Jesus since resurrection would be introduced to the world on behalf of such other individuals who died without sin?

(We should note that Enoch did not die, and so his case would not touch on the introduction of resurrection, but his case still touches the question concerning whether any man lived without ever sinning. And while it might easily enough be assumed that Abel sinned sometime before Cain killed him and so avoid any complication with regard to Abel, the rejection of original sin and Total Depravity by Freewill proponents like ourselves necessitates that all unborn children and infants that die, do so without sin. Thus, since the problem would not be avoided simply by making an assumption in the case of Abel, there is no point in making such an assumption, especially since the text of Genesis indicates Abel’s sinless condition – a topic discussed elsewhere.)

Why Consider that Abel May Have Died Sinless?

In this segment we will openly examine the question of whether or not the bible does indicate that men like Abel may have died without sin. Here we will start by looking at the individual assessments and information that God gives concerning each of them personally in scripture.

The indications concerning Abel (or Enoch) are not direct. There are, however, rather strong circumstantial evidences and indirect indicators. For this segment of the essay, we will retrace these evidences along the lines of how we first came across them.

These considerations first occurred to us as we were reading the Talmud’s account of Cain. Although the bible itself contains the critical similarities, the additional details in the Talmud made the similarities stand out, given that the Talmud mentions that the ground would produce only thorns and thistles for Cain. The bible does not contain this particular statement, which is identical to Adam.

This statement prompted a consideration of the total similarities between the sin and resulting curse of Adam and the sin and resulting curse upon Cain.

Upon rereading the biblical texts, we found that all the principle elements of each cursing are indeed virtually identical in both accounts in the scripture itself, except for the statement to Cain concerning the thorns. Consequently, as can be seen from the analysis below, the support for this aspect of our study comes from the biblical evidence, and does not rely upon, mention, or come from any statements in the Talmud, whose additional details are minor anyway. The proposition stands from the evidence of scripture and the primary proofs are from the scripture. In point of fact, the Talmud would add very little, if any, further support to the prominent supportive evidence provided by the text of scripture concerning this proposition.

Before we begin our direct comparison of Adam and Cain, it is important to note how God describes Cain's status regarding sin before the murder of Abel and before God declares Cain's punishment. In Genesis 4:7, God says to Cain, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him." Here the most critical element is that according to God, Cain is not yet under the mastery of sin. It is possible for Cain to rule over sin simply by exercising his ability to choose to do the right thing. This is inherently incompatible with the Calvinist doctrine of total depravity, which asserts that all men are enslaved to a sinful nature from conception due to the sin of their father Adam. Here again, a simple, natural reading of the text without presupposition suggests that Cain is not yet "under sin" until after he sins himself by killing Abel. With this fact in mind, we can now consider the comparison between Cain and Adam regarding their punishment.

There are two principle elements to both the curse on Adam and on the curse on Cain.

First, the ground is cursed and will not respond easily to labor. The ground is cursed to Adam so that when he works it, it will not respond well to his labor, consequently making it significantly more difficult for him to get the ground to produce.

Genesis 3:17 And unto Adam he 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;** 18 **Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;** 19 **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.

Likewise, when Cain is cursed, the ground is cursed for him so that when he works it, it will not respond to him either, but it will be significantly more difficult for him to get the ground to produce.

Genesis 4:11 And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; 12 **When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength;** a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.

Commentary: This begs the question: If the curse on the ground proclaimed upon Adam was in effect upon all men, then why is there need (or even potential) for the earth to be without curse in this regard toward Cain before he sins? Why would the ground need to be cursed after he sins? In any case, the curse upon Cain would constitute a second curse of this kind upon the ground. Wasn't the curse proclaimed upon Adam sufficient to cause Cain to have difficulty producing crops? Was the curse proclaimed upon Adam not applied to Cain? The text seems to indicate that it was not – that for Cain, before he sinned, the ground was as it had been for Adam before he sinned. *And like Adam, the ground only became cursed for Cain once he himself had sinned.* This will become more important as we consider Paul's comments in Romans 5 below as well as the similarity between the remaining principle element of Cain's curse and the remaining principle element of Adam's curse.

In the effort to retain the possibility that the ground was already cursed for Cain due to Adam's sin, it could be suggested that perhaps Cain's curse regarding the ground was incremental. In other words, perhaps the ground was already cursed for Cain due to Adam's sin and that curse simply became worse after Cain sins. However, it is noteworthy that the Talmud asserts that prior to the murder of Abel, Cain was not even experiencing the thorns and thistles that resulted from the curse upon Adam as seen in Genesis 3:17-18. In a book containing English translations of portions of the Talmud entitled, "The Talmud: Selections" by H. Polano, God responds to Cain after the murder of Abel, saying, "Cursed be thou from the ground which opened to swallow up thy brother's blood. No longer shall it give its strength to thee and answer to thy efforts; no longer shall it give thee aught but thorns." This strongly suggests that the curse upon Cain was not in addition to the curse upon Adam but rather the beginning of Cain's experience of any curse whatsoever upon the soil. While this quote from the Talmud does not prove that this is the correct biblical understanding, it does show that at least that the ancient Jewish people understood the text of Genesis as it pertains to the curse upon Cain in the same way that we do.

Second, there is the consequence of being sent out from the presence of the Lord. After he sins, Adam is driven out of the presence of the Lord, so that Adam leaves Eden, apparently exiting to the east, as indicated by the positioning of the cherubim on the east side of the garden of Eden. (Notice that God's presence is designated earlier in Genesis 3 to be in the garden and among the trees of the garden. Notice also that this is where God is said to walk with men. This will become relevant when we consider statements made concerning Enoch later on.)

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the voice of **the LORD God walking in the garden** in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from **the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.**

Genesis 3:23 Therefore **the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden**, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 **So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims**, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Likewise, the Bible states that when Cain sinned, he is driven out from the presence of the Lord and, more to the point it explicitly states that at this time when Cain goes out from the presence of the Lord he goes to live east of Eden.

Genesis 4:12 When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; **a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.** 13 And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment *is* greater than I can bear. 14 Behold, **thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth;** and it shall come to pass, *that* every one that findeth me shall slay me. 15 And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. 16 **And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD**, and dwelt in the land of Nod, **on the east of Eden.**

If Adam and Eve are driven from the garden of Eden and Cain is living with his parents outside the garden, then there are a limited number of options. Number one, Cain is in God's presence before he sins and, consequently, Adam and Eve are also still in God's presence since they are living with Cain. Number two, God's presence is not stationary but God moves around outside the garden to visit Cain when he is alone. In this way, Adam and Eve don't experience God's presence although Cain does. Number three, the presence of the Lord remains always in the garden and Adam and Eve's offspring are able to go into the garden to be in the presence of the Lord, while Adam and Eve are not.

A critical factor is establishing that the presence of the Lord necessarily refers to the garden of Eden. In other words, the presence of the Lord does not move around at this point in history. Nor is it outside the garden (where Adam and Eve are). Rather God's presence is fixed to the garden of Eden. There are two proofs for this conclusion.

