

LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #12
"Total Inability: The Fall of Man"
(Scriptures from NKJV)

NOTE: Much of the text herein is quoted directly or paraphrased from the book, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* by Lorraine Boettner.

We continue again in the topic of the Doctrine of Predestination. This will be the twelfth lesson in that series, and under a subtitle of The Depravity of Man. In the previous lessons, we have looked at Man's Total Inability, how intensiveness and extensiveness it is. Last week we looked at Man's Total Inability and the defects in man's good deeds. What is wrong with man's good deeds? His good deeds arise from selfish motives. Man doesn't do his good deeds for the glory of God, and therefore they are unacceptable.

We now move into the topic of "The Fall of Man." Just how important is it to understand the doctrine of the fall of man? It is absolutely crucial and foundational to the doctrine of redemption in Christ Jesus. If the fall is not properly understood, one will never thoroughly understand the doctrine of the remedy, which is in Christ. The fall of the human race into a state of sin and misery is the basis and foundation of the system of redemption that is set forth in the Scriptures, as it is the basis and foundation of the Calvinistic and reformed system which we are setting forth. Now my evaluation is not infallible and will not be accepted by those who hold to other positions, but it is still my conclusion that only Calvinists seem to take the doctrine of the fall very seriously, and if you have a low view of the fall, you cannot have a high view of the redemption that is in Christ. Yet the Bible from the beginning to the end declares that man is totally ruined, that he is in a state of guilt and depravity from which he is utterly unable to deliver himself, and that God in justice might have left the entire human race to perish as He did the fallen angels. So here is a question to consider in the fall of man - when man fell in the garden, how far did he fall? Did he just fall and skin his knees and all he needs is a good band-aid with some instructions to follow, or does he need an absolute resurrection from the dead spiritually. What you believe about that is going to affect your other beliefs in regard to the doctrine of election and redemption in Christ, the calling of the Holy Spirit, and the work of perseverance and preservation.

The narrative, or the historical description concerning the fall is found in the third chapter of Genesis, but we are not going to go there. However, we will look at New Testament references which refer to it. We will look at Romans 5:21, I Corinthians 15:22, II Corinthians 11:3 and I Timothy 2:13-14. It is important to note in our understanding of this, that the New Testament does not emphasize the historical fact that man fell, but the ethical fact that he is fallen. The historical narrative is found in Genesis, the ethical explanation is found in the New Testament. That is, the New Testament explains the meaning of what took place in Genesis. Go back to the Book of Genesis chapter 3, and we find that God had told Adam that in the day he ate thereof, he would surely die, but we don't have a lot of ethical explanation there. It is the New Testament writers that give us,

not the history, but the ethical interpretation of what took place in the third chapter of Genesis. The New Testament writers interpreted the fall literally and based their theology upon it. They did not view it as a myth or merely as a story from which we might glean some ethical moral value, but they understood it as a real occurrence in history. To the Apostle Paul, Adam was as real as Christ, and the fall was as real as the atonement.

It can be maintained by those who do not believe the Bible, that the Apostles were in error in their understanding of the fall, but that this was their true understanding and position cannot be denied. I will repeat that. You can, if you please, deny that the Apostles were correct. You can say they mistakenly set forth error in interpreting Genesis 3, but you cannot deny that they held to that. Let's look at these texts of Scripture.

Romans 5:12-21 - ***"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world,"*** Who would that one man be? Adam. ***"and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned – (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come."*** Notice that expression, Adam's sin was a specific type of sin. It is always tempting to stray from the reading of this text and deal with it verse by verse, but that is not my purpose, we are just trying to look at the fact that man sinned in Adam. Verse 15, ***"But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many."*** Interrupting the reading, do you see that information is not found in Genesis 3? Paul is giving us the full expanded effect of what happened morally in Genesis 3 and the fall. Verse 16, ***"And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification."*** You see, we are condemned in Adam, but we have righteousness through another Man who has represented us. ***"For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)"*** Notice again, one man's (Adam's) actions affected the rest of the totality of his descendants, and Christ's actions also affect those who become inheritors of eternal life. Verse 18, ***"Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life."*** We have pointed out numerous times that you cannot be in a state of justification and condemnation at the same time. Justification takes you out of a state of condemnation. Therefore, we are born into this world through our physical birth under condemnation because of the action of another

