

# **SOTERIOLOGY**

## **Introduction/Original Sin & Atonement**

# Introduction

- **Soteriology** (from the Greek word “*Soteer*” which means “*Savior*”, and “*Logos*” which means “*Study*” or “*Word*”) is the study of religious doctrines of salvation.
- **Atonement:** Salvation, reconciliation of God and humankind through redemption (forgiveness) of sin.

# Introduction: The DANGER of using a single verse!

- *“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household”* (Acts 16:31)
- Is Faith the only thing needed for salvation?  
WRONG!
- Many other things to consider:
  - To whom it was said?
  - What were the circumstances?
  - What happened afterwards?
  - What are the verses that followed?
  - Other verses relating to the same subject?

# Original Sin - in the Orthodox Perspective

- Adam & Eve had a 'good' human nature; It is written, **"God created man in His own image."** (*Gen 1:27*). **"Adam and Eve were perfect and good."** (*Gen 1:27*)
- After the fall, this image was distorted.
- The human nature became susceptible (predisposed) to sin.

# Original Sin - in the Orthodox Perspective

- This change in Adam's nature was transmitted to his sons. It is written that Adam begot a son **in his own likeness, after his image** (*Gen 5:3*).
- King David also said, **"I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me"** (*Ps 51:5*)
- We DID NOT inherit Adam's original sin.
  - "The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin" (*Deut 24:16*)
  - "The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son" (*Ezek 18:20*)

# Original Sin - in the Orthodox Perspective

- what we inherit or what is transmitted to us is Adam's fallen human nature and **not** his actual sin.
- *"the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23).*
- *"Through one man, sin entered the world, and death through sin" (Rom 5:12).*

# Original Sin - in the Orthodox Perspective

- The sin of Adam led to:
  - A corrupt human nature with a predisposition to sin.
  - We inherited this corrupt nature and have fallen in sin.
  - Death gained dominion over all of humanity as a result of the corrupt nature and sin.
  - All creation suffers from the sin of Adam and ours.

# Redemption & Atonement

- Sin is an offense **against God**: King David said, "*Against You, You only, have I sinned and done evil in Your sight*" (Ps 51:4)
- Sin is, therefore, considered **unlimited** because it is committed against the unlimited God. Consequently, any sin requires **unlimited atonement**.

# Redemption & Atonement – Cont'd

- This atonement should be provided by a person who is:
  - **Unlimited** - To be able to provide this unlimited atonement the Savior has to be unlimited.
  - **Sinless** - The Savior has to be free from sin to be able to redeem others, or else he would need salvation for himself.
  - **Human** - Since human beings committed the sin, therefore, a human being should pay the price.
  - **Mortal** - Since the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23), therefore, the savior has to be mortal.

# Redemption & Atonement – Cont'd

- Our Lord Jesus Christ is:
  - **Unlimited** - He said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty" (*Rev 1:8*)
  - **Sinless** - Archangel Gabriel said to the Virgin, "That Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God" (*Lk 1:35*). Our lord said, "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" (*Jn 8:46*)
  - **Human** - Our Lord was called the Son of Man several times, also, the Bible documents that on several occasions He was thirsty, hungry, tired, sleeping, etc....
  - **Mortal** - Even though our Lord is immortal due to His divinity, he assumed a human nature that was liable to die.

# The Ransom

- Our Lord said, **“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many”** (*Mk 10:45*).
- To whom was this ransom paid ?
- Since sin is committed against God (*Ps 51:4*) then the price of this sin should be paid to God Himself, On the cross our Lord offered Himself to the Father (**Lk 23:46**)

# Nature of Salvation

- The Incarnation of the Logos restored the human nature to its original state and blessed it ; **“The Likeness of God”**.
- As we pray in the Gregorian Liturgy saying, **“Thou hast blessed my nature in Thee”**. And in the Friday Theotokia, **“He took what is ours and gave us what is His”**.
- The death of our Lord on the cross gave us the forgiveness of our sins by satisfying the Divine Justice, **“without shedding of blood there is no remission”** (*Heb 9:22*).
- **The creation is still groaning and laboring with birth pangs until now** (*Rom 8:22*), probably because people are still sinning. But it will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (*Rom 8:21*).

# Why then do we still die?

- **Since the death of our Lord satisfied the Divine Justice, why then do we still die?**

# Why then do we still die? – cont'd

There are 2 kinds of deaths:

- Physical death of the body.
- Spiritual death due to sin.

Our Lord combined the two kinds of deaths in one verse when he said, **“let the dead bury their own dead”** (*Mt 8:22*)

# Homework

- Q1: We inherited from Adam the original sin that he committed many years ago (T/F)
- Q2: We inherited from Adam the nature of being susceptible to sin (T/F)
- Q3: If we commit a sin, it is against the person that we hurt. (T/F)
- Q4: If we commit a sin, it is against God. (T/F)
- Q5: What are the 4 criteria necessary for the saviour to provide atonement.