

HUMANS SIN AND GOD RESTORES, Part 1

by The Rev. John J. Fetterman
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1. **SIN:** a descriptive definition
 - A. A theological fact requiring a metaphor for understanding
 - B. Known by revelation in Genesis 1-11
 - The Great Metaphors and Myths (truth bearing) of Adam and Noah
 - C. Biblical usage: 22 metaphors used.
 - D. Most well- known:
 - Hattat (Heb) - transgression, trespassing, sin
 - Pesa (Heb) – breach of relationship, sin
 - Hammartia (Grk-Lk)- to miss the mark, to be wrong, to sin
 - Opheleimata (Grk-Mt) – to owe a debt, to
 - **Warning** to consumers of metaphors – Do not confuse the metaphor with the reality it points to. E.G. The Good Shepherd; Our Father

2. **MY CHOICE:** The Myths of Adam and Noah in Genesis 1-11
 - * A narrative about arrogance and ignorance; consequences of separation and aversion
 - * Adam: God creates man out of love and honors the free will given
 - * Noah: the point is restoration and renewal; not destruction (litotes)

3. What is the *sitz im leben* of the Planet Earth?
 - A. Original Blessing vs Original Sin
 - B. By reason of our common human nature we have the same *phronema sarkos* (“weakness of the flesh”, Article IX, p.869 BCP)
 - C. The sin of the world is the accumulation of all the ways in which humanity has learned to misuse the original blessings and that the world is disease -laden *sitz bath* in which we are immersed. Sometimes this evil is organized into programs and institutions of injustice.

4. **A PASTORAL REFLECTION** – PLEASE SEE REVERSE SIDE

A PASTORAL REFLECTION

The Book of Genesis describes Adam and Eve as being ashamed of themselves when God came looking for them in the Garden. Many have thought it was because they became mindful of their nakedness after having eaten the forbidden fruit (not an apple). The real problem lies not in the external action of eating a forbidden thing, but in the internal arrogance of thinking that they could become the equals of God. The God of their creation could not possibly miss a piece of fruit, but could be deeply offended by their ignorance in forgetting who they were and who God is.

There are some aspects of our lives where shame is appropriate but induced feelings of shame have been historically used by both the Church and the world to control people by making them feel bad about themselves. The Church, especially, should be proclaiming the Good News of God's love for us and we should feel very good about ourselves because of that.

Feeling bad about personal faults and naming those as sin inhibits us from naming the far bigger problem of structural systems of injustice and oppression which do terrible things to people. We participate in them either by our silence or our promotion. As examples I will offer an incomplete list of "isms" that have afflicted us like diseased water in a sitz bath: sexism (relegates worth to one gender over another or one expression of gender as being the only "right" way); imperialism (any oppressive use of power from personal and familial relationships to relations between nations); racism (deeming any one race as "the best and superior" to the degradation of others); classism (the ranking of people by any arbitrary standards); legalism (by suppressing the best use of law and formulating policies that favor a few and oppress many.) The basic meaning of all the metaphors for sin is the alienation and separation from God that humans have made. The term should be used with awe to acknowledge just that reality and not for a pitiful list of personal faults that misses the point. Overcoming the alienation is the essence of redemption.

This is called ***THE WORK OF CHRIST.***