

7—The Origin of Sin

“The Story of the Church”

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1. Augustine of Hippo

- A. Raised in Thugaste, North Africa (354)
- B. At 17 he goes to Carthage to study Rhetoric
 - 1) Leaves Christianity for Manichaeism
 - 2) Brags about his sexual exploits, “Lord give me chastity, but not yet.”
 - 3) Meets with the Manichaean Bishop and leaves disappointed
- C. In 384 he takes a position teaching rhetoric in Milan
- D. In Summer of 386 he has his conversion experience
 - 1) He hears a childlike voice say, “Take up and read!”
 - 2) He turns to Romans 13:13-14, “Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” (KJV)
 - 3) Ambrose baptizes him on Easter, 387
- E. In 395 he is appointed the Bishop of Hippo
 - 1) Writes *Confessions* in 397, a testimony and theological treatise
 - 2) Writes *City of God* in 410 after the sacking of Rome
- F. In 398 a decree from Emperor Honorius give Augustine magisterial power

2. Pelagius Backstory

- A. A British Monk reads Latin and Greek and teaches Christian ethics
 - 1) Arrives in Rome around 400 and is dismayed at the debaucher of the Christians
 - 2) Writes a *On Nature* questioning the logic of the Augustinian theory
- B. In 410 the Visigoths invade Rome and he is forced to flee to Carthage
- C. His friend Caelesius is condemned, Pelagius flees to Palestine
- D. In 415 the Synod of Diospolis puts him on trial for heresy (14 bishops) declare him to be orthodox
- E. In 416 two synods in North Africa retry Pelagius and Caelestius
 - 1) Based on Caelestius version and Augustine’s interpretation
 - 2) The North African bishops declare them heretics in their absence
- F. In 417 Pope Innocent I excommunicates Pelagius and Caelestius
 - 1) Pelagius sends Letter in Justification and Statement of Faith to Rome
 - 2) Pope Innocent dies before receiving them
- G. 418 the Synod of Carthage demands Pelagius confess salvation by grace
 - 1) Pelagius signs a statement, but is exiled anyway
- H. Zosimus makes Augustine’s doctrine the new test of orthodoxy

3. The Augustinian Theory of Sin

- A. Original Sin
 - 1) Passed on through sexual relations
 - 2) Nature is totally corrupted by sin
- B. Will is free but only chooses to sin
- C. Monergistic Grace
- D. Predestination to eternal life
 - 1) Justification of sin by a gift of grace
 - 2) Those who are not elect suffer perdition

4. The Pelagian Theology of Sin

- A. Free will is a part of our God-given nature
- B. God gives us His law (Old and New Testaments)
- C. We make a choice whether to obey or not
 - 1) Will we obey God's Word?
 - 2) Will we be led of the Spirit?
 - 3) Will we submit to God's grace?
- D. Sin is a wrongful action, not a substance
- E. Grace is manifest in the entire process

5. Is original sin in Romans?

- A. Romans 3:22-24

There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

 - 1) Pelagius: "The apostle was manifestly speaking of the then existing generation, that is, the Jews and the Gentiles."
- B. Romans 5:12

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man [Adam], and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.

 - 1) Latin—*in quo omnes peccaverunt*—"in whom all sinned"
 - 2) Greek—*éph hó pántes hémarton*—"in that (because) all sinned"
 - 3) Pelagius: "The statement that 'all sinned in Adam' was not made because of the sin which is derived from one's birth, but because of imitation of him."