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If Only Eve Had Eaten the Fruit, Would Sin Still Have Entered the World?

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#STRask - Stand to Reason

Questions about whether sin still would have entered the world if only Eve had eaten the fruit, the theological explanation for why Jesus did not inherit a sinful nature from Mary, and what the idea that nothing good can come from evil would mean for children born as a result of rape.

- * If only Eve had eaten the fruit and Adam refused, would sin still have entered the world?
- * What is the theological explanation for why Jesus did not inherit a sinful nature from Mary?
- * If nothing good can come from evil, how can we justify children born as a result of rape, incest, out of wedlock, etc.?

Transcript

Welcome, you're listening to Stand to Reason's hashtag, SDRask Podcast with Amy Hall and Greg Kockel. Good morning, Amy. Good morning, Greg.

Okay, let's start with a question from James. If only Eve ate the fruit and Adam refused, would sin have still entered the world? The Bible seems clear that it was Adam's sin that brought in sin, but I would think that it was a sin. that Eve's sinning would still somehow compromise her offspring in some way.

Would God just take her out and give Adam someone new? Well, you know, this is a fair question. It falls a little bit in the category of speculation or hypotheticals. It reminds me of a line in a movie.

If anybody's seen this more recent make of Two Grit, which far exceeds the old one, this magnificent movie in my view. There's a scene early on where the girl is bartering with the guy, an older man, about horses that her dad bought. Now, she doesn't need it.

It is a magnificent scene. But she asks, she raises a hypothetical of sort, is part of her argument. And he says, I do not entertain hypotheticals.

Reality is hard enough as it is, you know. Well, this I think might be applicable in this circumstance. I mean, sometimes we need to get to the bottom of some theological issue.

And so we have to speculate one way or another. I've actually never thought about this and what happened if Eve would have just sinned and not Adam. Who knows? The fact is Adam was the head of that family and therefore treated as they had when the corporate violation of God's will was reflected on by Paul in Romans 5, for example.

And the fact is they both fell, humanity fell, and therefore humanity is now in a fallen state and must be rescued from it. That's the relevant issue. I'm not even going to venture any speculations because I'd have no basis upon which to venture a speculation.

And I don't know that it would actually be useful. Okay? Like the man said, reality has enough difficulties of its own. So I guess I'm just going to pass on this.

Now you're free to speculate if you like Amy, but I don't have anything to say and I'm not sure it's helpful even to speculate what if, what if, what if. Because sometimes, and I don't think this is coming from James, but sometimes when we make speculations, it creates more confusion or difficulty that we just don't need. In fact, Paul, in some circumstances, warns against speculation.

I think in either Titus or Timothy, because the speculations that he was warning against really were inconsequential about anything and just ended up causing division. So anyway, I'm just going to bow out of this one. Well, I think there's one theological aspect of this that is relevant, but you've already touched on it, Greg, and that's the idea that Adam is our head.

So that is the one thing you'd have to think about when you're answering this question or you're thinking about this question. The idea is that we were all that if he's our head, he represents us. So were he to never sin? Yes, I'm sure Eve's sinning would have some effect on the world and maybe on her offspring, but it wouldn't be the case that we would all be dead in our sin in Adam.

So I don't know what that would do except to say as our head, that's the part that matters. And that's what we'd have to think about when we're speculating on this question or trying to figure out what it would mean, because that's something I think is so important to understand his and he can't be our head now. So it is something that's important to think about if he never sinned, would we not have original sin? I think probably not.

It doesn't mean there wouldn't be sin in the world, but I don't think we would be born

into sin because he was our head and he was sinless. But of course, that was never the plan. Yeah, it wasn't in doubt the circumstance either.

So it's a curious or an interesting question, but it's very difficult to figure out what that would have looked like. So let's go on to a question from Carlo. What is the theological and practical explanation for why Jesus did not inherit a human sinful nature from Mary seems to imply that original sin comes from Adam and not Eve, or that Mary was free of original sin? Well, I guess those are all theoretically possible, and this is an issue that some have speculated different ways on, and I want to stipulate that anything I'm going to say is going to be somewhat speculative because there is no answer for this in the scripture.

One alternative that is a possible alternative in principle is not a possible alternative scripturally, and that is that Mary had no sin. Now that is the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, but it's without biblical justification. In the magnificat when Mary is extolling, I think it's in Luke chapter 1, extolling the grace that has been given to her by God to make this thing possible, this event of her carrying the Messiah, the Son of God.

