

**"Chrysostom and Augustine on the Sin of Adam
and its Consequences"**

A Study of Chrysostom's "Homily 10, On Romans" and Augustine's
Interpretation of it in Contra Julianum

by

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Introduction

A detail, which for some may seem minor, regarding the meaning of “the sin of the first man” and its consequences, has separated the Eastern and Western theological traditions, from the time of St. Augustine. The majority of Eastern Fathers understood that the transgression of Adam caused the fall of humanity away from the grace of God, the introduction of death, pain, fear and suffering into our lives, and the introduction of the human defects¹ into our nature.² Augustine's understanding, on the other hand, was that all of the above are consequences of the fact that the sin of Adam and his guilt are transmitted, or propagated, through the act of procreation³ and are found in every person born. Hence, the sin of Adam *defiles* all humanity including children, who have no other sins of their own. Therefore, all human beings are condemned because of the sin of Adam (original sin), which they bring with them and for which they become responsible, unless they are baptized. Although, in his work Contra Julianum Pelagianum⁴ he examined some of the works of various Fathers, Eastern and Western, he still came to the conclusion that they all agreed with him. Thus, Augustine, with his understanding that “human nature has no intrinsic and inalienable power to do salvific

¹ Ἐλαττώματα.

² John Romanides, Τὸ Προπατορικὸν Ἀμάρτημα, (Athens, 1957); Julius Gross, Geschichte des Erbsündendogmas: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des problems vom Ursprung des Übels, 4 vols., (München: Ernst Reinhardt Verlag, 1960-72); J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, 3rd Ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1965), pp. 349-352; Maurice Wiles, The Making of Christian Doctrine, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 55-56; David Weaver, "From Paul to Augustine: Roman's 5:12 in Early Christian Exegesis," St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly 27 no. 3 (1983): 187-206.

³ According to a philosophical concept known as ‘traducianism’ human souls, like human bodies, are derived from the seed of the father, hence the father may transmit to his children even his own sins. This idea is clearly found in Tertullian and also in Ambrosiaster's commentary on Romans which appeared during the papacy of Damasus (366-384). Augustine was influenced in his theory of human nature by both Ambrose and Ambrosiaster. It was Ambrosiaster's commentary, however, that played a decisive role in Augustine's theory of original sin. It was there that Augustine found not only the traducianist concept but also the idea of sinning *in massa*.

⁴ St. Augustine, Contra Julianum Pelagianum, P.G. 44, 10,I; Against Julian, The Fathers of the Church, vol. 35, translated by Matthew A. Shumacker (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1957).

good”⁵ and with his doctrine of ‘original sin,’ “began to elaborate a radically new anthropology.”⁶

The purpose of this study is to focus on Chrysostom's understanding of Adam's sin and its consequences for humanity, especially as he expresses them in his Homily 10, on Romans,⁷ where he discusses Chapter 5 of the Epistle to the Romans. I will then compare the findings with Augustine's interpretation of that same Homily and the other texts of Chrysostom, which he quoted in his treatise against Julian of Eclanum.

I. Chrysostom's terminology: The sin of Adam and its effects before the Mosaic Law

Chrysostom never uses the term “original sin”⁸ in all of the texts that have been examined for the purposes of this study. The terms used for Adam's sin, all of which occur in Homily 10 on Romans, are the following: the sin of the one,⁹ the disobedience of the one,¹⁰ the transgression of the one, the transgression, the transgression of Adam, the sin of the disobedience of Adam,¹¹ and the sin which he [Adam] introduced.¹²

⁵ J. Patout Burns, *Theological Anthropology*, Sources of Early Christian Thought Series (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), p. 13.

⁶ Ibid. J. P. Burns differentiates between two distinct kinds of anthropology, which he claims are found in early Christianity, the ‘ascetic’ and ‘Platonic.’ Augustine, while retaining significant features of the above anthropologies, “challenged each of them, particularly in his conception of the capacity of fallen humanity to respond to environmental grace and earn a reward or achieve a stable goodness. . . .” Burns explains that, “Neither the ascetics nor the Platonists were prepared to admit that human nature could lose the capacity to desire and choose the good as God required; nor would they allow that human nature receive it as the fruit of grace rather than possessing it as the inalienable property of nature,” as Augustine believed. (J. P. Burns, *ibid.*, p. 15)

⁷ Homily 10, On Romans, P.G. 60, 473-484.

⁸ “ἀρχική ἁμαρτία” or any other term with this meaning.

⁹ Ibid., col. 474: “ ἡ ἁμαρτία τοῦ ἑνός.”

¹⁰ Ibid., col. 477: “ἡ παρακοή τοῦ ἑνός.”

¹¹ Ibid., col. 475: “τὸ τοῦ ἑνός παράπτωμα.”

¹² Ibid., col. 476: “ἡ παράβασις, ἡ παράβασις Ἀδάμ, ἡ ἁμαρτία . . . τῆς τοῦ Ἀδάμ παρακοῆς, ἡ ἁμαρτία ἣν ἐκεῖνος (ὁ Ἀδάμ) εἰσήνεγκεν.”