First, if Adam and Eve are simply removed from the Garden for their sin, but are not also barred from God's presence, then why is Cain removed from God's presence because of his sin? Clearly, Cain's sin shows that expulsion is not only about keeping men out of the garden, but expulsion is also about the end of fellowship with God. And on a more fundamental level, if Adam and Eve weren't expelled from God's presence but only from the garden, then there would be no reason to suppose that sinning inherently ends fellowship with God in his presence. Consequently, expulsion must necessarily include removing sinners

from God's presence. Therefore, the removal of Adam and Eve from the garden solved the problem of sinners living in God's presence. In this way, the removal of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden indicates that God's presence was fixed to the garden at this time in history.

Second, if God's presence isn't fixed solely to Eden then God could simply withdraw from Adam and Eve's location or from Cain's location and they would not need to be expelled from anywhere. It might be said that expulsion from the garden was necessitated solely by the desire to keep sinners from the tree of life. While this works for Adam and Eve, it does not work for Cain. According to common perception, Cain never had access to the garden of Eden or the tree of life. Consequently, common perception cannot explain Cain's expulsion in terms of keeping him away from the tree. So, the question remains. If at this time in human history, the presence of the Lord was not in a specific, fixed location but roamed about and could be anywhere, then why does Cain have to be driven out from it? Why doesn't the presence of the Lord simply withdraw from Cain and Cain remain where he is? The fact that Adam, Eve, and particularly Cain are all expelled in order to remove them from God's presence indicates that God's presence is in a fixed location.

And if the presence of the Lord was in a specific, fixed location at this point in Genesis and human history, then that location must have been the garden of Eden itself, which is exactly where Genesis 3 indicates that it was. This concept of a fixed location for the presence of God within the Garden of Eden, with the Garden as his meeting place is also corroborated by the Jewish Old Testament understanding that there was to be one central place where God would meet with and be worshipped by his people as well as the association of the Temple itself with the garden as reflected even in Solomon's decoration of the Temple with palm trees (1 Kings 6:29-35, 7:36, 2 Chronicles 3:3-5). Incidentally, both the Temple and the garden would have been entered coming from the east and exited going to the east.

All of this continues to beg the question: How is it that Cain, before his sin, was still in the presence of the Lord when Adam his father had been cast out before Cain was born? And why is it that Cain, like Adam, when cast out from the Lord's presence is said to go east of Eden? Was Cain (before his sin) living in (or at least allowed to visit) the garden of Eden like Adam was and driven out like Adam was in an eastward direction only after he sinned? There is only one option which maintains that sinners such as Adam and Eve are not allowed to continue in God's presence and also simultaneously explains why Cain was still experiencing God's presence before he sinned and why expulsion was necessary in order to remove Adam, Eve, and Cain from God's presence. Simply stated, before he sinned, Cain was in the presence of the Lord in Eden (or at least allowed to visit) just like Adam and Eve were before they sinned. And more to the point, prior to Cain's sin the presence of the Lord had not been withheld from him despite the fact that it had already been withheld from Adam. Again, if read simply for it what it says the text seems to indicate that Cain was able to go into the Lord's presence in the garden of Eden before he sinned. The further implications of this

pattern will be articulated as we review Paul's comments in Romans 5 in the next section below.

Finally, consider how the following Old Testament passages would have reflected the Jewish recognition that the text of Genesis indicates that Cain did not, by inheritance, bear the punishment or guilt of his father's sin.

Deuteronomy 24:16 Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin.

2 Kings 14:6 Yet he did not put the sons of the assassins to death, in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the LORD commanded: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins."

2 Chronicles 25:4 Yet he did not put their sons to death, but acted in accordance with what is written in the Law, in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins."

Jeremiah 31:29 In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. 30 But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

Ezekiel 18:1 The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, **2 What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? 3 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. 4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. 5 But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, 6 And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman, 7 And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; 8 He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, 9 Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD. 10 If he beget a son that is a robber, a shedder of blood, and that doeth the like to any one of these things, 11 And that doeth not any of those duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife, 12 Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, 13 Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him. 14 Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins**

which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, 15 *That* hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife, 16 Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, *but* hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, 17 *That* hath taken off his hand from the poor, *that* hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; **he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.** 18 *As for his father,* because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did *that* which *is* not good among his people, **lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.** 19 Yet say ye, **Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.** 20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: **the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.** 21 But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. 22 All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: **in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.** 23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: *and* not that he should return from his ways, and live? 24 But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *and* doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* doeth, shall he live? **All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.** 25 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal? 26 **When a righteous *man* turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.** 27 Again, when the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. 28 Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. 29 Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal? 30 **Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways,** saith the Lord GOD. **Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.** 31 Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: **for why will ye die, O house of Israel?** 32 **For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth,** saith the Lord GOD: **wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.**

Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, **As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?** 12 Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression:

as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his *righteousness* in the day that he sinneth. 13 **When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live;** if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but **for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.** 14 **Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin,** and do that which is lawful and right; 15 *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, **without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.** 16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live. 17 Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. 18 When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. 19 But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. 20 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, **I will judge you every one after his ways.**

Romans 5 and Genesis 3-4

Exegesis of Genesis 3-4 indicates that Adam's sons were not held guilty for Adam's sin and were not subjected to the punishments Adam underwent when he sinned. The account of Cain shows that until Cain himself sinned, sowing the ground was not difficult for him and more importantly, he was not cast out from the presence of the Lord. Therefore, the Calvinist model for the fall of mankind into sin is undermined by the very first examples of the history of men. It is not possible to conclude that all men are guilty and subjected to Adam's punishment merely because they are his descendants given that Adam's first son (Cain) is not counted guilty or subjected to Adam's punishments for sin until he himself sins. Therefore the fall of mankind into sin doesn't seem to be "federal" as Calvinism teaches, but instead occurs gradually over time as individual humans sin. As the passages concluding the above section show, this non-Calvinist concept of the fall of mankind into sin is affirmed elsewhere in the scripture. God does not punish a man's children for the sins of their father. In addition to these Old Testament texts, we also see this non-Calvinist model attested to in the New Testament. In Romans 5, Paul discusses this topic in direct relation to Adam, his sin, and the means by which all men come to be in bondage to sin.

When opening his description about the relationship between Adam's sin and the coming of death to the entire human race, Paul begins with this statement.

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; **and so (3779)** death passed upon all men, **for that all have sinned:**

The word for "so" in the phrase "and so death passed" is the Greek word "houto" (Strong's No. 3779), which simply means, "in this manner." A survey of its usage

in the New Testament (including Matthew 5:12, 15, 47, 6:9, 12:40, etc.) quickly reveals that it conveys the idea of one thing following the pattern or model of another.

And notice that Paul concludes this verse with the phrase “for that all have sinned,” clearly indicating that it is “for” his own sin that each man has death pass to him. Thus, what Paul is saying in plain Greek is that death passes to each man as each man sins, in the same manner, following the same pattern, by which death passed to Adam after Adam sinned.

This explains and is entirely explicit in the redundancy between the cursing of Cain and the cursing of Adam. When Adam sins, the ground is cursed toward Adam, so that Adam will have to labor harder to get it to produce. Yet before Cain sins, the ground does not behave that way toward him. It is not until after Cain himself sins that the same curse upon the ground is put into effect toward Cain.