man, namely Adam in his fall. And we receive a spiritual birth through the work of Jesus Christ by His act of having our sins imputed to Him on the cross, so that by trusting in Him, we are justified--just as if we had never sinned, or never would sin. We are removed from a state of condemnation of what we inherited in Adam, and now we have been placed as God's people into a state of justification, because we are now in Christ. We are no longer in Adam. Verse 19, ***"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous."*** By disobedience I became a sinner, Adam represented me, and by Christ's obedience, I have become righteous in His sight. So it is not through my trying to do works and actions of obedience on my own part in order to bring about my justification. It took nothing less than Jesus Christ and His life of perfection to be charged to my account, because I could never provide the sinless life of perfection which God required out of Adam. Another person has to do that, and that is none other than Jesus Christ. ***"Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."*** This, my hearers, is known as the fall of man. The fall has ruined man and Christ has recovered His people by bringing them by His grace through faith to trust, not in themselves and their own activity, but in Christ and Him alone and His activity.

Now lets look at I Corinthians 15:21-26 - ***"For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead."*** (Two men, Adam and Christ.) Verse 22, ***"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming."*** Now it is not denied that all men will be resurrected, be they saved or unsaved, but the Corinthian passage is focusing and narrowing its attention upon the resurrection of the saved. Let's read it again - ***"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits,"*** that is, He is the firstfruit of the resurrection. He came forth first and ***"afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death."*** Death is destroyed in the resurrection, and the resurrection occurs at the second coming of Christ. He said, ***"Because I live, you shall live also."*** (John 14:19). Christ is the firstfruit from the dead. He was raised first. All those who are in spiritual union with Him, shall be raised at His coming. When Christ comes, the dead in Christ who have already died will be raised first, and, ***"then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."*** (I Thessalonians 4:17). The believer's hope for life hereafter

is to be with Christ, which certainly eliminates the hope of many who have a hope of life after this life, but don't have any focus on Christ. Their hope is focused on what they want in this life, and they hope that their unfulfilled dreams and hopes will be carried over into perfection in the life to come. But the believer's Biblical hope is to be like Christ at His coming - sinless as Adam was prior to the fall.

Now let me read to you a quote from Dr. A. A. Hodge in his statement concerning the fall.

As a fair probation could not, in the nature of the case, be given to every new member in person as it comes into existence an undeveloped infant, God, as guardian of the race and for its best interests, gave all its members a trial in the person of Adam under the most favorable circumstances.

Have you ever thought of that? Rather than giving each member of the human race a probationary trial when they first come into this world, Adam was given a probationary trial as a representative, and he was put in a sinless environment. Aren't you glad that God didn't give us a probationary test under the influence of this sinful fallen world? Those who deny the fall, deny that man is born with original sin, or with a sinful nature, and that he is under a probationary act, just like Adam. Is it not interesting then that all of these individuals commit sin? Would you not think that if each one was still under a probationary act individually, that we would surely have somebody live a sinless life? Why does everybody sin? Because we have inherited a nature that has been infused in us from Adam, so that we repeat, Adam was put on a probationary trial, and as he goes, so goes the race. Some may say, "Well, that is not fair. I wanted to stand on my own." Well, I have learned it is far better to have a representative in Adam than to try to represent myself. Because if that is true, I have to provide, not just a few good deeds, but I have to provide 100% perfection. Hypothetically, say if I enter the world sinless and if I blow it, I cannot provide perfection. But there is hope because if it is true that Adam as our representative has brought condemnation upon us, there is another, namely Jesus Christ, who can give us hope. For He endured the probationary test. He lived 33 years without sin and died on the cross, not for His own sin, but for the sins of others. So that we have a hope that there is a sinless perfect One who has come forth from the dead and is now seated on the right hand of God as the Mediator between God and man. I can go and cast myself upon His mercy and trust in His righteousness, not in my righteousness. This, in essence, is the gospel. Picking up Dr. Hodge's statement again, where we left off. . .

. . . gave all its members a trial in the person of Adam under the most favorable circumstances – making him for that end the representative and personal substitute of each one of his natural descendants. He formed with him a covenant of works and of life; i.e., He gave to him for himself, and in behalf of all whom he represented, a promise of eternal life, conditioned upon perfect obedience, – that is, upon works. The obedience demanded was a

specific test for a temporary period of time, which period of time must necessarily be closed (or completed) either by the reward consequent upon obedience, or the death consequent upon disobedience. The "reward" promised (to Adam) was eternal life, which was a grace including far more than was originally bestowed upon Adam at his creation, the grant of which would have elevated Adam's descendants into a condition of indefeasible holiness and happiness for ever.