The question which arises, especially because of the expression “the sin which he [Adam] introduced,”¹³ is whether he thought that the sin, or guilt, which resulted from the transgression of Adam was something which was transmitted from parents to children. The most problematic passage with regard to this is found in Homily 10, on Romans where, after a series of syllogisms referring to the statement of St. Paul, “sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law” (Rom 5:13),¹⁴ Chrysostom concludes that the sin which was in the world before the law of Moses, was that of the transgression of Adam. The proof for the existence of sin being the fact that all people died even before the Law of Moses and the sin resulting from it were introduced.¹⁵ This passage was quoted by Augustine, as we will see later, in order to show that Chrysostom believed in the transmission of the sin of Adam. The key phrase quoted by Augustine, “. . . it was not the sin which comes from transgression of the Law but the sin which came from Adam's disobedience which destroyed all things,”¹⁶ can easily be interpreted as saying that the sin of the transgression of Adam was destroying everything before the Law was given through

¹³ “Ἡ ἀμαρτία ἦν ἐκεῖνος εἰσήνεγκεν.”

¹⁴ “ἄχρι γὰρ νόμου ἀμαρτία ἦν ἐν κόσμῳ, ἀμαρτία δὲ οὐκ ἐλλογεῖται μὴ ὄντος νόμου.”

¹⁵ Homily 10, On Romans, P.G. 60, 475: “Ὅθεν δῆλον, ὅτι οὐχ αὕτη ἡ ἀμαρτία ἡ τῆς τοῦ νόμου παραβάσεως, ἀλλ' ἐκείνη ἡ τῆς τοῦ Ἀδάμ παρακοῆς, αὕτη ἦν ἡ πάντα λοιμενομένη. Καὶ τίς ἡ τούτου ἀπόδειξις; τὸ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ νόμου πάντα ἀποθνήσκειν. Ἐβασίλευσεν γὰρ ὁ θάνατος, φησὶν, ἀπὸ Ἀδάμ μέχρι Μωϋσέως, καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς μὴ ἀμαρτήσαντας. Πῶς ἐβασίλευσεν; Ἐν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τῆς παραβάσεως Ἀδάμ, ὃς ἐστὶ τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος. Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ τύπος ἐστὶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ὁ Ἀδάμ.” (From this it becomes clear that it was not the sin which comes from transgression of the Law but the sin which came from Adam's disobedience which destroyed all things. And what proves this? The fact that all men died before the Law was given. For Paul says: “For death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those who did not sin.” And how did death reign? “After the likeness of the transgression of Adam who is the type of him who is to come.” This is why Adam is a type of Jesus Christ.) The English text is from the new translation by Paul W. Harkins and Panayiotis E. Papageorgiou, *Chrysostom's Homilies on Romans*, Ancient Christian Writers, forthcoming.

¹⁶ “. . . οὐχ αὕτη ἡ ἀμαρτία ἡ τῆς τοῦ νόμου παραβάσεως, ἀλλ' ἐκείνη ἡ τῆς τοῦ Ἀδάμ παρακοῆς, αὕτη ἦν ἡ πάντα λοιμενομένη.”

Moses. After Moses, the sin from the transgression of the Law finally took over. Chrysostom's idea here is that sin has to exist in order for death to exist. For sin to exist a commandment is necessary in order for transgression to take place. Since before the Law of Moses there was no other commandment, except for the one Adam transgressed, it follows that the sin from the transgression of Adam with its consequences had a direct effect on his descendants; hence Chrysostom's conclusion, that the sin from Adam's transgression reigned before the Law was given. This sin, however, loses its significance, after the sin from the transgression of the law of Moses takes over. The transgression of Adam, in fact, does not even seem to Chrysostom to be as great as the fratricide of Cain, which occurred even before the Law was given.¹⁷ What we see here is that, although there was no Law for Cain, his action was considered as sin and even *a greater one than Adam's*.

In Chrysostom's mind, the thought that Adam's sin reigned before the Law cannot really mean that his guilt was upon all. What it seems to mean is that the condition from the consequences of his sin was upon all, as we will see in the sections which follow.

There is also here a key idea which must be highlighted; the proof for the fact that sin existed before the law is that all died. Therefore, sin and death are intrinsically connected in the theology of Chrysostom. In fact, because of the sin of Adam, not only those who sinned but also those who did not sin were bound by death. *Death ruled over all because of Adam's sin*.¹⁸

II. The Consequences of the Sin of Adam according to Chrysostom

¹⁷ Homily 19, On Genesis, P.G. 53, 162: “καὶ ὅσω μείζον τοῦτο τὸ ἀμάρτημα, τῆς παραβάσεως τοῦ πρωτοπλάστου, ἐκ τῆς διαφορᾶς τῆς κατάρρας ἕξεστι τῷ βουλομένῳ συνιδεῖν.” (And how much greater this is to the sin of the disobedience of Adam one who wishes can see from the difference of the curse.)

¹⁸ Homily 10, P.G. 60, 475: “Adam became the cause of death for his descendants, even though they had not eaten of the tree, since death came into the world when Adam ate of it.”