Likewise, when Adam sins, he is cast out of God’s presence and driven out from the garden of Eden in an eastward direction. Yet before Cain sins, he is still in the presence of the Lord and it is not until after he sins that he is driven out of God’s presence in an eastward direction, to live east of Eden. It is very clear that both the difficulty concerning tilling the ground and the expulsion from God’s presence in Eden was not in effect upon Cain until Cain himself sinned and so followed the pattern of his father Adam, right down to the two principle elements of the curse that Adam received (not to mention the exact same order in which they were pronounced).

It might be noted as a potential refutation that Adam was cursed for violating a command verbally revealed by God, whereas no such verbal command or revelation was violated by Cain or was given prior to the death of Abel concerning the killing of a human being. The point of this refutation would be that Cain could not have followed the pattern of Adam and therefore that Romans 5 could not be asserting such a model. For, Cain could not have been condemned by following Adam’s pattern of sinning first then being condemned unless Cain received and violated a verbal command as Adam did.

But is this refutation accurate? While God did not issue a verbal command to Cain, God did personally, directly, and verbally warn Cain against sinning (in his anger against Abel). In doing so God indicates clearly that Cain understood what sin was and that he was not to commit it. We might also mention that Cain had the example of his parents to draw from as well.

Genesis 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And **the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:** 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. **And Cain was very wrath, and his countenance fell.** 6 **And the LORD said unto Cain,** Why art thou wrath? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and **if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his**

desire, and thou shalt rule over him. 8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

It is also relevant to point out that the text specifies that Cain killed Abel “when they were in the field” (not “in the garden”). The phrase “in the field” itself lends support to the idea that Abel was killed in a different location than where Cain and Abel made their sacrifices and interacted with God. In short, the author of Genesis found it necessary to specify a change in location that took place after God spoke to Cain. And this is a very natural and necessary course for the narrative given the fact that Cain would not have killed Abel right there in front of God. A change of location is required. And the text provides it just as expected. This fits perfectly with the idea that the sinless children were allowed to come and go into the presence of God (to make offerings, for example) in the garden of Eden. Only after they sinned were men barred from the garden and from God’s presence which resided there.

And even if we were to concede the absence of a verbal command in the case of Cain, Paul himself anticipates and addresses this distinction between Adam’s sin and Cain’s sin in Romans 5:13-14. Not surprisingly, Paul addresses this issue right after his assertion that all men receive death when they sin themselves and thereby men follow the pattern by which Adam was condemned. The words used by Paul here in these verses indicate the distinction of 1) a standard that is verbally declared and 2) one that is not. In fact, Paul’s point in verses 13-14 is to explain why persons like Cain received death even though they were not violating a verbal command.

Furthermore, by asserting that men like Cain were condemned despite the lack of a verbal command, Paul is using the example of men like Cain to back up his earlier arguments from Romans 1, that God’s standards (including what was sin and that the penalty for sin was death) were revealed in the natural created order of the world, even before the Law of Moses or verbal commands were given by God. Thus, Paul is proving that the natural created world was sufficient, even before the Law, because like Cain, God condemned men to death based solely on their violation of God’s standards as revealed in the natural order itself before the Law was revealed. And so, even though Cain and other men before the Law did not necessarily violate a direct verbal command as Adam did, they still followed in the pattern of Adam, in which they sin against the standards of God (even if those standards were only revealed in nature and not by verbal revelation). And when they sin themselves, they follow Adam’s pattern and receive the sentence of death. Thus, Paul defends his statement that all men are condemned when they follow the pattern of Adam and sin themselves, despite the distinction in which Adam violated a verbal command and Cain did not. In fact, Adam and Cain would fit perfectly into Paul’s argument in Romans 1-3 concerning the two groups under examination by Paul: The Jews, who’d received the verbal law and the Gentiles, who’d received what was revealed in the created world. As Paul argues, both are condemned, those who had the Law and those who sinned

without the Law. Consequently, this difference between Adam and Cain poses no problem for our interpretation of Paul's statements.

From our consideration of Romans 5, we can see that the Calvinist model of "federalism" is not found in Genesis, in the Old Testament, or in Romans 5. On the contrary, these texts plainly teach that men are not punished for their father's sin, but are punished only for their own sins. The scriptural attestation of this begins as soon as possible with Adam and Cain. And Paul's remarks in Romans affirm this understanding of what Genesis 3-4 teach us about the fall of men into sin.

Implications of Our Exegesis of Genesis 3-4

Our consideration of sin and punishment in Genesis 3-4 is not concluded. There are other questions that emerge once we recognize that God did not punish Cain and Abel for Adam's sin.

For instance, does this mean that the cherubim guarding the garden of Eden to the east to keep the way to the tree of life only kept out Adam and Eve, not Cain and Abel? Yes. And that should not be too surprising since Adam and Eve were the only people around when the guard was set up. Who else was it designed to keep out?

The demonstration that the pattern of punishment was only applied to Cain after he himself sinned indicates that, like the curse upon the ground and the expulsion from God's presence, the work of these cherubim was also selective. They only kept out those who had sinned and thus been cast out from God's presence. They only kept a person out after that person themselves had sinned.

But wouldn't this imply that Cain and Abel would be able to eat of the tree of life? In fact, doesn't it imply that all the men of that time would have been able to eat of the tree of life up until each one of them sinned themselves? Yes, which is a fact that would quite nicely explain why the men living before the surface of the earth was wiped out by the Flood were living such long life spans.

It wasn't necessarily that eating the fruit of the tree of life just one time would make a person permanently immortal as some have proposed. Rather, the tree of life can be understood instead as a supplement for a race (mankind) that was created mortal, not immortal like the angels. Men were not intended to die but intended by God to continue to eat of the tree of life forever in his presence and so to live forever by that supplement, continually partaking of that supplement. Sinners had to be expelled so that they would not continue to be able to eat of the supplement because as long as they continued to eat from it they would continue to live indefinitely by it. And to the extent that any man before the Flood ate of this fruit before the Flood, their lives were extended dramatically by the supplement, up to nearly 1,000 years. However, the fact that all of the other

patriarchs, except for Enoch, died before reaching 1,000 years of age indicates that, like Adam, after having been able to initially eat of the tree of life they did eventually sin, perhaps even very quickly, and so they were not allowed to continue eating from it. Therefore, they did not live to be 1,000 years of age. By contrast, the implications for Enoch are interesting and will be covered momentarily.

We should note that some may be hesitant to consider that Adam and Eve ate of the tree of life prior to their sin. However, the text presents no reason for this hesitation. In Genesis 2, God clearly forbids eating fruit only from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was perfectly acceptable for Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of life. In fact, God intended them to. Given that Genesis 3 indicates that Eve was keen to try any fruit that seemed to have some appeal or value and that God allowed Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of life, what reason do we have for objecting to the idea that they did eat from the tree of life prior to their sin? Some may think that they didn't have a chance to eat from the tree of life. But this would require concluding that Adam and Eve sinned very soon after their creation, a conclusion that again is not based on textual detail. Genesis 2-4 provides no indication of the length of time that occurred before Adam and Eve sinned. The only indicator we have regarding a timetable for their first sin comes in Genesis 5:3 where we learn that Adam and Eve were 130 years old when Seth was born, an event which Genesis 4:25-26 indicates took place not long after Abel's death. This leaves 130 years of time starting from Adam and Eve's creation on day six to allow for their sin and expulsion from the garden.

