

## Session 2: Article I - Original Sin

### Readings from the Book of Concord

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin*
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article I, Original Sin*

If you are using the *Concordia: A Reader's Version of the Book of Concord*, **Paul T. McCain** the contents for discussion can be found at the following:

- *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I. Original Sin*, pp. 474-477
- *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article I. Original Sin*, pp. 511-519.

Other foundational readings concerning the Article of Original Sin can be found in the Lutheran Confessions at the following locations:

- Augsburg Confession, Article II, (*The Concordia* pp. 31-32)
- Augsburg Confession, Article XIX, (*The Concordia* pp. 40-41)
- Apology to the Augsburg Confession, Article II, (*The Concordia* pp. 76-81))
- Smalcald Articles Part III, Article I, (*The Concordia* pp. 270-271)

### Brief Summary of Article I: Original Sin

**Only the Triune God can create.  
The Devil can only corrupt.**

## Key Words and Phrases

### Key Words and Phrases (with a warning)

“original righteousness vs. original sin”

“nature, substance and essence” (Latin: substantia)

“corruption of the nature” and “concupiscence”

“Pelagians” and “Manicheans”

### Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

*23] 13. But as to the Latin terms substantia and accidens, **because they are not words of Holy Scripture**, and besides unknown to the ordinary man, they should not be used in sermons before ordinary, uninstructed people, but **simple people should be spared them**. 24] But in the schools, among the learned, these words are rightly retained in disputations concerning original sin, because they are well known and used without any misunderstanding, to distinguish exactly between the essence of a thing and what attaches to it in an accidental way.*

### Key Question

Is original sin part of man’s very nature, substance and essence?

OR

Is it a deep and thorough corruption of the human nature.

### Key Thought

Scripture demands that there be a distinction between the human nature and the corruption of the nature.

**The Triune God alone creates.  
The Devil can only corrupt.**

## Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

25] For the **distinction between God's work and that of the devil** is thereby designated in the clearest way, because the devil can create no substance, but can only, in an accidental way, by the providence of God [God permitting], corrupt the substance created by God.

## The Status of the Controversy

### Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

1] Whether original sin is properly and **without any distinction** man's corrupt nature, substance, and essence, or at any rate the principal and best part of his essence [substance], namely, the rational soul itself in its highest state and powers;

or whether, even after the Fall, **there is a distinction between** man's substance, nature, essence, body, soul, and original sin, so that the nature [itself] is one thing, and original sin, which inheres in the corrupt nature and corrupts the nature, another.

## What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

### Lack of Original Righteousness and a Loss of the Image of God (deprivation)

Genesis 1:31: "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning-the sixth day."

Genesis 3:4-5: "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

1 Corinthians 2:14: The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

2 Corinthians 4:4: "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

### **Apology of Augsburg Confession, Article II, Original Sin**

15] *Neither have we said anything new. The ancient definition understood aright expresses precisely the same thing when it says: "**Original sin is the absence of original righteousness**" [a lack of the first purity and righteousness in Paradise].*

*But what is righteousness?*

*Here the scholastics wrangle about dialectic questions; they do not explain what original righteousness is. 16] Now in the Scriptures, righteousness comprises not only the **second table** of the Decalog [regarding good works in serving our fellow-man], but the **first also**, which teaches concerning 17] the fear of God, concerning faith, concerning the love of God.*

*Therefore **original righteousness** was to embrace not only an even temperament of the bodily qualities [perfect health and, in all respects, pure blood, unimpaired powers of the body, as they contend], but also these gifts, namely, a quite certain knowledge of God, fear of God, confidence in God, or certainly 18] the rectitude and power to yield these affections [but the greatest feature in that noble first creature was a bright light in the heart **to know God** and His work, etc.]. And Scripture testifies to this, when it says, Gen. 1:27, that man was fashioned in the **image and likeness of God**.*

*What else is this than that there were embodied in man such wisdom and righteousness as apprehended God, and in which God was reflected, i.e., to man there were given the gifts of the knowledge of God, the fear of God, confidence in God, and the like?*

19] *For thus Irenaeus and Ambrose interpret the likeness to God, the latter of whom not only says many things to this effect, but especially declares: That soul is not, therefore, in the image of God, in which God is not at all times. 20] And*

*Paul shows in the Epistles to the Ephesians 5:9, and Colossians 3:10, that the **image of God** is the knowledge of God, righteousness, and truth.*

## **What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!**

**original sin is an ACTIVE desire  
and a INCLINATION toward sin  
(concupiscence)**

Genesis 6:5: "The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Genesis 8:21: "The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."