She refers to God as her savior. Now, the response that would imply that she needs to be saved, and in Romans it says, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Now, Jesus, of course, is accepted for a vast array of theological reasons, plus also the text said that he himself was without sin.

So, there is a general statement made about humanity that all have sinned, and though Jesus was a true human, he is explicitly the exception. In the case of Mary, she is not accepted. In fact, she declares the fact that God is her savior.

Now, the explanation that I've heard regarding that is that God saved her in the sense that he rescued her from ever having had to have sin. He made her without sin. But that means he's rescued her by never having to rescue her.

Which to me is really specious, all right? And it's meant then to support a doctrine that has no legitimate place, I think, in Christian theology. It doesn't do any legitimate work. It isn't like without that we have all kinds of other theological problems.

And incidentally, if, and by the way, that is what the Immaculate Conception is referring to in Roman Catholic theology. Many Protestants think the Immaculate Conception means Jesus was born of a virgin. No, that's not what it means.

It means that Mary was born without sin. But that just pushes the problem a little bit further back. How is it that Mary's mother and father, who themselves were fallen human beings, did not transfer the sin nature to Mary? Well, that was a miracle.

Well, it would be a miracle if it happened, but we have no reason to believe it actually happened. And if it can be done with a mother and father, at least in principle, if we can

count as to that a mother and father can be both fallen and God could somehow create a miracle to have sin. Well, certainly that could be the case of Jesus.

I think the rationale that I've heard about Mary being without sin is that she would be an inappropriate domicile for the God-man. She'd be an inappropriate place for the God-man to rest inside of sinful flesh, this flesh being Mary. But of course, this strikes me.

Same problem because she was in a womb if she was sinless. Well, that's true. But she wasn't the God-man.

And so, I guess that's where they draw the line. But of course, the whole point of the incarnation is God came down. He humbled himself, and he took on the form of human beings, and he walked with us.

And so, there isn't any contamination to the divine son of God being in the womb of a sinful human being. I don't understand how that would possibly work. We are not contaminated by the sin of others just by being close to them, okay, or even in their womb.

There's a generation, a generation of a sinful human being to the act of procreation. We are sinful because we are the children of sinful parents, not because we are in the womb of a sinful woman. Okay.

And so, I don't see any justification for that. And what it ends up doing in practical terms is puts Mary in an entirely inappropriate position of honor. There is an appropriate position of honor.

This puts her in an inappropriate position of honor that she'd never received during her lifetime, at least as far as the Gospels are concerned. You know, remember there was an occasion where Jesus' mother and his children came to get Jesus because they thought Jesus was crazy. And he was told, your mother and your brothers and sisters are out there.

And he said, who are my mothers and brothers and sisters? Those who do the will of God. So, he was somewhat dismissive. Certainly, if she was the sinless, immaculately conceived theotokos, God-bearer, and that was theologically significant subsequent to the birth of Jesus and then into the ministry of Jesus, that would have been reflected at that moment.

It wasn't. She was almost, in a certain sense, dismissed in virtue of some greater, in a certain sense, lacking order that Jesus was describing. So this brings us back to the original question.

Mary's not a candidate for being sinless and therefore having a sinless child. Whatever miracle could have taken place to create a sinless Mary could have taken place with

Jesus. Now, one implication, or possible implication, is that the idea of the sin nature is passed down through the Father, okay? And I was offered that as an option when I was an early Christian as we were studying these things.

That seems to be nullified since the possibility of cloning. Because you can take an egg and let me just think about how this works now. Yeah, I think you can just take an egg and clone that egg.

Well, now I can't remember my, all of my, there was a season where we talked about this a lot and I had all of this stuff present to my own. Even if you cloned a woman, it would still have a father, because the clone was created by a father. Well, I don't think it works like this though.

I'm trying to remember how that works. Is it possible to have a clone human being with where there's no male sperm that's involved and it's just the egg that's involved. So I don't know about that.

But in any event, I don't, that's apart from that issue, that's speculative, we don't know. And there's certainly no reason to say that God just worked a miracle where he created a genuine human being. And by the way, Jesus was as genuinely human as Adam and Eve were when they were originally made because being fallen is an accidental property of humanity.

It is not essential property of humanity. It isn't native to being a human. It is just ubiquitous now with all human beings because we are all generated from fallen parents.

But fallenness is universal now, but not, it's not, it's not, it's not a necessary part of our humanity. It's an accidental property as philosophers would put it made evidence by the fact that it will be true human beings when we're resurrected, but not have a fallen nature. Okay.