The only other objection stems from Genesis 3:22 in which God declares that man should be expelled from the garden so that he does not "put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." Although this verse clearly demonstrates God's desire to prevent Adam and Eve from eating of the tree of life, it is equally clear that this statement pertains to the present moment forward after Adam and Eve had sinned and on into the future after that point. Consequently, nothing about this statement pertains to the past before their sin. One might take note that God did not expect Adam and Eve to live forever at this point. But this fact cannot prove that Adam and Eve hadn't eaten of the tree of life unless one assumes that one bite would make a man permanently immortal. But it is equally possible that the fruit of this tree was only a supplement that temporarily extended human life. And the text itself gives no prohibitions of this alternate model. And if the tree of life was only a temporary supplement, then Adam and Eve could have eaten of it in the past extending their lives to nearly 1,000 years and yet still needed to eat of it in the future in order to live forever.

Without textual support to the contrary, it becomes difficult to accept any objection that Adam and Eve ate from the tree of life. Likewise, Adam's excessively long lifespan is itself another good indicator that he had eaten from it. After all, when a text presents that mankind were living much longer than today and that there was a tree around at that time that extended human life, the natural and most readily available conclusion is that the text intends us to connect their

long life to the fruit of that tree. No alternative explanation for long lifespans before the Flood has anywhere near as much overt textual support.

This historical pattern of allowing men to eat of the tree of life until they sinned and then expelling them out of fellowship where they would die is also repeated in the communion meal and excommunication. As long as a person remains in good standing with the church and in obedience to Christ's commands, they are allowed to eat of the communion meal, which represents that they have eternal life. This signifies that they will be resurrected immortal when Jesus returns to live and reign with him forever in his kingdom on earth. But those who are excommunicated, although they partook of this meal for a time, will remain separated from the Lord when he returns and will not live in his presence and partake of his kingdom here on earth.

As we study human lifespans in the Genesis accounts, we can see that apparently there was a diminishing residual effect upon the descendants of men who had eaten from the tree, even descendants who did not eat of the tree of life themselves. For example, in the lineage from Shem, which is the only line for whom ages and life spans are given (Genesis 10), the life spans all decrease with almost surprising regularity as the distance from Shem increases (Genesis 11:11-32, 25:7-8, 35:28-29, 47:9, 28, 50:26). (See "patriarchs-age.jpg" diagram.) At (or perhaps sometime before) the Flood, the tree of life ascended into heaven with the rest of Eden (the New Jerusalem, see our article entitled "Origins and Destinations"). (Although it is unlikely that the tree of life existed anywhere on earth outside of Eden, if they did, they would have been destroyed when the Flood wiped out the surface of the earth.) Thus, after the Flood, mankind did not have access to the tree of life and so, without this supplement, their life spans were significantly shortened, until eventually reaching a maximum limit of around 120 years of age.

On this same note, it is interesting that while one or two figures drop down below the norm, which would be explainable if they contracted a disease or met with some accident, etc., none of them ever jumps up above the norm, reversing or constituting an exception to the downward trend.

Further support for the conclusion that early generations of men were able to enter the garden of Eden (before they themselves sin) comes from the phrase "God took." The phrase "God took" is applied to Enoch, and based on a comparison to earlier events, may be intended to mean "took into the garden of Eden" as we see concerning Adam in Genesis 2:15. In Genesis 2:15 we see that God takes Adam from the place where he was formed and places him in the garden of Eden. After Adam's sin man returns to this same ground where he was formed (Gen. 3:23). Therefore, the phrase "God took" with regard to Enoch and Adam may be the converse of being "driven" from Eden. Potentially, the descendants of Adam and Eve (such as Cain or Abel) would be "taken" by God into Eden just as God had once taken Adam into the garden and just as God had driven others out after they sinned. (Like Adam, future generations would need to be "taken by God," perhaps through angelic escorts, because they did not start out in the garden. Since Adam

and Eve or any other intervening parents who had sinned would be outside the garden and not be allowed to take their children in, men from successive generations, like Enoch, would be “taken” into the garden. But even this consideration parallels Adam’s experience, since he, too, was formed outside the garden and only subsequently brought into the garden.)

On this point, we can compare the statements concerning Adam and Enoch as well as the New Testament Greek word in Hebrews 11:5 which describes Enoch being taken. In Genesis, we find that the same Hebrew word that was used to describe Adam being taken and put into the garden of Eden in Genesis 2:15 is used to describe why Enoch was no longer among the rest of mankind in Genesis 5.

Genesis 2:15 And the LORD God took (03947) the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and **now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:** 23 Therefore the LORD God **sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken (03947).**

Genesis 5:21 And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: 22 **And Enoch walked with God** after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: 23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: 24 **And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took (03947) him.**

We also find that the New Testament Greek word used to recount this event concerning Enoch also conveys the idea of simply moving or relocating something.

Hebrews 11:5 By faith **Enoch was translated (3346) that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated (3346) him:** for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

3346 metatithemi

from 3326 and 5087; TDNT-8:161,1176; v

AV-translate 2, carry over 1, remove 1, change 1, turn 1; 6

1) to transpose (two things, one of which is put in place of the other)

1a) to transfer

1b) to change

1c) to transfer one’s self or suffer one’s self to be transferred

1c1) to go or pass over

1c2) to fall away or desert from one person or thing to another

Other examples of the use of “metatithemi” (Strong’s No. 3346) simply mean “relocate” or “move.”

Acts 7:16 And **were carried over (3346) into Sychem**, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor *the father of Sychem*.

Galatians 1:6 I marvel that **ye are (3346) so soon removed (3346) from him** that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

In particular, Hebrews 11:5 at least allows, if not indicates, that Enoch did not die because he was moved by God to a place where he would not see death, which is the converse of Genesis 3:22-24 in which Adam is removed from Eden so that he will die and not live forever. The implication is that Enoch would be taken to the place where he could eat of the tree of life and so never die.

There also seems to be a textual correlation to the idea that those who were in God's presence were walking with him in the garden. Not only did Adam do this before he sinned, but that others, such as Enoch and Noah also likewise walked with God in the garden after Adam's sin. (Compare Genesis 3:8, Genesis 5:22-24, and Genesis 6:9).

Genesis 3:8 And **they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden** in the cool of the day: **and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God** amongst the trees of the garden.

Genesis 5:22 And **Enoch walked with God** after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: 23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: 24 **And Enoch walked with God:** and he was not; for God took him.

Genesis 6:9 These are the generations of Noah: **Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.**

Thus, Enoch was taken, like Adam, and put in the garden to walk with God. Presumably, as we have said, this seems to have been the case with Cain and Abel as well, which is why Cain, like Adam, had to be driven out from God's presence after he sinned. When viewed on their own without viewing the earlier statements, it seems easy to miss the significance of such simple phrases. But, on all these points, the law of first reference seems to direct us quite a bit concerning how to understand such simple phrases when they are used later. This is all the more the case given that the phrases we are discussing are all found in a few short chapters discussing events in a similar setting, the pre-Flood world.