Chrysostom here follows Paul and his terminology very closely; the first consequence from the transgression of Adam is mortality and ultimately death.¹⁹ Even those who never ate from the tree become mortals through him. Further down, using the words of St. Paul (Rom. 5:15) he asserts: “Just as through one man sin entered into the world, so also through the transgression of the one the many died.”²⁰

Similar passages from other homilies indicate the same intrinsic connection between the sin of Adam and the introduction of death into the world. In the Homilies on Genesis we read: “After the transgression death entered in.”²¹ “The fact that he became mortal because of the transgression is made obvious both from the commandment as well as from the subsequent events.”²²

But the consequences from the transgression of the first couple²³ are more than just death. The next one is shame.²⁴ Then comes the loss of honor and authority,²⁵ then fear,²⁶ and even other consequences: the body, has not only become mortal but can also feel suffering.²⁷ Man now has many natural shortcomings and his body has become

¹⁹ Ibid., P.G. 60, 474: “πῶς οὖν εἰσῆλθεν ὁ θάνατος, καὶ ἐκράτησε; Διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ ἑνός.” (How then did death enter in and take over? Through the sin of the one.)

²⁰ Ibid., P.G. 60, 475: “Ὡσπερ δι' ἑνός ἀνθρώπου ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰς τὸν κόσμον εἰσῆλθεν· καὶ ἐν τῷ τοῦ ἑνός παραπτώματι οἱ πολλοὶ ἀπέθανον.”

²¹ Homily 16, On Genesis, P.G. 53, 134: “μετὰ τὴν παράβασιν ὁ θάνατος ἐπεισῆλθεν.”

²² Ibid., P.G. 53, 132: “Ὅτι γὰρ διὰ τὴν παράβασιν θνητὸς γέγονεν, δῆλον καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς ἐντολῆς, καὶ ἐκ τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα συμβάντων.”

²³ “Πρωτόπλαστοι.”

²⁴ Homily 17, On Genesis, P.G. 53, 135: “Ἐπεισῆλθε γὰρ ἡ ἁμαρτία καὶ ἡ παράβασις καὶ κατεσκεδάσθη αὐτοῖς ἡ αἰσχὺνη.” (Sin and transgression entered in and shame overtook them.)

²⁵ Homily 9, On Genesis, P.G. 53, 79: “ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ ἡ ἁμαρτία εἰσῆλθεν, ἀφηρέθη λοιπὸν καὶ τὰ τῆς τιμῆς, καὶ τὰ τῆς ἐξουσίας.” (But because sin entered in, the things of honor and authority were both taken away.)

²⁶ Ibid.: “Ἐὶ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα εἰσῆλθεν ὁ φόβος.” (After these things, feared entered in.)

²⁷ “Γέγονεν παθητόν.”

heavier and ungovernable.²⁸ Man now has experience of a multitude of passions which he needs to exert great effort to control.²⁹

Death, however, seems to be the most tragic consequence of the fall, so Chrysostom raises the question himself, "For what reason did this happen?" i.e. for what reason did God allow mortality to overcome the human race? Since St. Paul does not provide an answer, Chrysostom volunteers his own:

Not only have we been in no way harmed by this death and condemnation if we will live a sober life, but we will even benefit, despite the fact that we have become mortal and subject to death. The first reason for this is the fact that we do not sin in a body which is immortal. The second is that we have countless grounds for following a religious way of life.³⁰

And continues to explain what this religious way of life entails³¹ concluding:

²⁸ Homily 12, On Romans, P.G. 60, 498: "Ὅτε γὰρ, φησὶν, ἤμαρτεν ὁ Ἀδὰμ καὶ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ γέγονεν θνητὸν καὶ παθητὸν, καὶ πολλὰ ἐλαττώματα ἐδέξατο φυσικά, καὶ βαρύτερος καὶ δυσήνιος ὁ ἵππος κατέστη." (When, he says, Adam sinned his body became mortal and he received many natural shortcomings, and the horse became heavier and ungovernable.)

²⁹ Homily 13, On Romans, P.G. 60, 507: "Μετὰ γὰρ τοῦ θανάτου, φησὶν, καὶ ὁ τῶν παθῶν ἐπεισῆλθε ὄχλος." Ὅτε γὰρ θνητὸν ἐγένετο τὸ σῶμα, ἐδέξατο καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν ἀναγκαίως λοιπὸν, καὶ ὀργὴν καὶ λύπην καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα, ἃ πολλῆς ἐδεῖτο φιλοσοφίας, ἵνα μὴ πλημμύραντα ἐν ἡμῖν καταποντίσῃ τὸν λογισμὸν εἰς τὸν τῆς ἀμαρτίας βυθὸν." (After death, he says, the multitude of the passions entered in as well. When the body became mortal it also received by necessity desire and anger and sadness and many other [passions] which require great effort of the mind in order that they may not flood us and drown the mind in the depths of sin.) Here Chrysostom clearly believes that we have control over the passions. "The passions are not themselves sin," he continues, "but if we do not take hold of them they will lead us to sin." Cf. with Augustine in *City of God* XIV.9.4, where, in criticizing the Stoic idea of ἀπάθεια, he says: "if this word is to be understood to mean living without those feelings which occur in defiance of reason, to disturb the soul, it clearly is a good greatly to be desired; but it is not one for this present life." He takes this, however, one more step further saying that to seek to escape the passions and conflicts of this present state - "will not anyone judge that to be a stupor (insensitivity) worse than any moral failing?"

³⁰ Homily 10, III, 25, On Romans, P.G. 60, 478: "οὐ μόνον οὐδὲν παρεβλάβημεν ἀπὸ τοῦ θανάτου τούτου καὶ τῆς καταδίκης, ἐὰν νήφωμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐκερδάνωμεν θνητοὶ γενόμενοι· πρῶτον, τὸ μὴ ἐν ἀθανάτῳ σώματι ἀμαρτάνειν· δεύτερον, ὥστε μυρίας ἔχειν φιλοσοφίας ὑποθέσεις . . ."