I interrupt his quote again and rephrase that from another angle. Adam had life, but it was not confirmed life. He knew God, and to know God is to have life - communion with God. But he had not been confirmed in that life so that it was possible for him to lose it. Do you understand? He has life, but he can lose that life if he eats of the tree. We enter into speculative theology at this point, and I have wondered what would have been the result if Adam had not sinned, and he produced human beings. We would have all had a life of perfected holiness because Adam stood the test. I have reflected upon all of those things, and it reaches the point where you just have to pull off your shoes . . . I have wondered if the fall had not occurred, what would have happened to all the animals? How would God have handled the over population of the animals? I don't know, so we just have to leave this, as the Bible doesn't tell us about that. Picking up Dr. Hodge's quote again.

The 'penalty' threatened and executed was death: ***"The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."***

There was no question about it, Adam. You will have life as long as you continue in well-doing and obedience till a certain period determined by God takes place in which you will be confirmed. But in the day that you eat thereof, the moment you do so, you shall surely die. It is imperative that we understand what was meant by that death, what it contained. That is where the New Testament writers do the explanation of that. Picking up his quote again.

The nature of the death threatened can be determined only from a consideration of all that was involved in the curse actually inflicted.

That is, we now start going through the Bible and we find the effects of the curse of what occurred and was inflicted upon Adam and his descendants.

This we know to have included the instant withdrawal of the divine favor and spiritual intercommunion upon which man's life depended.

God withdrew his favor from Adam, and Adam knew something was wrong immediately. He enjoyed being able to commune with God in the garden, but when he sinned, he immediately knew he had lost the favor and the approval of God, and this is evidenced by what he did. He went and hid. He was ashamed that he could no longer enjoy God. This is what is meant by death. The natural unregenerate man cannot enjoy God. According to the Confession, what is the chief end of man? *"The chief end of man is to glorify God and to*

enjoy Him forever." Now Adam knows that by his sin he has not glorified God, and now he can no longer enjoy God. As we saw last week, fallen man may use God for self-interests, but he can't enjoy communion with God. He can't be intimate with his Creator. Picking up the quote. . .

Hence the alienation and curse of God; involves the sense of guilt and corruption of nature; consequent actual transgressions, the miseries of life, the dissolution of the body, the pains of hell. (A. A. Hodge, Pamphlet, *Presbyterian Doctrine*, pp. 19, 20).

I will read those again. What is involved in the term "death?" It is the loss of Divine favor and communion with God, and to be under the curse of God. Man has a sense of guilt. He knows he is a sinner, and he feels the corruption of his nature. He is aware of his actual transgressions. He knows good and evil as a moral being, and his conscience tells him when he does wrong. He knows that he is being exposed to a life of misery. He knows that when he dies, that the death of the body is going to dissolve back to the dust of the earth, and is not going to exist forever. He also knows that he will be exposed to the pangs of hell in the hereafter. This is what is meant by "death."

The consequences of Adam's death are all comprehended under the term "death," in its widest sense. Paul gives us the summary statement that **"The wages of sin is death."** (Romans 6:23). All of these things have come upon Adam as a result of sin, and his descendants have inherited those wages. The full import of the death which was threatened to Adam can only be seen by considering all the evil consequences which have since befallen man. It was primarily spiritual death, or eternal separation from God, which was threatened; and physical death, or the death of the body, is but one of the first fruits and relatively unimportant consequences of that greater penalty. Why do I say that? I say so because Adam did not die physically the moment he sinned, but he lived 930 years after the fall. However, he did die spiritually the very moment he fell into sin. Those who deny this are denying the reality of the Scripture here--the way the Apostles are explaining the fall. They are affirming that all men who come into this world as infants are innocent, holy and right, just like Adam was, and then they lose their innocency by sinning in their probationary state. Adam died just as really as the fish dies when taken from the water, or as the plant dies when taken from the soil.