Furthermore, if the phrase "Enoch was taken" does not refer to him being taken off the face of the earth but instead being taken into the garden of Eden as Adam was, then two questions arise. First, wouldn't that mean that Enoch is still living in Eden and, thus, on the face of the earth, when the Flood arises? This is especially pressing given the fact that if Enoch was eating from the tree of life, he would not have died before the Flood. Second, if Enoch was not taken from the

face of the earth but merely taken into Eden, then what would the phrase “Enoch was no more” refer to? Concerning the second question, the phrase “Enoch was no more” clearly does not mean that Enoch ceased to exist, as all parties will agree. Instead, it means that he was no longer among the people. This would be the true meaning of the phrase whether he went to heaven or he went to Eden. Therefore, this interpretation poses no problem.

Concerning the first question, our hypothesis is that Eden is the city known in the New Testament as the New Jerusalem, which has a garden in it, which formerly resided upon the earth in the days of Genesis before the Flood, and which will return again at the millennial reign of Christ Jesus. It is quite plausible that this heavenly city, which Revelation depicts as descending to the surface of the earth, could just as easily have ascended from the surface of the earth at some point prior to the Flood. (For more on this topic, see our article titled, “Origins and Destinations”). Thus, since the theory is that Enoch was taken into the garden of Eden, he would not have been on the surface of the earth during the Flood because he would have left the earth in the New Jerusalem when it ascended into heaven before (perhaps in the days just before) the Flood.

(In addition, the idea that Enoch might have shunned sin and therefore been given the right to eat of the tree of life may also be supported by Jesus’ promise in Revelation 2:7 and mentioned again in Revelation 22:2, 14. These passages indicate that those who overcome will be given the right to eat of the tree of life in the paradise of God. The pattern seems to be identical. Furthermore, if the tree of life is again made available during the 1,000 year reign, first symbolically to the glorified saints who no longer need it as a supplement since they have been made immortal, but also eventually to the natural men in the millennium who abstain from sin, this would also explain Isaiah 60:17-20, which states that in the millennium, men will again live for centuries and that those who die before 100 will be considered accursed. Could it be that during the millennium, natural men will be able to eat of the tree of life if they abstain from sin and not permitted to eat of it if they sin, thus causing them to die before 100 or at least before reaching hundreds of years of age? This would be identical to the theory under examination here in which antediluvian (pre-Flood) patriarchs were allowed to eat of the tree of life until or unless they sinned, which extended their lives to over 900 years.)

These scriptural considerations provide a further exegetical basis for understanding the fall of mankind into sin wherein all men are not punished for Adam’s sin, but rather individuals are punished only for their own sin. This is supported by language and descriptions in early Genesis regarding Adam, Cain, and Enoch indicating that before men sinned they were permitted to enter the garden of Eden, eat of the tree of life, and walk in God’s presence. And this is also supported by the long lifespans of men prior to the Flood. However, when men sinned they were removed from God’s presence and subjected to death (by being deprived of the fruit of the tree of life).

*The Spread of Sin among Mankind**(And Discussion of the Limited Number of Men Who May Not Have Sinned)*

Beginning in the earliest parts of Genesis, we have established that the Calvinist concept in which all of Adam's descendants are punished for Adam's sin is not sustainable. We have encountered at least two men who may have lived without ever having sinned (Abel and Enoch) and therefore having never come to deserve the punishment of death or separation from God. It is therefore of paramount importance to this study to be specific about exactly which other individuals could be considered as potentially dying without having sinned. First and foremost, within a Freewill perspective, the doctrine of original sin is rejected.

Consequently, within a Freewill perspective, Adam's guilt does not transfer to his offspring. As such, any child that dies of sufficiently early age before they are able to do anything that God's Word deems sinful would be dying without having sinned and without guilt.

It remains speculative exactly when a child is old enough and functioning enough to actually make decisions and perform actions that are deemed sinful. Certainly children of just a year or two, as soon as they are able to comprehend speech, are capable of disobeying their parents' instructions. Setting aside the question of whether or not there is an age of accountability, disobeying a parent would most likely constitute the earliest form of sin any child could commit, even if not deemed accountable for it by God.

(The age of accountability is a term used to refer to the age at which a child is deemed old enough by scripture to know right from wrong and so deemed accountable. For instance, consider the Hebrew words employed in Genesis 2:9, 17, Genesis 3:5, 22, and Isaiah 7:16. For a fuller scriptural discussion of this topic please see our study entitled "The Age of Accountability" which can be found on our Redemption studies page.)

Even within a Calvinist theology, which asserts original sin and thereby imputes the guilt of Adam to his offspring, unborn babies and infants are not counted guilty because they have committed sin themselves. They are deemed guilty because they inherit Adam's guilt and sin. Thus, there are no parties asserting the position that children as young as the unborn or infants are committing sins themselves.

So, even if we take an extremely conservative point of view and do not factor in the age of accountability, all unborn children and infants that have died since the creation would have died without committing sin themselves. Therefore, the concept of other persons besides Abel dying without having sinned is included in Freewill theology. And once the concept that other individuals (such as unborn babies and children) have died without having sinned is accepted, there is no longer any reason to simply assume, without evidence and against indications, that someone like Abel, or even Enoch, necessarily must have committed at least some sin.

This leads us to our second group of persons who potentially died without sinning. The first group included all unborn children and infants who have died since creation, which would be a relatively large number of persons. However, it is important to note that although it's a very large group, all of the persons in that first group have died at an extremely young age, a factor that will play a vital role in distinguishing Jesus Christ and retaining his unique qualification as Savior and Redeemer.

The second group of persons who potentially died without sin would include adults. In contrast to the size of the first group, the number of persons who would even potentially fit into the second group is very, very small and limited. First and foremost, this group is limited to a specific period of early human history. Second, it is limited to those individuals within that historical period for which scripture provides at least some degree of indication of their exceptional status. As we will see, this second limitation drastically narrows the number of persons, even before the Flood, who might be considered to have lived or died without sin.

To be specific, the historical period to which this group is limited is the time before the Flood. For reasons we will now explain, the only potential adults that have lived (ex. Enoch) or died (ex. Abel) without sin are limited to those who lived before the Flood.

We must remember that according to the Biblical timeline there were nearly 17 centuries of human history before the Flood is sent in the six-hundredth year of Noah's life (Genesis 7:6). Prior to the arrival of the Flood, God first instructs Noah to build the ark. Genesis 6 describes these events. Assuming that God spoke to Noah about the ark somewhere in the century or two prior to the actual Flood, this would mean that the assessment of mankind's sinfulness found in Genesis 6 dates, at the earliest, to the 15th century after creation. (A timeline of Biblical history is available under the "316 Particulars of Christianity" section of the Bible Study Resource page of our website.)

Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 **And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth;** both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. 9 **These *are* the generations of Noah:** Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God. 10 And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 11 **The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.** 12 **And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.** 13 **And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.** 14 Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. 15 And this *is the fashion* which thou shalt make it *of*: The length of the ark

shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. 16 A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; *with* lower, second, and third *stories* shalt thou make it. 17 **And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh**, wherein *is* the breath of life, from under heaven; *and* every thing that *is* in the earth shall die.