³¹ Ibid.: "Surely, the presence of death and the expectation of dying ourselves persuade us to be moderate, to practice self-control, to be subdued, and to keep ourselves away

It will be just as if we were under instruction in a kind of school in the present life where we learned from disease, tribulations, trials, poverty, and other things which seem to be deserving of dread, so that we might become suited to receive the blessings of the world to come.³²

Even what Chrysostom originally calls punishment he finally shows it to be for our benefit. Even the condemnation to death is for our own good, he points out, for it is designed to bring us back to our original love for God, sanctify us and make us worthy for the blessings of the Kingdom.

III. The transmission of sin from Adam to his descendants

The question of the transmission of sin appears indirectly from the very beginning of Homily 10 on Romans. Chrysostom asks: “What does it mean, ‘Through whom all sinned?’”³³ and he answers: “Adam having fallen, even those who did not eat from the tree became mortal,”³⁴ i.e., Adam's descendants inherit his mortality. There is no idea here of inheritance of his sin or guilt.

The question, however, comes up again further down in Homily 10 when St. John discusses the verse of Romans 5:19: “by one man's disobedience many were made

from all wickedness and evil. Together with these virtuous acts, or even before them, death has brought in other and greater blessings. For it is from death that the crowns of the martyrs came, as did the rewards of the apostles. It was by death that Abel received justification, as did Abraham after his son was slain, as was John [the Baptist] when he was beheaded for the sake of Christ, as were the three boys, and Daniel. For if we should will it so, neither death nor the devil will be able to do us harm. Over and above these examples, we can also say this. Immortality will await us and, after a brief period of chastisement we will enjoy without fear the blessings to come.”

³² Ibid., § 27: “ὡσπερ ἐν διδασκαλείῳ τινὶ τῷ παρόντι βίῳ διὰ νόσου καὶ θλίψεως καὶ πειρασμῶν καὶ πενίας καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν δοκούντων εἶναι δεινῶν παιδευόμενοι εἰς τὸ γενέσθαι ἐπιτήδειοι εἰς τὴν τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν ὑποδοχὴν.” Cf. Homily 9, On Genesis, P.G. 53, 79, where Chrysostom tells us that ὁ φόβος (fear) was also given by the loving God for our benefit and is proof of His lovingkindness for man: “καὶ τοῦτο τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ φιλανθρωπίας μέγιστον τεκμήριον.” (and this is a great proof of God's love for mankind.)

³³ “Τὶ δὲ ἐστίν, Ἐφ' ᾧ πάντες ἤμαρτον;” (Rom. 5:12)

³⁴ Homily 10, On Romans, P.G. 60, 475: “Ἐκεῖνου πεσόντος, καὶ οἱ μὴ φάγοντες ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου γεγόνασιν ἐξ ἐκεῖνου πάντες θνητοί.”

sinner.” Chrysostom recognizes the gravity of such a statement on the part of St. Paul and proceeds to investigate it:

Yet what Paul says seems to involve no small question. But if anyone pays careful attention, the question is easily answered. What, then, is the question? It is that he says that through one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners. For the fact that, when Adam sinned and became mortal, those who were his descendants also became mortal is not improbable. But how would it be logical that from Adam's disobedience, another man would become a sinner? For such another man will not be found as owing a penalty on this account, unless he became a sinner of his own accord.³⁵

Here Chrysostom, actually takes up the issue of transmission of guilt in a very direct way and rejects this idea as unnatural and unjust; such responsibility cannot be placed on anyone who did not become a sinner by his own will. How, then, can we explain St. Paul's statement “one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men?”³⁶ He raises the question himself: “What does ‘sinners’³⁷ mean here?”, he asks. “It seems to me,” he continues, “to be responsible for punishment and condemned to death.”

This final statement does not completely clarify the issue, but we can still reach the conclusion, from the overall discussion and his ideas so far presented, that it would be necessary for those responsible for punishment to be also responsible for specific transgressions which they have committed on their own, although the condemnation to death is inherited by all because of the transgression of Adam.³⁸ As we have already

³⁵ Ibid., P.G. 60, 477: “Καὶ δοκεῖ μὲν ζήτημα οὐ μικρὸν ἔχει τὸ εἰρημένον· ἂν δὲ τίς ἀκριβῶς προσέχει, καὶ τοῦτο εὐκόλως λυθήσεται. Τὶ ποτ' οὖν ἐστὶ τὸ ζήτημα; Τὸ λέγειν διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀμαρτωλοῦς γενέσθαι πολλούς. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀμαρτόντος ἐκείνου καὶ γενομένου θνητοῦ, καὶ τοὺς ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοιοῦτους εἶναι, οὐδὲν ἀπεικὸς (ισ νοτ υνλικελψ), τὸ δὲ ἐκ τῆς παρακοῆς ἐκείνου ἕτερον ἀμαρτωλὸν γενέσθαι, ποίαν ἂν ἀκολουθίαν σχοίη; Εὐρεθήσεται γὰρ οὕτω μηδὲν δίκην ὀφείλων ὁ τοιοῦτος, εἴ γὰρ μὴ οἴκοθεν γέγονεν ἀμαρτωλός.”

