



OPEN BIBLE SCHOOL

Soteriology Course

Session 2

Where Do Babies Come From? Are We All Sinners From Birth?

ANCHOR TEXTS

1 Peter 1:10-12

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Hebrews 1:1-3

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

2 Peter 3:15-18

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

SESSION QUESTIONS

This session seeks to answer two foundational questions that sit at the heart of our soteriology:

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Where do babies come from?

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Are we all sinners from birth? If no, why do we need salvation?

QUESTION 1 — WHERE DO BABIES COME FROM?

The Word "Adam" in Genesis

We begin with a word study in Genesis, using our Strong's Concordance.

NOTE

The word "Man" in Genesis 1:26 is the Hebrew word Adam. This same word appears throughout Genesis: 1:27; 2:5; 2:7; 2:8; 2:15; 2:16; 2:18. In Genesis 2:19, the man is explicitly called Adam by name. And in Genesis 5:1-2, Moses states that he called them — both male and female — Adam.

Moses uses the word Adam to refer both to the male specifically and to male and female together. The word is not a personal name alone — it is a category.

NOTE

Genesis 1:26 becomes an opening theme of Scripture. Notice the word "image" — this will become increasingly significant as we progress through this course.

The Mandate of Genesis 1:26-28

God gives humanity a threefold mandate in these verses. Read them carefully:

THE MANDATE — Genesis 1:26-28

1. Have dominion
2. Be fruitful
3. Multiply and replenish the earth

Tracing the Mandate Through Scripture

Now read Genesis 6:1 — "When men began to multiply on the face of the earth..." Are they fulfilling the mandate?

NOTE

Word Study: The word for "multiply" in Genesis 1:28 is the Hebrew word *rabah*, meaning to increase. The word used in Genesis 6:1 is *rabab*. Moses is deliberate — men were indeed multiplying, fulfilling the original mandate of creation.

Now read Genesis 3:22-4:1. Adam knew Eve his wife and they multiplied. The very first human reproduction recorded in Scripture is in Genesis 4:1.

Discussion

In Genesis 4:1-2, it appears that Cain and Abel might have been twins. What do you think?

Consider the language and sequence of the text carefully. What clues does Moses give us?

Twins in the Bible

The Bible records several instances of twins. Study the following references:

TWINS	REFERENCE	NOTE
Jacob & Esau	Genesis 25:22-26	<i>The struggle began in the womb</i>
Perez & Zerah	Genesis 38	<i>Zerah pulled back his hand first</i>
Thomas Didymus	John 11:16; 20:24; 21:2	<i>Both Thomas (Aramaic) and Didymus (Greek) mean "twin"</i>

NOTE

Thomas was a very common Aramaic name in the time of Jesus. The fact that John gives both the Aramaic and Greek forms of the name suggests his twin identity was well known to the community.

Tracing the Fruitfulness Mandate Further

The mandate to be fruitful and multiply does not disappear after the Fall. Trace it through Scripture:

REFERENCE	NOTE
Genesis 9:18-29	Noah's family continues the mandate after the flood. Sexual sin and its consequences also appear here.
Genesis 12:1-2	God re-announces the Genesis 1:26-28 mandate to Abraham — I will make you a great nation, I will bless you.
Genesis 16:3-4	An agricultural word is used here for Abraham — like going into the soil. The language of fertility and seeding is intentional.
Genesis 19	Sexual immorality at Sodom and Gomorrah — the mandate distorted by sin.
Genesis 21:1-2; 25:1-2; 29:31-34; 30:1-24	God gives, opens, and closes the womb. He remains sovereign over human reproduction throughout Genesis.

NOTE

God gives man the agency to be fruitful, to multiply, and to fill the earth — to make his baby. This is why the Virgin Birth is the greatest miracle of the Incarnation. For the first and only time in history, a human being was born without the agency of man.

QUESTION 2 — ARE WE ALL SINNERS FROM BIRTH?

If man makes his baby — is his baby a sinner? Are we all sinners in Adam?

Genesis 3:15-16

"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children..."

What is Original Sin?

In Christian theology, original sin (Latin: *peccatum originale*) is the condition of sinfulness that all humans share, inherited from Adam and Eve due to the Fall. It involves the loss of original righteousness and the distortion of the image of God.

The biblical basis is generally found in three texts:

- Genesis 3 — the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden
- Psalm 51:5 — "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me"
- Romans 5:12-21 — "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned"

NOTE

Historical note: The doctrine of original sin was developed in the 2nd century in the struggle against Gnosticism by Irenaeus of Lyons, and shaped significantly by Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) — the first author to use the phrase "original sin." The Councils of Carthage (411-418 AD) and Orange (529 AD) brought this doctrine into the official lexicon of the Church.

AUGUSTINE'S VIEW OF ORIGINAL SIN

In Augustine's view, original sin is not just the first sin committed by Adam and Eve — it is the inherited condition of guilt and corruption passed down to all their descendants. He identifies three components:

COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Original Guilt (Reatus)	Every human is born legally guilty before God because we were "in the loins of Adam" when he sinned.
Original Pollution (Macula)	Our human nature is inherently damaged or "bent" toward evil.
Concupiscence	A disordered desire where the lower passions — lust, greed, pride — rule over the mind and will.