Let's look at I Timothy 2:13-14. We will read the text and make some observations. - **"Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."** Remember the text in Romans 5:14 where it said, **"death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression."** Adam sinned in a way that Eve did not sin, and it is crucial that this be understood. You say, "Well, sin is sin!" No, Eve was deceived

but Adam was not deceived. We might have some pity for Eve, but Adam's sin was a willful sin, knowingly understanding the consequences. Eve was not fully aware of what the consequences would be, but Adam was. Now let's take that text and apply it in this manner. In general, we have a very wrong idea as to how Adam fell. Adam was not tempted by Satan in a direct way. Eve was tempted by Satan, and she fell being deceived, but we have here inspired evidence to prove that Adam was not deceived. Now what does that mean? It means he knew full well what he was doing, and as a rebel he chose to disobey God and expose himself to the consequences. He was not caught by the wiles of Satan, but that which he did, he did wilfully and deliberately. He did so in the full consciousness of what he was doing and with a perfect realization of the solemn consequences which were involved. He deliberately chose to follow his wife in her act of sinful disobedience. Yes, it was disobedience on the part of Eve, but Adam is now choosing to follow the path of his wife, who is a creature, and go with her rather than abiding with the Creator. Do you see that? That is what men who are Adam's descendants are doing today. They love the creation more than the Creator. They get enjoyment in the created things more-so than in the Creator and communion with Him. It was this deliberate wilfulness of man's sin which constituted its heinous character.

I have reflected on this, and for what it is worth, let me share it with you. Adam was created out of the dust of the ground, and he was given the capability to distinguish all of the animals. He could name them, as he knew there was a distinction. However, there was one thing lacking in Adam's life. He did not have a help-mate. God saw that it was **"not good that the man should be alone;"** and said, **"I will make him an help meet for him."** (Genesis 2:18). He put Adam to sleep and brought forth from his side, not just a rib, but what we now know as the DNA which comprises the female makeup. That is something to reflect upon, that a female makeup came out of a male. Here comes the woman. Adam has never seen anything like this in the animal creation. What was his description of her? Here is **"bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."** (Genesis 2:23). What did he call her? **"Woman."** He said, "Wow! This is something that I have been lacking!" Adam couldn't be intimate with the animals, but here was someone who he could have friendship and communion with. This was someone like himself, and she completed his makeup.

Now what has happened since Eve sinned? Eve's destiny was going to be separation from God. She was going to perish, go back to the dust of the earth, and she was never going to be able to have fellowship with God again. Where did this leave Adam? He realized that he would be all alone. He reflects on his Creator whom he loves, and he reflects upon this woman whom he needs, and he deliberately chooses to spend the remainder of his earthly existence in fellowship with this sinful creature and her allurements which he loved so much, even if it meant forfeiting his relationship with God. Do you see what I am getting at? It was a willful deliberate act of rebellion against the Creator, preferring the creature,

however lovely she was, and a life with her as opposed to a life with the Creator. My wife and I have been married fifty-one years, and the day is going to come in which one of us is going to die and we won't be together. I have tried to put myself in that situation with Adam. Am I going to have to give up my wife in order to live for the glory of God? Which one means the most for me -- my wife, Carolyn, or my Creator? Adam says, "I am going to choose the creature." That should help clarify the matter that Eve was deceived, but Adam was not deceived. Therefore it is by Adam's act, the head of the race, not Eve's act, that his descendants are brought into condemnation.

We have inspired evidence in I Timothy 2:14 to prove that Adam was not deceived but chose deliberately to go with his wife. Had he been attacked by Satan, and forced to yield through some overwhelming power being brought against him, then we might have tried to find some excuse for his fall. But no excuse can be found for his fall when, with eyes wide open and his mind perfectly conscious and fully aware of the awful nature of his act, he used his free will to respond to the claims of the creature in defiance of the Creator. In reality, his act was wilful, defiant rebellion, and by it he openly transferred his allegiance from God to Satan. That is why we are said to be under the wiles of the devil. We are born into this world under the kingdom of darkness, and that in order to be reconciled with God, we have to be translated out of that kingdom into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Only Christ has the ability to overrule the spiritual death which we are residing in and give us eternal life which will never be forfeited. It can never be lost because God is the originator of it and will be the preserver of it. **"He who has begun a good work in [us] will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ"** or salvation at the coming of Christ. (Philippians 1:6).

The more we see of human nature as it is manifested in the world around us, the easier it is to believe in this great doctrine of original sin or the fall of Adam. If this doctrine is not true, there ought to be many people out here who are living sinless lives, but how do we account for the fact that none do? The Pelagian system has to give an answer for that, and it has none. It just reduces Christianity to a system of moral ethics -- helping the poor, trying to hold down wars and things of this nature, but it has no answer for why everybody who comes into this world ends up being a sinner. We hold that they come into this world **"speaking lies,"** (Psalm 58:3) because they come into this world with a sinful nature, and as a result, will commit acts of sin.