³⁶ “Ἐνὸς παρακούσαντος τοῦ Ἀδάμ, ἡ οἰκουμένη κατεκρίθη.” (Cf. Rom. 5:18)

³⁷ “Ἀμαρτωλοί.”

³⁸ Elsewhere, Chrysostom sees death as a weapon of the devil and not as punishment; see Homily 4, On Hebrews 4, P.G. 63, 41.

seen above, however, even the condemnation to death is seen by Chrysostom to be for our benefit.

IV. Augustine and the sin of Adam; his misinterpretation of Chrysostom

In his work Contra Julianum Augustine attempts to defend his position that there exists 'original sin' which is "contracted by human propagation," and defiles all humanity.³⁹ He examines the works of both Western and Eastern fathers and finds that they all believe the same thing as he does. In this study we will only look at the texts he quotes from Chrysostom in order to determine whether his interpretation of those texts is a correct one.

The first text Augustine quotes is one that Julian has also used to combat Augustine's theology from Chrysostom's Homilies to the Neophytes.⁴⁰ And this is Augustine's interpretation:

He said that infants do not have sins – he meant of their own therefore, John, comparing them to adults whose personal sins are forgiven in

³⁹ Gerald Bonner in his article "Augustine's theology on 'Adam,'" in Augustinus-Lexicon, vol. 1, edit. by Cornelius Mayer (Stuttgart: Verlag Publishers, 1986), col. 82, says that, according to Augustine, "Adam's primal sin is passed on to his descendants as a kind of hereditary infection, which Augustine on one occasion compares to gout: '*si quis intemperantia sibi podagram faciat eamque transmittat in filios, quod saepe contingit, nonne recte dicitur in eos illud uitium de parente transisse, ipsos quoque hoc in parente fecisse, quoniam, quando ipse fecit, in illo fuerunt? ac sic ipsi atque ille adhuc unus fuerunt; fecerunt ergo non actione hominum, sed ratione iam seminum*' (c. Iul. imp. 2, 177). So the sin which was voluntary in Adam becomes natural in his descendants." See also Maurice Wiles, The Making of Christian Doctrine, (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 55.

⁴⁰ Contra Julianum, P.L. 44, 10, I, 21, 655: ". . . *Hac de causa etiam infantes baptisamus; cum non sint coinquinati peccato, ut eis addatur sanctitas, justitia, adoptio, haeretitas, fraternitas Christi, ut ejus membra sint.*" The Greek text, the first part of which Augustine quotes in the original in order to prove that Julian's translation is faulty, is: ". . . Διὰ τοῦτο γοῦν καὶ τὰ παιδία βαπτίζομεν καίπερ ἁμαρτήματα οὐκ ἔχοντα, ἵνα προσεθῆ ἁγιασμός, δικαιοσύνη, υἰοθεσία, κληρονομία, ἀδελφότης, τὸ μέλη εἶναι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, τὸ κατοικητήριον γενέσθαι τοῦ πνεύματος." (Ibid., P.L. 44, 22, 656); See Greek text in Ὁμιλία πρὸς Νεοφωτίστους, "Ἑλληνες Πατέρες τῆς Ἐκκλησίας", vol. 30, p. 386, §5-6: (Transl.: This is why we baptize children, although they have no sins, so that sanctification, justification, sonship, inheritance, brotherhood will be added to them, so that they may become members of Christ and a dwelling-place of the spirit.)

Baptism said they do not have sins – not as you quote him: "are not defiled with sin," (*non coinquinatos esse peccato*) where you want it understood to mean that they are not defiled by the sin of the first man (*non eos peccato primi hominis inquinatos*).⁴¹

. . . Why did he himself not add "their own?". Why I think, except that he was speaking in the catholic church and did not believe that he would be understood in any other way, since no one had raised such a question, and he spoke more carelessly since you were not yet disputing.⁴²

It is quite obvious from the texts, however, that Julian is the one who read Chrysostom correctly and not Augustine.

Next, Augustine also quotes from the Letter to Olympias in order to prove that Chrysostom believes that children are "defiled by the sin of the first man": "When Adam sinned that great sin, and condemned all the human race in common, he paid the penalties in grief."⁴³ And then, he quotes from the Homily on the Raising of Lazarus: "Christ wept because the devil made mortal those who could have been immortal,"⁴⁴ and concludes:

What will you answer to this? If Adam by his great sin condemned all the human race in common, can an infant be born otherwise than condemned? . . . Who of mortals is not touched (*pertineat*) by this fault (*culpam*) and mischance (*casum*) by which the first man fell from everlasting life. . . If the devil made mortal all who could have been immortal, why do even infants die if they are not subject to the sin of that first man?⁴⁵

Chrysostom would have answered to this as follows: "Yes, all are condemned to death because of Adam's transgression. Yes, all are touched by the consequences of the sin of the first man, but they do not need to be guilty of the sin of Adam for that to happen. It is, rather, a natural condition we all inherit by virtue of our humanity, a

⁴¹ Against Julian, FOTC, p. 26, § 22.

