

What Lutherans Believe

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
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Original Sin

What is Original Sin? _____

Did Jesus suffer from original sin?

Lutherans do not agree with the Roman Catholic doctrine of “Immaculate Conception”

Pope Pius IX, in his bull (encyclical letter) “Ineffabilis Deus”, December 8, 1854:

“...The most Blessed Virgin Mary was preserved from all stain of original sin in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God, in consideration of the merits of Jesus Christ, savior of the human race.”

The bull states that this doctrine has been revealed by God and must, therefore, firmly and constantly be believed by all the faithful.

What does the Bible say about Jesus and Sin?

Jesus’ incarnation is a mystery:

- 1 Timothy 3:16

He was fully human:

- Romans 9:3-5; Hebrews 2:10-18

He was utterly without sin:

- Romans 5:18-19; 2 Corinthians 5:21

He was tempted to sin:

- Romans 1:3-4; Romans 8:3-4

He is the High Priest of God, *existing to save His people*:

- Hebrews 7:26-28; 1 Timothy 2:5-6

His nature has never changed:

- Hebrews 13:8

(Could original sin be a Y chromosome thing, passed down through the *father*?)

From the Christian Cyclopedia (<http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?t1=s&word=SIN.ORIGINAL>)

Sin, Original

(inherited; hereditary; principal; capital; Adam's sin; nature-sin; person-sin). 1. In its ordinary meaning this term does not refer to the origin of sin but to the guilt of Adam's sin imputed to his offspring (hereditary guilt, *Ro 5:12–19*; *Eph 2:3*; *cf. FC SD I 9*) and the corruption of man's nature that occurred when sin entered and which inheres in the human will and inclinations. *Cf. Gn 5:3; 6:5; 8:21; Jb 15:14; Ps 51:5; Jn 3:6; Ro 14:23*. Original sin is not an activity but a quality, a state, an inherent condition. It exists, though there be no conscious, voluntary act of internal or external powers, of mind or body. It is “the chief sin, a root and fountainhead of all actual sins” (*FC SD I 5*).

2. *FC Ep I 1*: “There is a distinction between man's nature and original sin... No one except God alone can separate the corruption of our nature from the nature itself... We ... reject the Manichean error that original sin is an essential, self-existing something which Satan infused into and mingled with human nature.” *AC II*: “Since the fall of Adam all men who are propagated according to nature are born in sin. That is to say, they are without fear of God, are without trust in God, and are concupiscent. And this disease or vice of origin is truly sin, which even now damns and brings eternal death on those who are not born again through Baptism and the Holy Spirit.” “Concupiscent” (drawn from the *Lat.* text) is explained in the *Ger.* text as “unable by nature to have true fear of God and true faith in God.”

3. The *Luth.* Confessions condemn *Pelagianism*,* which denies the reality of original sin. *FC SD I 10*: “Original sin is the complete lack or absence of the original concreated righteousness of paradise or of the image of God according to which man was originally created in truth, holiness, and righteousness, together with a disability and ineptitude as far as the things of God are concerned.” *FC SD I 11–12*: “Original sin in human nature is not only a total lack of good in spiritual, divine things, but ... at the same time it replaces the lost image of God in man with a deep, wicked, abominable, bottomless, inscrutable, and inexpressible corruption of his entire nature in all its powers, especially of the highest and foremost powers of the soul in mind, heart, and will. As a result, since the Fall man inherits an inborn wicked stamp, an interior uncleanness of the heart and evil desires and inclinations. By nature every one of us inherits from Adam a heart, sensation, and mind-set which, in its highest powers and the light of reason, is by nature diametrically opposed to God and his highest commands and is actually enmity against God, especially in divine and spiritual matters. True, in natural and external things which are subject to reason man still possesses a measure of reason, power, and ability, although greatly weakened since the inherited malady has so poisoned and tainted them that they amount to nothing in the sight of God.” *FC Ep I 8*: “Original sin is not a slight corruption of human nature, but ... it is so deep a corruption that nothing sound or uncorrupted has survived in man's body or soul, in his inward or outward powers. It is as the church sings, ‘Through Adam's fall man's nature and essence are all corrupt.’”

4. Escape from the consequences of original sin is only by rebirth through Baptism and the Holy Spirit (see [2](#)); *cf. Mk 16:16*.

Separation of the corruption of our nature from the nature itself (see [2](#)) “will take place wholly by way of death in the resurrection. Then the nature which we now bear will arise and live forever, without original sin and completely separated and removed from it”; *cf. Jb 19:26–27. (FC Ep I 10). FC SD L 46*: “Precisely the substance of this our flesh, but without sin, shall arise, and ... in eternal life we shall have and keep precisely this soul, although without sin.” *FC Ep I 6*: “Christ ... will not quicken [original sin] in the elect, will not glorify it or save it. On the contrary, in the resurrection it will be utterly destroyed.”

From <http://www.busatedhalo.com>:

Where in the Bible does it say that Mary, mother of Jesus, is sinless? And if it is not in the Bible, why does the Catholic Church act like she is?

By [Fr. Joe Scott](#) December 24, 2009

Catholics differ from some Christian Churches, which accept the Scripture as the only source of God's revelation. Catholics have a strong belief in the truth of Scripture, but we also believe in tradition as a way in which God continues to reveal truth to us. Tradition can include beliefs, customs, prayers, and worship, the teaching of popes, bishops, theologians, and Church councils. It's our process of continually reflecting on the way in which the Word of God encounters our own experience as a community of faith.

Catholic understanding is that tradition includes Scripture and began before the gospels and letters were written. We do believe that Scripture is a unique revelation from God and that the truths of tradition must always be tested and evaluated against the truths revealed in Scripture. They should not contradict Scripture. They should find their roots in Scripture.

The belief that Mary lived without sin from the moment of her conception springs from Church tradition. It evolved over a period of time and was not formally defined as a teaching of the Church until 1854. It is not found explicitly in Scripture, but seems for Catholics to flow naturally from the testimony of Scripture that Mary was "full of grace" (Luke 1:28) and "blessed" (Luke 1:42).

In Catholic understanding, the belief in Mary's "immaculate conception" does not say so much about Mary as it is about Christ's saving power. We believe that God created the human person to be in God's own image. Grace is more original than sin. Our natural state was to be "full of grace." Sin is our universal experience, but it's not what God intended for us in the past nor wants for us in the future. We are saved from sin through Christ. Mary's being conceived without sin takes place in the context of the entire saving act of Christ. In being "full of grace" she is a model of what we human beings were intended to be and who we are redeemed to be through God's saving power. She is the first sign of God's victory over sin in Christ.

[Fr. Joe Scott](#)

Fr. Joe Scott, CSP, has been a campus minister, pastor and editor as a Paulist priest.

Genesis 1:26

Isaiah 48:16

John 17:3

1 Corinthians 8:6

1 John 5:20

John 15:26

Acts 5:3-4

Matthew 28:19

1 Peter 3:18-22

Ephesians 5:25-26

Titus 3:5

Galatians 3:24-27

Romans 6:4

Genesis 17:12

Leviticus 12:3

Mark 10:14

Acts 2:38-39

Acts 16:15,33

1 Corinthians 1:16

Colossians 2:11-12

Romans 9:3-5

Hebrews 2:10-18

Romans 5:18-19

2 Corinthians 5:21

Romans 1:3-4

Romans 8:3-4

Hebrews 7:26-28

1 Timothy 2:5-6

1 Timothy 3:16