

ARTICLE 8: FALL

Summary

Creation's original goodness is corrupted by sin; all humans are sinners in need of God's grace.

Detail

We need to be reconciled with God. We believe that Adam, made in the image of God, distorted that image and forfeited his original blessedness—for himself and all his progeny—by rebelling against God through Satan's temptation. As a result, all human beings are alienated from God, corrupted in every aspect of their being (e.g., physically, mentally, volitionally, emotionally, relationally, spiritually) and condemned finally and irrevocably to death—apart from God's own gracious intervention. The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to the God under whose just and holy wrath we stand; the only hope of all human beings is the undeserved love of this same God, who alone can rescue us and restore us to himself. Humanity's rebellion does not only affect humanity; it disintegrated the whole of creation and subjected it to futility. Sin now is contained within the mores and structures of both biology and society. While the creational structures of the world remain fundamentally good, the distorting power of sin means they have been radically misdirected.

Key Points:

1. We are sinners by nature and by choice.
2. The just penalty for our sin is God's wrath.
3. The brokenness of our world is the result of sin.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does the doctrine of the Fall make sense of the evil we see in the world?
2. Why is our culture so resistant to the concept of sin?

Scriptures:

- Genesis 3:1-7 / 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'?" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 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.' " But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 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. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.
- Romans 5:12, 19 / Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned...For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.
- Romans 8:20-22 / For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

ARTICLE 9: ELECTION

Summary

God unconditionally chose his people to be saved by the work of Jesus.

Detail

We believe that from all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end foreknew them and chose them. We believe that God justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus, and that he will one day glorify them—all to the praise of his glorious grace. This election is not only a privilege, it is a responsibility; in love, God commands and implores all people through the church to repent and believe, having set his saving love on those he has chosen and having ordained Christ to be their Redeemer.

Key Points:

1. God does the work of saving and cleansing those who put their hope in Jesus.
2. All people are invited to repent and believe.

Questions for Reflection:

1. How does the doctrine of election require us to be humble?
2. Why might we be resistant to the idea that God unconditionally chose us?

Scriptures:

- Ephesians 1:3-10 / Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.
- Acts 17:30-31 / The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.
- Acts 13:48 / And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.
- Romans 9:16 / It depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.
- John 6:37 / All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
- John 15:16 / You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.
- Philippians 1:29 / For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake
- Isaiah 49:6 / I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.