THE CHALLENGE OF PELAGIUS

Pelagius was a British (or possibly Irish) monk who arrived in Rome around 380 AD. He was known for his strict self-discipline and deep personal holiness. When he arrived in Rome, he was shocked by the low moral standards of the city's Christians.

The catalyst came when he heard a bishop quote Augustine's famous prayer: "Give what You command, and command what You will." Pelagius was deeply troubled — he felt this implied that humans were puppets who could not obey God unless God forced them to.

Pelagius' Core Arguments

Pelagius built his theology on three main pillars:

A. The "Unspoiled" Human Nature

Pelagius argued that Adam's sin affected only Adam. Every human is born with a clean slate (tabula rasa), possessing the same capacity for good as Adam had before the Fall.

- If sin is inherited, then it is a physical thing or a biological necessity. But if sin is necessary, it cannot truly be called sin, because sin must be a free choice of the will.
- "Everything good and everything evil... is done by us, not born with us." — Pelagius

B. Possibility, Will, and Act

Pelagius broke down human action into three parts to show where God's role ends and humanity's begins:

ELEMENT	LATIN TERM	SOURCE
Possibility — the capacity to do good	<i>Posse</i>	From God
Will — the decision to do good	<i>Velle</i>	From Man
Act — the actual doing of good	<i>Esse</i>	From Man

NOTE

In other words: God gave us the hardware — the capacity. But we provide the software — the choice and the action. Pelagius saw grace as external: the Law showed us the way, and Jesus was the ultimate Good Example. He denied that grace was an internal power that changes the heart.

C. Pelagius' Key Texts

Pelagius drew on the following Scriptures to support his arguments:

PELAGIUS' KEY TEXTS

Jeremiah 17:9 | Ephesians 2:1-3, 8-9 | Matthew 5:48 | Ezekiel 18:20 | Genesis 5:24 | Job 1:1 | Deuteronomy 30:11-14

THE BATTLEGROUND — INFANT BAPTISM

Infant baptism (paedobaptism) is the practice of baptizing newborns or young children to initiate them into the Christian faith. In the 4th and 5th centuries, it became the central battleground where Augustine and Pelagius fought over the nature of human sin.

When Did It Start?

The Apostolic Origin (c. 1st-2nd Century)

Many historians and theologians argue that the practice began with the Apostles themselves.

- Scriptural Inference: They point to household baptisms in Acts — the household of Lydia (Acts 16:15) and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:33). In the Greco-Roman world, a household (oikos) included everyone from the head of the house to the youngest infants.
- Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 180 AD) wrote that Christ came to save "all who through him are born again to God — infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men."

The Developed Practice (c. 3rd Century)

The first explicit mentions of infant baptism appear in the early 200s AD.

- Hippolytus of Rome (c. 215 AD) in The Apostolic Tradition: "Baptize first the children, and if they can speak for themselves let them do so. Otherwise, let their parents or other relatives speak for them."
- Origen (c. 248 AD): He explicitly stated that "the Church received from the Apostles the tradition of giving baptism even to infants."

Augustine vs. Pelagius on Infant Baptism

By the time of Augustine (c. 400 AD), baptizing infants was already a widespread, centuries-old tradition in the Church. The liturgy included exorcisms and a specific declaration for the remission of sins.

NOTE

Augustine used this established practice as a trap for Pelagius. His argument was simple: If the Church baptizes babies for the forgiveness of sins, what sins are being forgiven in a newborn?

AUGUSTINE'S VIEW	PELAGIUS' VIEW
Baptism is medicine for a spiritually sick baby. Infants are born with Original Sin inherited from Adam and need the guilt washed away.	Baptism is an adoption ceremony into the family of God. Infants are born innocent — baptism is not forgiveness but an upgrade into the Kingdom.
Unbaptized infants carry the stain of Adam and cannot enter the Kingdom. This later led to the medieval concept of Limbo.	Innocent unbaptized infants still receive eternal life. Baptism unlocks a higher status — becoming a co-heir with Christ.

The Council of Carthage (418 AD)

The debate ended in a crushing defeat for Pelagius. The African bishops issued Canon 2:

Canon 2 — Council of Carthage, 418 AD

"Whosoever says that... infants newly born from their mothers' wombs should not be baptized... or says that they are baptized for the remission of sins, but that they derive no original sin from Adam... let him be anathema."

By law, the Church officially tied infant baptism to the doctrine of Inherited Guilt. From 418 AD onward, the Western Church officially defined every baby as being born guilty of Adam's sin.

CLOSING DISCUSSION

Discussion

How true do we think this is? What happens to babies?

Read Deuteronomy 1:34-40 carefully. What does God's response to the children of Israel tell us about how He views those who have not yet come to the age of understanding? What does this mean for our soteriology?

If man makes his baby — is his baby a sinner? And if so, what does that mean for the one who saves?



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