Consider the world around us as a whole. Turn on your television and watch the news every night. What makes the news? This world is filled with murders, robberies, drunkenness, wars, broken homes, and crimes of all kind. The thousand different forms which crime and vice have assumed in the hands of regular people are all tokens telling a fearful tale. Something is wrong with the human race. A large portion of the human race today, as in all

ages past, is left to live and die in the darkness of heathenism, hopelessly astray from God. We will discuss the state of the heathen later in our study, but rather than feeling pity for them and wanting them to hear the gospel, let us remember, they are still moral creatures, and they have a responsibility to seek out their Creator. When you send missionaries over to the depths of Africa, they do not find people there who are anxiously waiting and saying, "Oh, this is what we have been looking for." They are not seeking out after God, any more than Adam was seeking out after God after the fall. **"There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."** (Romans 3:11-12). That is the state of the human race. Modernism and denial of every kind has saturated even the church. Evil and false doctrine can be penetrated into the church. Sin, sin, everywhere, even the so-called religious press is tinged with unbelief. You won't hear much talk about Adam's fall today in the religious press.

Now lets bring it on down to our own time, we who call ourselves Christian and believe that we have been regenerated. Do you not find a general disinclination to pray? Why? That ought to be the most enjoyable of all of the duties of a Christian. But why are we disinclined to pray? It is sin and selfishness. What about studying the Bible? Are we not more disinclined than inclined to read the Bible? To speak of spiritual things when we are in a group of people, what is the topic of conversation? What is the first one? "It is football, if you are in Alabama." I find the first topic is usually the weather. "Well, we are having a good day today, but I hear it might rain." That is what we can have in common with everyone. We can talk about all of these natural things, but how hard it is to bring up the subject of religion. Why should that not be the first thing we want to talk about? We reason, "Well, I don't want to make other people uncomfortable." Did Christ have a problem with that? No, He made the unbeliever to feel uncomfortable. But we are inclined to this, and it is a grief to a true regenerate person that we are yet like this. God help us.

Is not man now just like his father Adam, fleeing from the presence of God, not wanting communion with Him, and with enmity in his heart for his Creator? Surely man's nature is radically wrong. Even in such an enlightened land as America, the daily newspaper accounts of events show that man is sinful, lost from God, and actuated by unholy principles. The only adequate explanation of all this is that the penalty of death, which was threatened on man before the fall, now rests on the human race. And yet the liberal will come back with his defense that there is a little bit of goodness in all of us. They say that if we can just remove the effects of the environment on man, and give him an improved environment, he will become more holy and good. Listen, Adam was put in a perfect environment and he didn't stand. The gospel is not the social gospel of changing man's environment so that will produce an improvement in his nature, the Biblical gospel is that man's nature must first be changed, and then he will change the environment around him.

That is the difference between the gospel of Christ and the social gospel that is being propagated today. Isn't it interesting though, that this is what the world would rather hear? Why doesn't it want to hear the Biblical gospel? Because it deals with sin. Adam, get out of those bushes, repent and cast yourself down before your Creator and ask for mercy. Man is too proud to hear a message like that. It will soon be called a "hate crime" to call somebody a sinner.

We live in a lost world, a world which if left to itself would fester in its corruption from eternity to eternity. Unless God intervenes, that is all it is going to continue to be, a world reeking with iniquity and blasphemy. The effects of the fall are such that man's will in itself tends only downward to acts of sin and folly. As a matter of fact, God does not permit the race to become as corrupt as it naturally would if left to itself. There is a restraining element. He exercises restraining influences, inciting men to love one another, to be honest and considerate of other people's welfare. Unless God continues to exercise these influences, wicked men would become worse and worse until the very height of lawlessness would soon be reached and the earth would become so utterly corrupt that the elect could no longer live on it. What did God see just prior to the Genesis flood? In Genesis 6:5 we read, ***"The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*** What was God's solution? If He let it go on, the world would become totally corrupt. He wiped out the human race with the exception of eight people and started over again.

Now, what is in store for the human race? God is restraining evil through common grace so that the society doesn't completely become destroyed. God is now calling members of Adam's race out of darkness one by one into the kingdom of His dear Son, making up a spiritual kingdom. One day He will call those who have died in Christ out of the graves, remove the wicked, and cast them into what is known as the second death, the lake of fire. I don't know where that is and how it is going to take place, but I know this, there is good news in store for planet earth. God is going to repopulate this earth with a host of perfected people like Adam's descendants would have been had he not sinned. There will be no more wickedness and no more sinning. That, my hearers, is the philosophy of redemption in Christ. We will close at this point.