⁴² Ibid., p. 27, § 22.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 28, § 24.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 28-29, § 24.

humanity changed because of Adam's transgression. Children *'non cinquinos esse peccato and non eos peccato primi hominis inquinatos.'*"⁴⁶

Augustine also refers to St. John's treatment of Genesis 1:28 where God subjected the beasts to man. He points out how the sin of Adam changed it so that man may fear the beasts instead and be harmed by them as punishment of the first sin (*poenam primi esse peccati*). St. John, however, does not say here that the fear was a punishment for the first sin, but rather that man lost his authority⁴⁷ over nature because of his fall from the boldness⁴⁸ in front of God on account of his disobedience.⁴⁹ God, grieving for what man did, and caring for him, took authority away from him.⁵⁰ The consequence of that was the introduction of fear in his life.⁵¹ Augustine, on the other hand, wants to believe that the fact that we all fear is proof that we all have inherited the first sin:

Surely it is clear that St. John has shown in this discussion that that sin which entered through one man became common to all, since the fear of beasts is common to all, and beasts by no means spare even infants, whom certainly, according to the treatise of St. John, they should in no way harm or frighten unless infants were held by the bonds of the ancient sin (*veteris illius peccati*).⁵²

And Augustine's final conclusion from the above texts is that Chrysostom is "asserting the propagation of condemnation" (*propagationem damnationis asseruit*), although Chrysostom never uses such terms or ideas.⁵³

⁴⁶ In Hom. 28, II-III, On Matthew, P.G. 57, 353, where Chrysostom speaking against the popular belief that the souls of children killed by sorcerers are joined to demons and help the sorcerers, he insists, that as "the souls of the just are in the hand of God," (Sophia Sirah 3:1) so also are the souls of children, for they also are not wicked.

⁴⁷ "Ἀρχή, ἐξουσία."

⁴⁸ "Παρρησία."

⁴⁹ Homily 9, On Genesis, P.G. 53, 79: "Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τῆς παρρησίας ἐξέπεσεν διὰ τὴν παρακοὴν, καὶ τὰ τῆς ἀρχῆς ἠκρωτηριάσθη." (Because he fell from the boldness he had with God, he was also deprived of his authority.)

⁵⁰ Ibid.: "κηδόμενος ἡμῶν καὶ φροντίζων ἐξέβαλεν ἡμᾶς τῆς ἀρχῆς."

⁵¹ Ibid., P.G. 53, 79: "Ἐὶ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα εἰσηλθεν ὁ φόβος." (After these things, fear entered in.)

⁵² *Contra Julianum*, P.L. 44, 10, I, 658.

⁵³ For Augustine the Fall has brought about both a deterioration of Adam's nature as well as punishment. Both of these conditions are transmitted seminally to his

The next passage Augustine quotes from Chrysostom is, again, from the Homily to the Neophytes and here we discover a new idea introduced by Chrysostom; the concept of a 'paternal handwriting,'⁵⁴ written by Adam, which introduced the debt. This debt, however, Chrysostom explains, has been increased by us through our own subsequent sinning. Augustine quotes here the Greek text,⁵⁵ and translates it to Latin.⁵⁶ He then proceeds to give the interpretation that "the debt of that *chirographum paternum* already pertained to us" (*jam illius chirographi paterni ad nos debitum pertinere*), i.e., we share responsibility for Adam's sin⁵⁷ and are also responsible for our own.

Finally, Augustine comes to Chrysostom's Homily on Romans 5:14 where, ironically, he sees "the truth of Chrysostom's Catholic faith clearer than light."⁵⁸ Quoting Chrysostom⁵⁹ he translates *λοιμενομένη* as *contaminavit*, i.e. 'which has

descendants. The icon of God has been seriously damaged; man's free will (*libertas*), by which he was able to avoid sin and do good, has also been damaged. "Henceforth, we cannot avoid sin without God's grace, and without an even more special grace we cannot accomplish the good." (Kelly, p. 365.)

⁵⁴ "Χειρόγραφον πατρῶον." The idea of the *χειρόγραφον* is used by St. Paul in Col. 2:14.

⁵⁵ "Ἐρχεται ἅπαξ ὁ Χριστὸς, εὔρεν ἡμῶν χειρόγραφον πατρῶον, ὃ τι ἔγραψεν ὁ Ἀδὰμ. Ἐκεῖνος τὴν ἀρχὴν εἰσήγαγεν τοῦ χρέους, ἡμεῖς τὸν δανεισμὸν ἠύξησαμεν ταῖς μεταγενεστέραις ἀμαρτίαις." (Contra Julianum, P.L. 44, 10, I, col. 658.) (Transl.: Christ, having come once, found a manuscript of our forefathers written by Adam. He [Adam] introduced the beginning of the dept, we increased it by our subsequent sins.)

⁵⁶ Ibid.: "Venit semel Christus, invenit nostrum chirographum paternum, quod scripsit Adam. Ille initium induxit debiti, nos fenus auximus posterioribus peccatis."

⁵⁷ Gerald Bonner, in "Augustine's theology on 'Adam,'" Augustinus-Lexicon, vol. 1, col. 82, explains Augustine's position as follows: "But the consequences of the Fall were not, however, confined to Adam; because of his identity with the human race, all who were born of Adam are, in a mysterious way, Adam himself, and share his guilt and condemnation. The whole of humanity was seminally present in Adam's loins at the time of the Fall and thus participated, in some fashion, in his sin: '*omnes enim fuimus in illo uno, quando omnes fuimus ille unus*'" (ciu. 13, 14; corrept. 28)

⁵⁸ Contra Julianum, P.L. 44, 10, I, col. 659.