So we'll be glorified human beings, but we will still be true human beings. We won't be a different kind of being altogether. So I don't know how to answer that question.

And I think the best answer probably is that God just worked a miracle in the incarnation through the work of the Holy Spirit creating in Mary a separate human being. We don't even know if her biology was participating in this. It's not clear from the revelation.

It could just be a de novo creation of a genuine human being in the womb of Mary. So I think I'd rather go with that frankly than to say that the sin nature has passed down by men. This has maybe other theological ramifications that may not be helpful.

Well, one thing he suggests, it seems to imply that original sin comes from Adam and not Eve. But the fact is Mary's head is Adam as much as any man's head is. It's not that only Eve's nature comes down through women.

I mean, Adam is the head of every human being who has come from him. So yeah, I don't think it would imply that you're right, Greg, this is I guess another speculation question. Right.

We got two in a row here. Okay, let's go on to question from Osset. If nothing good can come from evil, how can we justify children born as a result of rape, incest, out of wedlock, et cetera? What if nothing good can come from evil? Mm hmm.

That's the question. But that's his basic premise. Nothing good could come from evil.

Is it? Am I? Yeah, that's what he says. Yes. Was it evil that Jesus was crucified on the cross? Mm hmm.

Yes, it was despicable. And those who did it are being held morally responsible. But magnificent good resulted from that.

So I don't, the starting point is not sound. I wonder, I wonder if he is suggesting, because what came to mind for me was Romans 3, 7, and 8. And here's what it says. But if through my lie, the truth of God abounded to his glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? And why not say, as we are slanderously reported in a some claim that we say, let us do evil that good may come.

Their condemnation is just. So this question might be coming from a misunderstanding of this verse, because what I think, what Paul is saying here is that we are not supposed to do evil in order to achieve good. But that doesn't mean that God is not working good things out of the evil that we do.

It's just that we don't have the power to decide, we are not, we do not actively, we should not actively do evil, choose to do evil in order to do good, whereas God is working through our sinful choices to accomplish something good, which is a different sort of thing. That's right. So we're not supposed to do evil purposefully in order to do good.

And I think that in the context, as Paul's making that discussion, there's an argument there or there's a flow of thought, and that is by contrast to our sin, there is this greatness of the grace of God that brings forgiveness for him who does not work, but believes in a God who justifies the ungodly to him it is recognized righteousness. So that's what in chapter four. And it's right near where this discussion is happening.

And what, and then Paul talks in chapter five about the new Adam, et cetera, but then he's anticipating an objection. By the way, there's a point here too. And the objection is, if I understand you right, then it's okay to keep sinning because grace abounds all the more to more sin.

And Paul says, no, you idiot, that isn't the way it works. You're completely misunderstanding. The point here is, first of all, that's the context where that's

mentioned.

So it doesn't have application to the question that was offered. It was addressing an excessive or inaccurate understanding of race. Well, great.

The more we send, the more grace there's going to be. So let's send more so we get more grace. Okay.

And Paul says, if you've died to sin, how are you going to continue in it? But it does make the point that if you are not teaching grace so aggressively that someone might mistake it for license, then you're probably not communicating the grace of God the way Paul was communicating it here in Romans because that's the problem he's anticipating with the strong message of grace that we see in chapter four and chapter five of Romans. So that is chapter six, but this comes before that. This is actually talking about how our unrighteousness demonstrates God's righteousness because of his wrath against sin, which is interesting because sometimes it demonstrates our sin demonstrates his grace and sometimes our sin demonstrates his wrath and both are bringing him glory.

And both are good. Right. So then Paul, the mistake you can make with that is, okay, well, then great.

My unrighteousness demonstrates God's righteousness. Great. Let's demonstrate.

So you can make the mistake in either way. Yeah. And Paul's like, don't sin.

That's a stupid mistake for a person to say, all right, I'm going to send it up because God will be shown to be righteous when he punishes me glory. Yeah, that's the way out in the field. Right.

But you're right. Both points are being made. Yeah.

Good observation. Okay. We're out of time.

Thank you, James and Carlo and us if we really appreciate hearing from you. Send us your question on X. I think about that for a second with the hashtag SDR dot. Oh, sorry, with the hashtag.

That's D R ask. I'm losing it, Greg. I'm getting ahead of myself.

So hashtag SDR ask on X or you can go to our website at SDR dot org and send us your question. We'd love to hear from you. If there's something you've been thinking about, go ahead and send it in and we will consider it.

This is Amy Hall and Greg Coco for Stand to Reason.