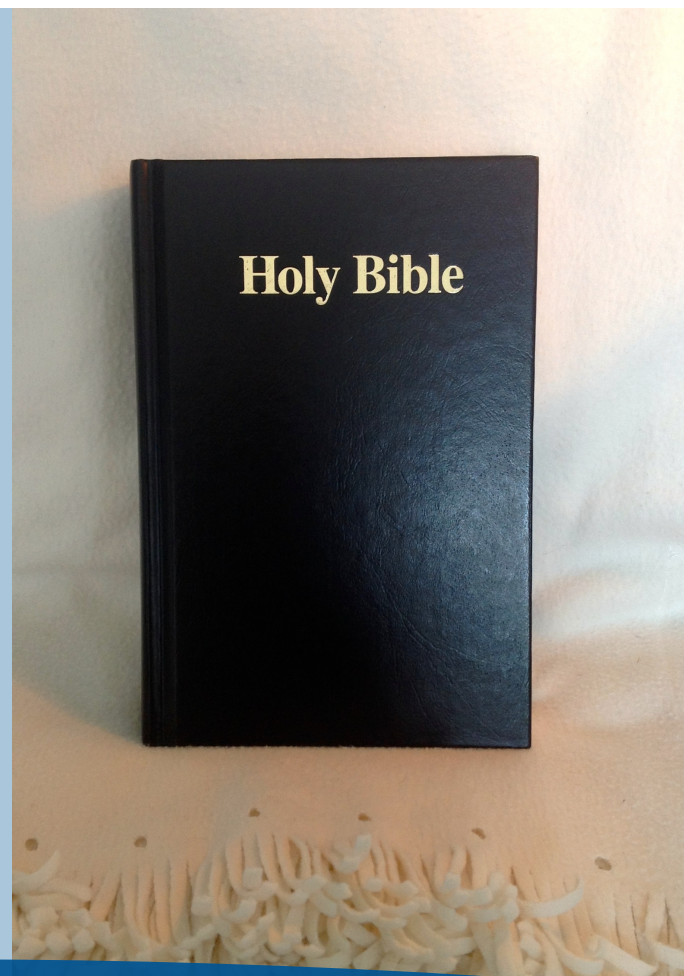


*Unlock the passages of the Bible for yourself*

# Learn to Read the Bible More Effectively

CONSIDERING  
THE BIBLE  
CONCEPT OF  
HUMAN  
NATURE



Page 1



@biblelightstand

E-mail [info@bibleonline.uk](mailto:info@bibleonline.uk)



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We considered today what the Bible has to say about Human Nature; what it has to say about

## **ITS ORIGIN, ITS EFFECTS, ITS REMEDY**

### **ITS ORIGIN**

We find that according to the Bible human nature as we know it, has its origins in the fall of man as recorded in Genesis 3 (all the bible quotes used are from the English Standard Version, or the King James Version).

It tells us in Genesis 3 that the most intelligent of the “beasts of the field”, the serpent, had wrongly advised Adam and Eve, to disobey God in the eating of the forbidden fruit. As a result, God inflicted a curse upon it that involved physical changes.

**Gen 3:14** *The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all **beasts of the field**; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.*

It goes on to say in v19 that God also cursed mankind with adverse physical changes as:

**Gen 3:19** *By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

Mortality and all its ill effects become part of man’s genetic makeup from then on, and so human nature as we know it (in the fallen state) came into existence at that time and in that way.

Verses 1-6 are the account of how Adam and Eve came to disobey

#### **Gen 3:**

**1** *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”*

*2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,*

*3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”*

*4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.*

*5 For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

This animal logic was wrong, and it falsely accused God of being a liar.

***Gen 3: 6*** *So when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food**, and that it was a **delight to the eyes**, and that the tree was to be **desired to make one wise**, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.*

We notice that when judging whether God was right or the serpent, the woman was influenced by other considerations: she saw it was “good for food”, and “a delight to the eyes”, was “to be desired to make one wise”; so that satisfying otherwise innocent desires, had now become more important to her than believing and obeying God. The bad character, or tendencies Adam and Eve developed in this matter, became genetically imprinted upon their natures when God, by His subsequent curse, reduced them to the fallen mortal state. So we read of human nature the world over as defined by John in these terms:

*1Jo 2:16* ***For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.***

**“the lust of the flesh”**

The tendency to serve the several appetites of the flesh-rather than God

**“the lust of the eyes”**

The tendency to covet things that ‘delight the eyes’

**“the pride of life,”**

the tendency to be puffed up by any superiority we may think we have

All wrongdoing in the world is due to one or more of these three lusts of the flesh.

## ITS EFFECTS

The effects of human nature (thus defined) are that these lusts of the flesh urge or tempt us from within. Our nature acts like a tempting serpent within; we also have a natural tendency (like the serpent) to disbelieve God and so falsely accuse Him Hence:

### **Jam 1**

*:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:*

*:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.*

This hinders even those who seek righteousness; as Paul, using himself as an example, illustrates in Romans 7:

### **Romans 7:**

*6 But now we are released from the law, having died to that which held us captive, so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit and not in the old way of the written code.*

*7 What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."*

"Covet" signifies 'An intense longing to possess something', here its used in a bad sense. "The law" mentioned here is the law of Moses that was eventually taken out of the way by Christ's sacrifice. In the next verse Paul shows that it was not The law, but human nature that was the problem:

### **Romans 7:**

*8 But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead.*

*9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died.*

*10 The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.*

*11 For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.*

Paul here uses the word “sin” as a noun rather than a verb. He is calling the lustful aspect of human nature by the name of “sin”. The Law of Moses promised long life and prosperity to any who kept it perfectly, but human nature, such as it is, meant that no man fully succeeded,(except Jesus, and he surrendered his rights under The Law, by submitting to the death of the cross Gal.3:11-14). Paul is saying that when at the age of responsibility he committed to keeping that Law of Moses (at Bar Mitzvah) it made him aware of the physical aspect of “sin”, or human nature, in that obedience sometimes proved difficult.