Psalms 51:5: "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

Psalms 53:1-3: "The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and their ways are vile; there is no one who does good. God looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one." (see also Romans 3:10-12)

Mark 7:20-23: ""What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.' "

Romans 8:20-22: "For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.”

2 Peter 1:3-4: “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”

James 1:13-15: “When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

### **Apology of Augsburg Confession, Article II, Original Sin**

2] *[It is further taught that since the Fall of Adam all men who are naturally born are conceived and born in sin, i.e., that they all, from their mother's womb, are **full of evil desire and inclination**, and can have by nature no true fear of God, no true faith in God.]*

3] *This passage testifies that we deny to those propagated according to carnal nature not only the acts, but also the power or gifts of producing fear and trust in God. For we say that those thus born have **concupiscence**, and cannot produce true fear and trust in God.*

### **Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin**

8] 3. *But, on the other hand, we believe, teach, and confess that original sin is **not a slight, but so deep a corruption of human nature** that nothing healthy or uncorrupt has remained in man's body or soul, in his inner or outward powers, but, as the Church sings:*

*Through Adam's fall is all corrupt,  
Nature and essence human.*

## **What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!**

### **enemies of God, hostile toward Him, dead to spiritual things**

Romans 5:9-19: "Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

Ephesians 2:1-10: "As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath."

Colossians 1:21-23: "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation."

### **Apology of Augsburg Confession, Article II, Original Sin**

*24] Of the same import is the definition which occurs in the writings of Augustine, who is accustomed to define original sin as concupiscence [wicked desire]. For he means that when righteousness had been lost, concupiscence came in its place.*

### **"defect and vicious habit"**

*For inasmuch as diseased nature cannot fear and love God and believe God, it seeks and loves carnal things. God's judgment it either contemns, when at ease, or hates, when thoroughly terrified. Thus Augustine includes both the defect and 25] the vicious habit which has come in its place.*

*Nor indeed is concupiscence only a corruption of the qualities of the body, but also, in the higher powers, a vicious turning to carnal things. Nor do those persons see what they say who ascribe to man at the same time concupiscence that is not entirely destroyed by the Holy Ghost, and love to God above all things.*

*26] We, therefore, have been right in expressing, in our description of original sin, both namely, these defects: the not being able to believe God, the not being able to fear and love God; and, likewise: the having concupiscence, which seeks carnal things contrary to God's Word, i.e., seeks not only the pleasure of the body, but also carnal wisdom and righteousness, and, contemning God, trusts in these as good things.*

## **What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!**

### **First Article of the Creed: Creation God's the Creator BEFORE the FALL and AFTER the FALL**

Deut. 32:6: "Is this the way you repay the Lord, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?"

Job 10:8-12: "Your hands shaped me and made me. Will you now turn and destroy me? Remember that you molded me like clay. Will you now turn me to dust again? Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews? You gave me life and showed me kindness, and in your providence watched over my spirit."

Ps. 139:14-16: "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."



Eccl. 12:7

Is. 45:11, 54:5, 64:8

Acts 17:25

Rev. 4:11

### **Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin**

*4] For God created not only the body and soul of Adam and Eve before the Fall, but also our bodies and souls after the Fall, notwithstanding that they are corrupt, which God also still acknowledges as His work, as it is written Job 10:8: Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about. Deut. 32:18; Is. 45:9ff; 54:5; 64:8; Acts 17:28; Job 10:8; Ps. 100:3; 139:14; Eccl. 12:1.*

### **Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article I, Original Sin**

*34] Moreover, the chief articles of our Christian faith urge and compel us to preserve this distinction. For instance, in the first place, **in the article of Creation**, Scripture testifies that God has created human nature not only before the Fall, but that it is a creature and work of God also since the Fall, Deut. 32:6; Is. 45:11, 54:5, 64:8; Acts 17:25; Rev. 4:11.*

*35] Thine hands, says Job, have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet Thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech Thee, that Thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt Thou bring me into dust again? Hast Thou not poured me out as milk and curdled me as cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favor, and Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. Job 10:8-12.*

*36] I will praise Thee, says David, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect, and in Thy book all my members were written which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them, Ps. 139:14-16.*

37] *In the Ecclesiastes of Solomon it is written: Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to God, who gave it, Eccl. 12:7.*