Notice that the narrative begins with an opening assessment of God concerning the sinful state of mankind. The relevant statements are recorded for us in verse 5-7. Notice also that these thoughts and assessments of God are repeated almost identically in verses 11-13 where they are placed within the context of the story of God's interaction with Noah. This tells us the timeframe when God made this assessment.

Notice that verses 8-10 set the timeframe for the narrative as the days of Noah's life. Then verse 11 describes the moral state of the earth in Noah's day. Verse 12 then begins with the phrase "and God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt." Verse 5, the opening statement that summarizes the theme of the narrative, begins the same way, saying, "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth." In both cases, God is looking down at the earth of Noah's day and making an assessment of the state of mankind.

This is very important so it is worth repeating. Verses 5 and 12 both inform us that it is during Noah's lifetime that God "looks down" at the earth and as a result of what he sees *at that time*, makes the assessment that "all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth." Thus, God's statements that the "all flesh has corrupted its way" is NOT an assessment of the 15 centuries of human history from Adam to Noah. It's an assessment of *the state that things had reach by the time of Noah's day*. Consequently, it took time for all flesh to become so pervasively corrupt. This did not occur immediately after Adam's sin. Only in the 15th century of human history did God assess that all mankind had become corrupt and sinful. No such assessment is given by God concerning the state of mankind before the 15th century. Therefore, we are without a biblical basis for insisting that sin was committed by each and every man who lived during the first 1,500 years of creation.

That is not to say that men weren't sinning prior to the 15th century, but that the bible attests that the full permeation of sin was somewhat more gradual. It is as Paul himself states in 1 Corinthians 5:1-8 concerning the "leaven" or "yeast" of wickedness that, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump."

1 Corinthians 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the

power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your glorying is not good. **Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.** For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 **Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.** 9 **I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:** 10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. 11 **But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.** 12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. **Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.**

Here Paul is expressing his concern that if the Corinthians don't purge themselves of such things and particularly purge themselves of this one individual in the church who was committing fornication, that these sinful tendencies would spread to the entire church. Likewise, once sin was present in the world, introduced by the disobedience of Adam, it had to work its way around and it did eventually permeate the whole of mankind. But this was not immediate. Even by the 15th century there was still one household which God deemed "just and perfect," the household of Noah. This leaves open the possibility of lingering traces of men who had not been corrupted or sinned, particularly early on before the "leaven" of sin had time to permeate the whole of men.

But is 1 Corinthians 5 an isolated statement? Or is this a general pattern well-established and well-understood in Judaism?

It is, in fact, not an isolated statement. Hebrews 12 is identical to 1 Corinthians 5 in this regard.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, **let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,** and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers

of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. 12 **Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; 13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.** 14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 **Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator,** or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

Here the author of Hebrews instructs his audience to purge themselves of sin, including to put out from among them sinful persons. He even names “fornication” specifically just as in 1 Corinthians 5. The author also states that the reason for putting out such sinful persons is so that it does not result in a root of bitterness, or sin, springing up and causing many to be defiled by the sinful behavior. Clearly, the permeation of sin model is part of the Jewish understanding of how sin spreads from one man to the whole group in the New Testament.

This leads to another obvious question. Did the Jews interpret the spread of sin according to this permeation model even earlier, in Old Testament itself? The answer is that this model of sin starting with only one person or a small group and then gradually permeating through natural influence is one of the ruling paradigms in the Law of Moses. Moreover, the book of Hebrews is actually quoting a statement from Moses himself who also authored of Genesis, the account of the fall of mankind into sin. As we will continue to discuss, this highly significant fact demonstrates that Moses viewed the fall of mankind into sin in terms of this gradual permeation model, starting from one sinner influencing in turn a whole community. Consider Deuteronomy 29, the source of the “root of bitterness” quote found in Hebrews.

Deuteronomy 29:7 When you reached this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out to fight against us, but we defeated them. 8 We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh. 9 Carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do...16 You yourselves know how we lived in Egypt and how we passed through the countries on the way here. 17 **You saw among them** their detestable images and idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold. 18 **Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the LORD our God** to go and worship the gods of those nations; **make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison.** 19 When such a person hears the words of this oath, he invokes a blessing on himself and therefore thinks, "I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way." **This will bring disaster on the watered land as well as the dry.** 20 The LORD will never be willing to forgive him; his wrath and

zeal will burn against that man. **All the curses written in this book will fall upon him**, and the LORD will **blot out his name** from under heaven. 21 **The LORD will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for disaster, according to all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law...23 The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur--nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in fierce anger.**

Like it's New Testament counterparts in 1 Corinthians 5 and Hebrews 12, Deuteronomy 29:18 is not only the source of the quote "no root of bitterness" found in Hebrews, but it also likewise clearly commands God's people to remove sinful persons from among themselves so that the larger group will not be led astray by their sinful conduct. Here there are some very clear connections to Genesis and the fall of man into sin. And this is important because it tells us that Moses and his audience would have interpreted the fall of men into sin in Genesis in the same terms that we see articulated here. Relevant to this point is the fact that Moses is the author who compiled both Genesis and Deuteronomy 29.

Here in Deuteronomy 29:18 one sinful man acts as a root that can influence others, turning them away from God. The sin is not spread through federation or spiritual transference of some kind, as in the Calvinist model. Instead, sin clearly spreads through the natural processes of influence, exposure, and temptation. Likewise, as seen in verses 19-20, the result is phrased in terms of a curse upon the land. The curses on Adam and Cain in Genesis 3-4 are clearly a curse upon the productivity of fruitful soil. But here the curse is described as something that will affect not just watered, fruitful soil, but also soil that is already dry and unproductive. The inclusion of the dry, unproductive soil makes it unlikely that this is a curse upon soil productivity. In addition, this curse is depicted as the opposite of the "safety" the sinner envisions for himself. Similarly, verses 7-9 remind the Israelites to keep God's commands by reminding them that God attacked and displaced the previous disobedient inhabitants of the land. And lastly, verses 23 compares the disaster on the land to God's fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. These four considerations lead to the conclusion that this curse upon the land comes in the form of an attack from enemies or from God himself. Yet, despite this difference, the punishment is clearly conveyed in terms of the language of Genesis 3-4. And third, in verse 21 the curse is individualized. God "singles the man out" applying the curses only to him rather than to all just as was the case with Adam and Cain. (These last two points will become important later when we consider the individualization of the curse upon the ground in Genesis.)

Notice what happens to Paul's comments concerning Adam and all men in Romans 5 when we interpret it in terms of this early, Mosaic concept: one man becomes a sinner, then other men sin and by sinning themselves, incur the same curse as the first sinner.

Romans 5:12 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:**

Paul is merely applying the exact same pattern as any Jewish teacher would find in Deuteronomy 29. Clearly, neither Paul nor the Old Testament Jews understood a “federal” view for the fall of mankind into sin. Rather, they understood the permeation view, the view in which sin spreads naturally by influence and temptation (rather than by some spiritual inheritance).