**Romans 7:**

*12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.*

*13 Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, producing death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.*

*14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under **sin**.*

*15 **For I do not understand my own actions.** For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.*

*16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good.*

*17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but **sin that dwells within me.***

In verse 17 Paul is not excusing himself, but rather he is identifying a problem with human nature.

**Romans 7:**

*18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.*

*19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.*

*20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.*

Paul was trying to serve God perfectly, but was sometimes hindered by spontaneous imperfections. eg. how often have we tried to say or do the right thing and in an unguarded moment, done the opposite? It may only take a lapse of a second or two, but we are left wondering “why did I do that?” or as Paul said (7:15) “I do not understand my own actions.” This is the kind of thing Paul is referring to, yet it shows up how sick or ‘sinful’ human nature is.

### **Romans 7:**

*21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.*

*22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,*

*23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the **law of sin** that dwells in my members.*

*24. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from **this body of death?***

*25. **Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!** So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.*

“the law of sin” is in effect how Paul defines human nature, and he is including mortality in this state, by the term “this body of death”, he also shows that this is why we need a saviour, saying “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ”(verse 25 is the end of chapter 7) Originally there were no chapter divisions, he continues in chapter 8:1-3 by showing how Christ came to save us from this state of sin and death.

## **ITS REMEDY**

### **Romans chapter 8:**

*1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

*2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from **the law of sin and death.***

*3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the **likeness of sinful flesh** and for sin, he **condemned sin in the flesh,***

*4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who **walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.***

In verse 2, Paul expands his definition of human nature by the term “**the law of sin and death**” and he shows in verse 3 that the required sacrifice for the sinful fallen state of the race of Adam, was the acceptable condemnation (or judging against) of “sin in the flesh” or human nature. Jesus came “in the likeness of sinful flesh”(verse3), the word “likeness” here signifies ‘sameness’-he came in the like sinful human nature as the rest of the race of Adam- yet he was the only man who never yielded to sin; had no personal transgressions, therefore **in Christ God could exclusively “condemned sin in the flesh”** that is, **show his righteous judgement** against “*sin in the flesh*”, or the fallen state of human nature. His sacrifice dealing with the racial condition of mankind, means that any member of the race can benefit by accepting Christ as their representative and to “*walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.*” (verse 4)

**Rom 3:**

*25 Whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. **This was to show God's righteousness**, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.*

*26 It was to **show his righteousness** at the present time, so that **he might be just and the justifier** of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

So the crucifixion was how God "condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3); "This was to show God's righteousness"(Rom 3:25)- that He cannot condone sin in any of its forms- but Christ, as a representative of the race of Adam, through submitting to God's righteousness, brought reconciliation between God and man.

To be our representative, Jesus had to inherit our Adamic fallen nature through his mother Mary, and so we read:

**Heb 2:**

*14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has **the power of death**, that is, **the devil**,*

*15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

*16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.*

*17 Therefore he had to be made **like his brothers in every respect**, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, **to make propitiation** for the sins of the people.*

*18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Here Paul personifies human nature, (or "sin in flesh" Rom.8:3), by the term "the devil"(v 14). This is a New testament term and is derived from the Greek word "diabolos". This is the standard Greek term for "**false accuser**" and is so rendered on occasion. Why does Paul define "the power of death" (mortality) as "the devil" (verse 14)? Well the curse of mortality and death came upon Adam and Eve through going along with the **False Accusation** of the serpent against God. And this tendency to disbelieve and **falsely accuse** or slander God became ingrained in fallen human nature.

As well as being son of God, Jesus had to be son of man as:(verse 17) "Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect,"

As the elder brother of the faithful Jesus could act as their representative in finding grace from God. So he had to be of our nature:

**Heb 2:**

*10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.*

*11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,*

**Heb 4:**

*14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*

*15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

“in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” that is, he was tempted from within as we are, yet he never transgressed.

Romans chapter 6 says we must identify with Christ by being baptised into his death, so that we can then benefit from Christ’s resurrection to immortality, whose victory over sin and death are referred to in verse 7

**Romans 6:7** *For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

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**Romans 6:7** *“For the one having died has been declared-righteous from sin.”*

(  
*“the one having died” being Christ crucified; “declared-righteous” or “justified in the spirit” when raised 1Tim.3:16)*

**Romans 6:**

*8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:*

*9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath **no more dominion** over him. 10.For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11.Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

To represent his brethren and sisters, Jesus also had to be a beneficiary of his own sacrifice, as:



**Heb 9:**

*12 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but **by means of his own blood**, thus securing an eternal redemption.*

Jesus “securing an eternal redemption” first for himself, empowered him to share it with his brethren and sisters later.

**Romans 6:**

*12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*

*13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

*14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.*

We see all the 3 points we wished to consider, the origin, the effects, and the remedy, concerning mortal human nature in:

**1Corinthians 15:**

*20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.*

*21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.*

*22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

*23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

**1 Corinthians 15:**

*54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.*

*55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

*56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*

*57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

We have considered today some of what the Bible has to say about Human Nature:-

**ITS ORIGIN, ITS EFFECTS, ITS REMEDY**