38] *These passages clearly testify that God even since the Fall is the Creator of man, and creates his body and soul. Therefore corrupt man cannot, without any distinction, be sin itself, otherwise God would be a creator of sin; as also our Small Catechism confesses in the explanation of the First Article, where it is written: I believe that God has made me and all creatures, that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still preserves them. Likewise in the Large Catechism it is thus written: This is what I believe and mean, that is, that I am a creature of God; that He has given and constantly preserves to me my body, soul, and life, members great and small, and all my senses, mind, and reason. Nevertheless, this same creature and work of God is lamentably corrupted by sin; for the mass (massa) from which God now forms and makes man was corrupted and perverted in Adam, and is thus transmitted by inheritance to us.*

39] *And here pious Christian hearts justly ought to consider the unspeakable goodness of God, that God does not immediately cast from Himself into hell-fire this corrupt, perverted, sinful mass, but forms and makes from it the present human nature, which is lamentably corrupted by sin, in order that He may cleanse it from all sin, sanctify and save it by His dear Son.*

40] *From this article, now, the distinction is found indisputably and clearly. For original sin does not come from God. God is not a creator or author of sin. Nor is original sin a creature or work of God, but it is a work of the devil.*

41] *Now, if there were to be no difference whatever between the nature or essence of our body and soul, which is corrupted by original sin, and original sin, by which the nature is corrupted, it would follow either that God, because He is the Creator of this our nature, also created and made original sin, which, accordingly would also be His work and creature; or, because sin is a work of the devil, that Satan would be the creator of this our nature, of our body and soul, which would also have to be a work or creation of Satan if, without any distinction, our corrupt nature should have to be regarded as sin itself; both of which teachings are contrary to the article of our Christian faith.*

42] *Therefore, in order that God's creation and work in man may be distinguished from the work of the devil, we say that it is God's creation that man has body and soul; also, that it is God's work that man can think, speak, do,*

*and work anything; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being, Acts 17:28. But that the nature is corrupt, that its thoughts, words, and works are wicked, is originally a work of Satan, who has thus corrupted God's work in Adam through sin, which from him is transmitted by inheritance to us.*

**A distinction must be made between ...  
man's nature and the corruption of the nature by original sin**

**Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin**

*2] 1. We believe, teach, and confess that **there is a distinction between** man's nature, not only as he was originally created by God pure and holy and without sin, but also as we have it [that nature] now after the Fall, namely, between the nature [itself], which even after the Fall is and remains a creature of God, and original sin, and that this distinction is as great as the distinction between a work of God and a work of the devil.*

*3] 2. We believe, teach, and confess also that this distinction should be maintained with the greatest care, because this doctrine, that no distinction is to be made between our corrupt human nature and original sin, **conflicts with the chief articles** of our Christian faith concerning creation, redemption, sanctification, and the resurrection of our body, and cannot coexist therewith.*

**What does the Bible Say?  
We believe, teach and confess!**

**Second Article of the Creed: Redemption**

**The Incarnation:  
Jesus is our Brother, in the flesh**

John 1:1-14: "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us."

Hebrews 2:11-18: "Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers ..."

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.”

### **Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin**

*5] Moreover, the Son of God has assumed this human nature, however, without sin, and therefore not a foreign, but our own flesh, into the unity of His person, and according to it is become our true Brother. Heb. 2:14: Forasmuch, then, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same. Again, 16; 4:15: He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, yet without sin.*

### **Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article I, Original Sin**

*43] Secondly, in the article of Redemption the Scriptures testify forcibly that God's Son assumed our human nature without sin, so that He was in all things, sin excepted, made like unto us, His brethren, Heb. 2:14. Hence all the old orthodox teachers have maintained that Christ, according to His assumed humanity, is of one essence with us, His brethren; for He has assumed His human nature, which in all respects (sin alone excepted) is like our human nature in its essence and all essential attributes; and they have condemned the contrary doctrine as manifest heresy. 44] Now, if there were no distinction between the nature or essence of corrupt man and original sin, it must follow that Christ either did not assume our nature, because He did not assume sin, or that, because He assumed our nature, He also assumed sin; both of which ideas are contrary to the Scriptures. But inasmuch as the Son of God assumed our nature, and not original sin, it is clear from this fact that human nature, even since the Fall, and original sin, are not one [and the same] thing, but must be distinguished.*

## What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!

### Third Article of the Creed: Sanctification

#### New Creation

#### Sanctification and Resurrection

1 John 1:8—2:1: “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. My dear children, I write this to you, so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”