We also find this pattern prominently featured in Numbers 16. In this passage, God acknowledges Moses point that it is wrong to destroy a whole congregation for the sin of one man, an event that again demonstrates the flaw in the Calvinist “federalist” model of the fall and the curse. Then God tells the Israelites to separate the sinful from themselves for 2 reasons. First, they were to separate so that the rest of the people wouldn’t be influenced and carried along into their sinful ways. Second, they were to separate so that God could single out the sinful for punishment and leave the rest alone.

Numbers 16:20 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, 21 Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. 22 And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? 23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 24 Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. 25 And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of their's, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.

In fact, as we stated earlier, when we survey some of the most infamously severe passages of the Old Testament, we find that the “gradual permeation” model is a primary ruling paradigm in the Law of Moses: sin spreads from one man to many by natural influence over time. Moreover, even Paul’s use of the metaphor of “purging yeast” to refer to excommunication in 1 Corinthians 5 is based around a famous Old Testament passage about excommunicating the disobedient. Here again in Exodus 12, we can clearly see that individuals were cut off so that the guilty could then be punished for his or her own sins while those who did not sin could be spared.

Exodus 12:15 For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for **whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel...**19 For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is an alien or native-born. 20 Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread." 21 Then **Moses summoned all the elders of Israel** and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. 22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into

the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. 23 **When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.**

And we can see the prominence of this “spread of sin” model in two other ways. First, the underlying basis of this model is evident concerning God’s command for the Israelites to destroy all members of those sinful Canaanite nations because even *a few survivors* would be a snare, influencing and teaching the holy people of Israel to learn sin.

Exodus 23:23 My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the **Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out.** 24 **Do not** bow down before their gods or worship them or **follow their practices. You must demolish them** and break their sacred stones to pieces. 25 Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, 26 and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span...31 "I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the desert to the River. **I will hand over to you the people who live in the land and you will drive them out before you.** 32 **Do not make a covenant with them** or with their gods. 33 **Do not let them live in your land, or they will cause you to sin against me, because the worship of their gods will certainly be a snare to you."**

Exodus 34:11 Obey what I command you today. **I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.** 12 **Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you.** 13 Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. 14 Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. 15 **"Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices.** 16 **And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.**

Deuteronomy 7:1 **When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you- 2 and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. 3 Do not intermarry with them.** Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, 4 **for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against**

you and will quickly destroy you. 5 This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. 6 **For you are a people holy (06918) to the LORD your God...** 16 **You must destroy all the peoples the LORD your God gives over to you. Do not look on them with pity and do not serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you.**

(Notice from the definition below that the word “holy” in part designates the idea of keeping those who do not sin separated from those who do so that sin will not spread.)

qadowsh 06918

Part of Speech: adjective

Outline of Biblical Usage 1) sacred, holy, Holy One, saint, **set apart**

Deuteronomy 12:1 These are the decrees and laws you must be careful to follow **in the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, has given you to possess**—as long as you live in the land. 2 **Destroy completely** all the places on the high mountains and on the hills and under every spreading tree where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods. 3 Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places. 4 You must not worship the LORD your God in their way... 29 **The LORD your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land,** 30 and after they have been destroyed before you, **be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying,** "How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same." 31 You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods. 32 See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.

Second, we can see this paradigm for “how sin spreads” in God’s command that those who committed moral crimes were to be cut off from the people so that the Israelites would learn not to sin and would in this manner purge sin from among themselves. This becomes apparent in the numerous passages cited below.

As we continue we should note that in the quotes below the defiling of the land deals with it becoming “unholy” before God because of the sins of the previous Gentile inhabitants, not with its productivity being diminished. This was a land flowing with milk and honey when the Israelites entered – Exodus 3:8, 17, 13:5, 33:3, Leviticus 20:24, Numbers 13:27, 14:8, 16:13-14, Deuteronomy 6:3, 11:9, 26:9, 15, 27:3, 31:20.

Leviticus 18:1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. 3 **You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices.** 4 You must obey my laws and

be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. 5 Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD. 6 " 'No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the LORD. 7 " 'Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her. 8 " 'Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonor your father. 9 " 'Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere. 10 " 'Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter; that would dishonor you. 11 " 'Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father; she is your sister. 12 " 'Do not have sexual relations with your father's sister; she is your father's close relative. 13 " 'Do not have sexual relations with your mother's sister, because she is your mother's close relative. 14 " 'Do not dishonor your father's brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt. 15 " 'Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife; do not have relations with her. 16 " 'Do not have sexual relations with your brother's wife; that would dishonor your brother. 17 " 'Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness. 18 " 'Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living. 19 " 'Do not approach a woman to have sexual relations during the uncleanness of her monthly period. 20 " 'Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife and defile yourself with her. 21 " 'Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed [a] to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD. 22 " 'Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable. 23 " 'Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion. 24 " **'Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled.** 25 Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. 26 But you must keep my decrees and my laws. **The native-born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things, 27 for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled.** 28 And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you. 29 " **'Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people.** 30 Keep my requirements and **do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them.** I am the LORD your God.' "

Leviticus 20:1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Say to the Israelites: 'Any Israelite or any alien living in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech must be put to death. The people of the community are to stone him. 3 I will set my face against that man and I will cut him off from his people; for by giving his children to Molech, he has defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name. 4 If the people of the community close their eyes when that man gives one of his children to Molech and they fail to put him to death, 5 I will set my face against that man and

his family and will cut off from their people both him and all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molech. 6 " **'I will set my face against the person who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute himself by following them, and I will cut him off from his people.** 7 " **'Consecrate yourselves and be holy,** because I am the LORD your God. 8 Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy. 9 " **'If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death.** He has cursed his father or his mother, and his blood will be on his own head. 10 " **'If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.** 11 " **'If a man sleeps with his father's wife, he has dishonored his father. Both the man and the woman must be put to death;** their blood will be on their own heads. 12 " **'If a man sleeps with his daughter-in-law, both of them must be put to death.** What they have done is a perversion; their blood will be on their own heads. 13 " **'If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death;** their blood will be on their own heads. 14 " **'If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. Both he and they must be burned in the fire, so that no wickedness will be among you.** 15 " **'If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he must be put to death, and you must kill the animal.** 16 " **'If a woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it, kill both the woman and the animal. They must be put to death;** their blood will be on their own heads. 17 " **'If a man marries his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother, and they have sexual relations, it is a disgrace. They must be cut off before the eyes of their people.** He has dishonored his sister and will be held responsible. 18 " **'If a man lies with a woman during her monthly period and has sexual relations with her, he has exposed the source of her flow, and she has also uncovered it. Both of them must be cut off from their people.** 19 " **'Do not have sexual relations with the sister of either your mother or your father, for that would dishonor a close relative; both of you would be held responsible.** 20 " **'If a man sleeps with his aunt, he has dishonored his uncle. They will be held responsible; they will die childless.** 21 " **'If a man marries his brother's wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonored his brother. They will be childless.** 22 " **'Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out.** 23 **You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you.** Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. 24 **But I said to you, "You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey."** I am the LORD your God, who has set you apart from the nations. 25 " **'You must therefore make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground—those which I have set apart as unclean for you.** 26 **You are to be holy to me** because I, the LORD, am holy, and **I have set you apart from the nations** to be my own. 27 " **'A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death.** You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads.' "