⁵⁹ "'Manifestum,' inquit, 'quoniam non ipsum peccatum, quod ex legis transgressione, sed illud peccatum quod ex Adæ inobedientia, hoc erat quod omnia contaminavit.' Et paulo post: 'Regnavit,' inquit, 'mors ab Adam usque ad Mosen, et in cos qui non peccaverunt . . .'" The Greek text is as follows: "'Ὅθεν δῆλον, ὅτι οὐχ αὕτη ἡ ἀμαρτία ἢ τῆς τοῦ νόμου παραβάσεως, ἀλλ' ἐκείνη ἢ τῆς τοῦ Ἀδὰμ παρακοῆς, αὕτη ἦν ἢ πάντα λοιμενομένη. Καὶ τίς ἢ τούτου ἀπόδειξις; τὸ καὶ πρὸ τοῦ νόμου

defiled.’ A Greek word for defile, however, would have been μολύνω - (perf. tense pass. μεμόλυσμαι), μιαίνω - (perf. tense pass. μεμίασμαι), or κηλιδόω. The word used here, λοιμενομένη, comes from λοιμός or λοίμη, which means *a plague* or *pestilence*.⁶⁰ Therefore, ‘ἡ ἁμαρτία ἡ πάντα λοιμενομένη’ would mean, ‘the sin which plagues (or has become a pestilence on) all things,’ and not ‘that has defiled all things.’⁶¹

Augustine, however, chooses *Contaminavit*, either because that was the term used in the translation he had in front of him, or because he sincerely believed that that was the meaning Chrysostom intended to convey. He did know some Greek, however, so it is equally possible that the choice of the translation was his own decision in order to suit his theology of the propagation of ‘original sin’ which he was not willing to give up so easily.

The most interesting thing about Augustine's chapter 27 of his Contra Julianum is that there he quotes extensively from Chrysostom's Homily 10 on Romans, thus indicating that he must have had the entire homily in front of him, but misses the important passages,⁶² where Chrysostom actually addresses directly the question of ‘propagation’ of the sin of Adam and the inheritance of his guilt by posterity. The passages I am referring to are two. The first one is:

πάντας ἀποθνήσκειν. Ἐβασίλευσεν γὰρ ὁ θάνατος, φησὶν, ἀπὸ Ἀδὰμ μέχρι Μωϋσέως, καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς μὴ ἁμαρτήσαντας.” (From Hom. 10, On Romans, P.G. 60, 475). See above, footnote 15, for translation.

⁶⁰ H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, First Edition 1889, Impression of 1986), p. 477; G.W.H. Lampe, Edit., A Patristic Greek Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961, Eighth Impression, 1987), p. 811.

⁶¹ Augustine has arrived at the conclusion (contrary to the rest of the Christian Tradition) that the Fall has left Adam deprived of all goodness. Prior to 412 Augustine seems to have even held that the image of God in man was wholly destroyed. Bonner, however, points out that this opinion seems to have begun to change even before the controversy with the Pelagians necessitated a change of view. (G. Bonner, *ibid.*, col. 83).

⁶² It is possible that he just misunderstood those passages which were in conflict with his theology and so ignored them in his line of argumentation, but it is also equally possible, that he deliberately chose to ignore them knowing that they were in conflict with his positions and thinking that Chrysostom was the one in error. Augustine probably felt that he was thus protecting Chrysostom's memory.

But what does he mean when he says: 'Inasmuch as all have sinned?'
After Adam fell into sin, even those who had not eaten of the tree all
became mortal because of him.⁶³

Here Chrysostom explicitly states that he understands St. Paul's 'Ἐφ' ὃ πάντες ἤμαρτον;' to mean that 'all became mortal' because of Adam's fall. Chrysostom correctly understands 'Ἐφ' ὃ' to mean 'in that' and not 'in whom' (in quo), which the Latin translation of the Vulgate would imply.⁶⁴ Augustine skips right over this text and explanation.⁶⁵

The second passage occurs, at a later point, where Chrysostom raises the question about, "Paul's saying that through the disobedience of the one many became

⁶³ Homily 10, I, 2, On Romans, P.G. 60, 474: "Τὸ δὲ ἐστίν, Ἐφ' ὃ πάντες ἤμαρτον;" Ἐκεῖνου πεσόντος, καὶ οἱ μὴ φάγοντες ἀπὸ τοῦ ξύλου γεγόνασιν ἐξ ἐκεῖνου πάντες θνητοί."

