

“Original Sin”: An Early
Christian/Pauline
Invention?

Romans 3:23

...For all have sinned and fall short
of the glory of God.

Romans 7:14, 19

¹⁴For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

¹⁹For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want.

Romans 7:23

But I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

²¹For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

Sumerian Wisdom Text

(Line 102, *Ancient Near East II:140*)

Never has a sinless child been born to
its mother...a sinless workman has
not existed from of old.

Psalm 14:1-3

¹The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God "

They are corrupt, they have committed
abominable deeds;

There is no one who does good.

²The LORD has looked down from heaven upon
the sons of men

To see if there are any who understand,
Who seek after God.

³They have all turned aside, together they have
become corrupt;

There is no one who does good, not even
one.

Psalm 53:1-3

- ¹The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God,"
They are corrupt, and have committed
abominable injustice;
There is no one who does good.
- ²God has looked down from heaven upon the
sons of men
To see if there is anyone who understands,
Who seeks after God.
- ³Every one of them has turned aside; together
they have become corrupt;
There is no one who does good, not even
one.

Psalm 51:5

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.

Job 4:17

Can mankind be righteous before
God?

Can a man be pure before his Maker?

Job 15:14

What is man, that he should be pure,
Or he who is born of a woman, that he
should be righteous?

Job 31:33

"Have I covered my transgressions like
Adam,

By hiding my iniquity in my bosom?

Isaiah 43:27

Your first forefather sinned,
And your interpreters/spokesmen
have transgressed against Me...

Isaiah 53:6

⁶All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own
way;
But the LORD has caused the
iniquity of us all to fall on Him.

Isaiah 64:6

⁶For all of us have become like one who is
unclean,

And all our righteous deeds are like a
filthy garment;

And all of us wither like a leaf,

And our iniquities, like the wind, take us
away.

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is more deceitful than all
else

And desperately sick;

Who can understand it?

Hosea 6:7

⁷But like Adam they have transgressed the covenant;

There they have dealt treacherously against Me.

1 Enoch 10:8

The whole earth has been corrupted
by Azazel: to him ascribe all sin.

Ben Sira 25:28

From a woman did sin originate, and
because of her, we all must die.

Wisdom of Solomon 12:10

But judging them little by little You
gave them a chance to repent,
Though You were not unaware that
their origin/nature was evil
And their wickedness inborn.

1QHodayot (“Thanksgiving Hymns”)

5:20-23

What is someone born of a woman among all your awesome works? He is a structure of dust shaped with water, his base is the guilt of sin, vile, unseemliness, source of impurity over which a spirit of degeneracy rules.... Only by your goodness is a man acquitted, purified by your abundant compassion.

1QH 7:16-17

...It is not by a hand of flesh that the path of man is straightened out, nor can a human being establish his steps.

1QH 8:19

I know that no one besides you is
righteous.

1QH 9:21-23

I am a creature of clay, fashioned with water, foundation of shame, source of impurity, oven of iniquity, building of sin, spirit of mistake, astray, without knowledge...

1QH 12:29-31

What creature of clay can do wonders? He is in sin from his maternal womb and in guilty iniquity right to old age... righteousness does not belong to man, nor the perfect path to the sons of man. To God most High belongs all the acts of justice, and the path of man is not secure.

1QH 12:34

I have remembered my faults along with
the disloyalty of my ancestors.... I said,
“Because of my sin I have been barred
from your covenant.”

1QH 13:5

I give thanks, O Lord, because you did not judge me according to my guilt, nor did you abandon me because of the designs of my inclination.

1QSereq 4:24-25

Until now the spirits of truth and injustice struggle in the hearts of men.... For God has established the two spirits in equal measure until the determined end (cf. Rom 7:21, 24-25).

Romans 7:21, 24-25

²¹I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good.

²⁴Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?

²⁵Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.

1QH 15:3

Belial is present when the inclination of
their being becomes apparent.

1QH 15:17-18

I do not have the defenses of flesh...and
there is not righteousness to be saved
from sin except through forgiveness.

1QH 15:27

You have made me know your wonderful mysteries, your loving-kindness to a man of vanity and in the greatness of your mercy to a perverse heart.

1QH 15:28-29

Who, before you, is just when judged? No spirit can reply to your reproach! No one can stand up against your anger!

1QH 15:36

As for me, I am an unclean man and from the womb of her who conceived me. I am in sinful guilt, and from the breast of my mother in injustice and in the bosom of my nurse in great impurity and from my youth I am in blood and until my old age in the iniquity of the flesh.

4th Ezra 3:7-23

And to him you commanded only one observance of yours, but he transgressed it. Therefore, you appointed death for him and for his generations...and every nation walked after their own will...and...when you led forth his seed out of Egypt and brought them to the Mt. Sinai...to give law to Jacob's seed and commandment to the generation of Israel, yet you did not take away from them the evil heart...for the first Adam, clothing himself with the evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, and likewise, also all who were born of him. Thus, the infirmity became systemic: the law indeed was in the heart of the people, but existed in conjunction with the evil germ. So what was good departed and the evil remained.

4th Ezra 7:48

O Adam, what have you done? For though it was you who sinned, the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants.

BT *Sukkah* 52a

The Evil *Yetzer* has seven names. The Holy One, blessed be He, called him Evil (Gen 8:21), Moses called him uncircumcised (DT 10:16); David called him unclean (Ps 51:12), Solomon called him fiend/enemy (Prov. 15:31), Isaiah called him stumbling-block (Isa 57:14), Ezekiel called him stone (Ezk 36:26), Joel called him “the hidden-one” in the heart of man (Joel 2:20).

BT *Bava Batra* 16a

R. Shemon ben Lakish said, “Satan and *Yetzer* and the Angel of Death are one.”

BT *Shabbat* 145b-146a

Rabbi Yochanan said, “Why are the Gentiles contaminated with lust? Because they did not stand at Mt. Sinai. For when the serpent came upon Eve, he instilled contaminating lust into her. When, however, Israel stood at Mt. Sinai, their lust ceased, but since the Gentiles did not stand at Mt. Sinai, their contamination did not disappear.

BT *Sukkah* 52b

The Evil *Yetzer* persuades man to sin in this world.

Mishnah *Avot* 2:16

The evil eye, the Evil *Yetzer*, and the hatred of one's fellow-creatures put man out of the world.

BT *Sanhedrin* 91b

Rabbi Judah taught, “When does the Evil *Yetzer* begin his rule over man? From the movement of his formation into bones, muscles, and flesh, or from that of his birth? ...Scripture is in support [of the latter], as it is said, “At the door [of man’s entrance into the world] the sin lieth.”

JT Berachot 6b

Even in his state as a minor, man's thoughts are evil.

Avot d' Rabbi Natan 32a-b

From the moment man is born, the Evil
Yetzer cleaves to him.

BT *Berachot* 61a

Two reins are in man: The one counsels him for good, the other for evil, and the good is on the right side, the evil is on the left, as it is said, “The heart of the wise man is on his right side; the heart of the fool is on his left” (Ecc 10:2; cf. *BaMidbar Rabba* 22:9, where the right = the Good *Yetzer* and the left = the Evil *Yetzer*).

Deuteronomy Rabba 9:8

Rabbi Levi said, “Moses pleaded, ‘Master of the Universe, there are 36 transgressions punishable by extinction enumerated in the Torah, for the commission of any one of which a man is liable to be put to death. Have I then transgressed any one of them? Why do You decree death upon me?’ God replied, ‘You are to die because of the sin of the first man who brought death to the world.’”