Deuteronomy 13:1 **If a prophet,** or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, 2 and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, **and he says, "Let us follow other**

gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," 3 **you must not listen to the words of that prophet** or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. 5 **That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God,** who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; **he has tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded** you to follow. **You must purge the evil from among you.** 6 **If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you,** saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods that neither you nor your fathers have known, 7 gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), 8 **do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity. Do not spare him or shield him.** 9 **You must certainly put him to death. Your hand must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people.** 10 Stone him to death, because he tried to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 11 **Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.** 12 **If you hear it said about one of the towns** the LORD your God is giving you to live in 13 that wicked men have arisen among you and have **led the people of their town astray, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods"** (gods you have not known), 14 then you must inquire, probe and investigate it thoroughly. And if it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done among you, 15 **you must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. Destroy it completely, both its people and its livestock.**

Deuteronomy 17:1 Do not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep that has any defect or flaw in it, for that would be detestable to him. 2 **If a man or woman living among you in one of the towns the LORD gives you is found doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God in violation of his covenant,** 3 and contrary to my command has worshiped other gods, bowing down to them or to the sun or the moon or the stars of the sky, 4 and this has been brought to your attention, then you must investigate it thoroughly. If it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, 5 **take the man or woman who has done this evil deed to your city gate and stone that person to death.** 6 On the testimony of two or three witnesses a man shall be put to death, but no one shall be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. 7 The hands of the witnesses must be the first in putting him to death, and then the hands of all the people. **You must purge the evil from among you.**

Deuteronomy 21:18 If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, 19 **his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town.** 20 They shall say to the elders, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard." 21 **Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.**

Deuteronomy 22:13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, 14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: 15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth *the tokens of* the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: 16 And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; 17 And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech *against her*, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these *are the tokens of* my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18 And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; 19 And they shall amerce him in an hundred *shekels* of silver, and give *them* unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. 20 **But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel:** 21 **Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you.**

Deuteronomy 22:22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, *both* the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. 23 **If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;** 24 **Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, *being* in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.**

Leviticus 24:13 Then the LORD said to Moses: 14 **"Take the blasphemer outside the camp.** All those who heard him are to lay their hands on his head, and **the entire assembly is to stone him.** 15 Say to the Israelites: 'If anyone curses his God, he will be held responsible; 16 anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD **must be put to death. The entire assembly must stone him.** Whether an alien or native-born, when he blasphemes the Name, he **must be put to death.**...32 While the Israelites were in the desert, a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath day. 33 Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly, 34 and they kept him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. 35 Then the LORD said to Moses, **"The man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp."** 36 **So the assembly took him outside the camp and stoned him to death,** as the LORD commanded Moses.

Exodus 31:12 Then the LORD said to Moses, 13 **"Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy (06942).** 14 **" Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who**

desecrates it must be put to death; whoever does any work on that day must be cut off from his people.

Again, notice from the definition below that the word “holy” in part designates the idea of keeping those who do not sin separated from those who do so that sin will not spread.

qadash 06942

Part of Speech: verb

Outline of Biblical Usage

1) to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate, be hallowed, be holy, be sanctified,

be separate

a) (Qal)

1) to be set apart, be consecrated

2) to be hallowed...

Once again, here at the end of this list of Old Testament passages we have to ask an obvious question. Given the fact that Moses repeatedly impressed upon the Israelites that allowing one sinner in their midst would eventually spread through natural processes of influence and temptation, how would Moses (the author of Genesis) and his fellow Israelites have understood Genesis’ record of how the earth became filled with sin? How would they have understood the course of events from Adam’s first sin to God’s assessment 15 centuries later that the human population had by that time become so permeated with sin that only one righteous man remained (Noah)?

The answer is plain. Even the Jewish authors of the New Testament understood that sin enters a population beginning with a small start, even one man, and then gradually spreads through normal processes such as influence and temptation. We must not forget that Paul was a Jewish man, thoroughly schooled in the Old Testament. It was against the backdrop of this mountain of explicit Old Testament passages describing this gradual-permeation model of sin that Paul wrote “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” (Romans 5:12). Consequently, there can be no doubt that Paul meant this statement as an assertion of the gradual-permeation model.

This is especially obvious in light of the fact that such doctrines as “federalism,” “original sin,” and “total depravity” are shown to absolutely no explicit attestation in either the early or the later Old Testament and even the fleeting indirect attempts to support these concepts are shown to dissolve in light of scrutiny. (See our main Calvinism outline.)

Conversely, the Old Testament does explicitly repudiate punishing one man for another’s sins or punishing children for their fathers’ sins. The Old Testament is explicit that each man is to be judged and punished only for his own sins.

Deuteronomy 24:16 Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin.

2 Kings 14:6 Yet he did not put the sons of the assassins to death, in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the LORD commanded: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins."

2 Chronicles 25:4 Yet he did not put their sons to death, but acted in accordance with what is written in the Law, in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded: "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins."

Jeremiah 31:29 In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. **30** But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

Ezekiel 18:1 The word of the LORD came unto me again, saying, **2** What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? **3** As I live, saith the Lord GOD, ye shall not have *occasion* any more to use this proverb in Israel. **4** Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. **5** But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, **6** And hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, neither hath defiled his neighbour's wife, neither hath come near to a menstruous woman, **7** And hath not oppressed any, *but* hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; **8** He *that* hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, *that* hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, **9** Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD. **10** If he beget a son *that is* a robber, a shedder of blood, and *that doeth the like to any one of these things*, **11** And that doeth not any of those *duties*, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife, **12** Hath oppressed the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, **13** Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: **shall he then live? he shall not live: he hath done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon him.** **14** Now, lo, *if* he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, **15** *That* hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbour's wife, **16** Neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, *but* hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, **17** *That* hath taken off his hand from the poor, *that* hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; **he shall not die for the**

iniquity of his father, he shall surely live. 18 *As for his father*, because he cruelly oppressed, spoiled his brother by violence, and did *that* which *is* not good among his people, **lo, even he shall die in his iniquity.** 19 **Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live.** 20 **The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.** 21 **But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.** 22 **All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.** 23 **Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?** 24 **But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.** 25 **Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?** 26 **When a righteous *man* turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die.** 27 **Again, when the wicked *man* turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.** 28 **Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.** 29 **Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?** 30 **Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.** 31 **Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?** 32 **For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.**

Ezekiel 33:11 Say unto them, **As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?** 12 **Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his *righteousness* in the day that he sinneth.** 13 **When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.** 14 **Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is**

lawful and right; 15 *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, **without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.** 16 None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live. 17 Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. 18 When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. 19 But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. 20 Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, **I will judge you every one after his ways.**

In this section of our study we have shown biblical support for the idea that some humans lived and died without having sinned. So far this has included Abel, Enoch, unborn babies and young children, as well as a potential group of people who lived before the Flood. We have also shown, beginning early in Genesis and continuing into the New Testament that men are not punished for Adam's sins, nor children for the sins of their fathers. And we have seen that the biblical model for the fall of mankind into sin is not a Calvinistic "federal" model whereby all men are counted guilty and punished for Adam's sin. Rather, from Moses to Paul, scripture teaches that sin spreads gradually among men and that this spread results not from heredity or programming, but through natural means such as influence and temptation.

In the section below we will continue to evaluate scriptural statements that have been used to support the idea that all men have sinned.