1 Corinthians 15:51-57: “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed--in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

#### Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

*6] In like manner Christ has also redeemed it as His work, sanctifies it as His work, raises it from the dead, and gloriously adorns it as His work. But original sin He has not created, assumed, redeemed, sanctified; nor will He raise it, will neither adorn nor save it in the elect, but in the [blessed] resurrection it will be entirely destroyed.*

*7] Hence the distinction between the corrupt nature and the corruption which infects the nature and by which the nature became corrupt, can easily be discerned.*

## **Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article I, Original Sin**

*45] Thirdly, in the article of Sanctification Scripture testifies that God cleanses, washes, and sanctifies man from sin, 1 John 1:7, and that Christ saves His people from their sins, Matt. 1:21. Sin, therefore, cannot be man himself; for God receives man into grace for Christ's sake, but to sin He remains hostile to eternity.*

*Therefore it is unchristian and horrible to hear that original sin is baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, sanctified and saved, and other similar expressions found in the writings of the recent Manicheans, with which we will not offend simple-minded people.*

*46] Fourthly, in the article of the Resurrection Scripture testifies that precisely the substance of this our flesh, but without sin, will rise again, and that in eternal life we shall have and retain precisely this soul, but without sin.*

*47] Now, if there were no difference whatever between our corrupt body and soul and original sin, it would follow, contrary to this article of the Christian faith, either that this our flesh will not rise again at the last day, and that in eternal life we shall not have the present essence of our body and soul, but another substance (or another soul), because then we shall be without sin; or that [at the last day] sin also will rise again, and will be and remain in the elect in eternal life.*

## **What does the Bible Say? We believe, teach and confess!**

### **Corruption discerned not by human reason but only by the revelation of God's Word**

1 Corinthians 2:14: The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

## Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

9] *This damage is unspeakable, and **cannot be discerned by reason, but only from God's Word.** 10] And [we affirm] that no one but God alone can separate from one another the nature and this corruption of the nature, which will fully come to pass through death, in the [blessed] resurrection, where our nature which we now bear will rise and live eternally without original sin and separated and sundered from it, as it is written Job 19:26: I shall be compassed again with this my skin, and in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold.*

## What does the Bible Say? We reject and condemn!

### Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article I, Original Sin

#### That ... original sin is only a debt and not a corruption

11] 1. *Therefore we reject and condemn the teaching that original sin is only a reatus or debt on account of what has been committed by another [diverted to us] without any corruption of our nature.*

#### That ... lusts are not sin

12] 2. *Also, that evil lusts are not sin, but con-created, essential properties of the nature, or, as though the above-mentioned defect and damage were not truly sin, because of which man without Christ [not ingrafted into Christ] would be a child of wrath.*

#### That ... we're all good by nature (Pelagian)

13] 3. *We likewise reject the **Pelagian error**, by which it is alleged that man's nature even after the Fall is incorrupt, and especially with respect to spiritual things has remained entirely good and pure in naturalibus, i. e., in its natural powers.*

### That ... “it’s just a flesh wound” (semi-Pelagian)

14] 4. Also, that original sin is only a slight, insignificant spot on the outside, dashed upon the nature, or a blemish that has been blown upon it, beneath which [nevertheless] the nature has retained its good powers even in spiritual things.

15] 5. Also, that original sin is only an external impediment to the good spiritual powers, and not a despoliation or want of the same, as when a magnet is smeared with garlic-juice, its natural power is not thereby removed, but only impeded; or that this stain can be easily wiped away like a spot from the face or pigment from the wall.

16] 6. Also, that in man the human nature and essence are not entirely corrupt, but that man still has something good in him, even in spiritual things, namely, capacity, skill, aptness, or ability in spiritual things to begin, to work, or to help working for something [good].

### That ... the flesh is “infused” with evil. (Manichean error)

17] 7. On the other hand, we also reject the false dogma of the **Manicheans**, when it is taught that original sin, as something essential and self-subsisting, has been infused by Satan into the nature, and intermingled with it, as poison and wine are mixed.

18] 8. Also, that not the natural man, but something else and extraneous to man, sins, on account of which not the nature, but only original sin in the nature, is accused.

19] 9. We reject and condemn also as a **Manichean error** the doctrine that original sin is properly and without any distinction the substance, nature, and essence itself of the corrupt man, so that a distinction between the corrupt nature, as such, after the Fall and original sin should not even be conceived of, nor that they could be distinguished from one another [even] in thought.