⁶⁴ See Joseph Freundorfer, Erbssünde und Erbtod Apostel Paulus: Eine religionsgeschichtliche und exegetische Untersuchung über Römerbrief 5:12-21, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen, (Münster i.W. : Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1927) pp. 132-134. According to Freundorfer (and Kelly, p. 354) the Latin translation available to Ambrosiaster Rom 5:12 read "... so death spread to all men in whom (*in quo*) all sinned." Ambrosiaster was most probably the first one to understand the *in quo* of Rom 5:12 as a relative conjunction with its antecedent Adam. In Phil. 3:12, however, *in quo* is a causal conjunction translated as *because* or *inasmuch as* or as *in that* and need not have caused misunderstanding of the original meaning. Hence Romans 5:12 would read: "Through one man (or 'because of one man') sin entered into the world, and through sin death; and thus death came upon all men, *in that* all sinned." Julian of Eclanum objected to the term 'in quo.' He proposed 'quia' (because) as a more accurate translation of 'ἐφ' ὃ.' See also Elaine Pagels, Adam, Eve and the Serpent, (New York: Random House, 1988) p. 109, 143; For more on the term 'ἐφ' ὃ,' see D. Weaver, "From Paul to Augustine"; G. Bonner, "Augustine on Romans 5:12", in Studia Evangelica 2 (1968): 242-247; S. Lyonnet, "Le Péché Originel et l' Exégèse de Rom. 5:12-14," in Recherches de Science Religieuse 44, I (1956): 63-84; also by Lyonnet, "Le Sens de ἐφ' ὃ en Rom. 5:12 et l' Exégèse des Pères Grecs," in Biblica 36 (1955): 427-456; A. d'Alès, "Julien d' Eclane, Exégète," in Recherches de Science Religieuse 6 (1916): 311-324.

⁶⁵ M. Wiles in The Making of Christian Doctrine, p. 56, thinks, that Rom. 5:12 is only secondary support for Augustine's doctrinal belief, and not its true foundation. It seems, however, that for Augustine, the phrase in Rom. 5:12, "*in quo omnes peccauerunt*" was official biblical confirmation of his theory of seminal identity. See also M. Wiles, footnote 1 on the same page, for other opinions on this issue.

sinners.”⁶⁶ and points to the two possible interpretations of it. The first one, which does not seem unlikely, he says, is that because of Adam's sin and his change to a mortal state, all who came from him would be the same, i.e. mortal. St. Paul gives us ample proof that such a thing is possible, he explains.⁶⁷ The second possible interpretation, which Chrysostom sees, coincides with the position which Augustine holds: That because of Adam's disobedience another one might become a sinner, i.e., that another person may have the sin or guilt of Adam's transgression. Chrysostom finds this notion illogical and unjust, since this other person has not become a sinner by his own will or action (οἰκοθεν), and rejects it.⁶⁸

The questions which arise are: Did Augustine read these two passages, or did he not? If he read them, why did he ignore them?

Discussion and Conclusion

The above investigation demonstrates that St. John Chrysostom saw the transgression of Adam as the cause of our present condition, i.e. the fallen human nature, where all are bound by weaknesses, shame, fear, suffering and many natural defects,⁶⁹ but above all by death. For Chrysostom, we have been condemned to this condition due to Adam's transgression, but are not directly responsible for his sin. Even this condemnation was given by God not so much as punishment but rather out of mercy, in his foreknowledge and providence, in order to save us from sinning eternally and bring us back to his love and sanctification. Not only did we not lose from this, Chrysostom claims, but we have in fact gained. This condition has become for us a training ground⁷⁰ for virtue, so that we can become capable of receiving the

⁶⁶ Homily 10, On Romans, P.G. 60,477: “Τὸ λέγειν διὰ τῆς παρακοῆς τοῦ ἑνὸς ἁμαρτωλοῦς γενέσθαι πολλούς.”

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ “Πολλὰ φυσικὰ ἐλαττώματα.”

⁷⁰ “Διδασκαλεῖον.”

future gifts of God. Chrysostom clearly rejects the idea that we are responsible for and being punished for Adam's sin and points out that we are only responsible and will be punished for the sins we commit ourselves willingly.⁷¹

With regard to baptism, Chrysostom agrees with infant baptism because, although infants have no sins, they will receive through the Sacrament, sanctification, justification, sonship, inheritance, brotherhood with Christ, they will become members of Christ and a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. He says nothing about the forgiveness of the sin of Adam, which a child may be bringing with it. In fact, nowhere in the texts we examined, including those quoted or referred to by Augustine, have I found any indication, in the mind of Chrysostom, of the existence of the notion of the propagation of the 'first sin' through the act of procreation.

It is clear that Augustine read these same texts, but completely ignored the passages which explicated clearly the position of Chrysostom on the issue, probably because he was already convinced of the correctness of his own belief and his main concern was to combat Julian rather than present the true belief of St. John Chrysostom. It is even possible, that in his own mind, he thought he was protecting the memory of St. John from a possible association with the Pelagian heresy (there are indications of this in his comments in Contra Julianum).⁷² In so doing, however, he established in the West a teaching of 'original sin' not completely in line with the Patristic tradition (at least of the East), which was to have a lasting effect on the western church, being accepted by Catholic and Protestant theologians alike. As Prof. Bonner points out, there are serious intellectual difficulties with Augustine's teaching:

It is not clear by what justice humanity can share in Adam's guilt when it existed only in potentiality in his loins at the time of the Fall. It is also difficult to see why the children of the baptised should inherit a guilt from which their parents have been cleansed. Finally, it has been argued that Pope Zosimus' condemnation of Pelagianism in his Tractoria did not

⁷¹ "Οὐχοθεν."

⁷² See especially the opening comments of §23 and §26, Against Julian, FOTC, pp. 27, 30.

constitute a complete endorsement of the Canon's of Carthage of 418, which represent Augustine's doctrine in its most rigorous form.⁷³

I would like to take this one step further and point to an important modern theological development in the West which has its roots in Augustine's doctrine of original sin, the recent doctrine-made-dogma of the 'Immaculate Conception' of the Virgin Mary. It seems to me that, it was mainly the need of Roman Catholic theology to cleanse the Mother of God from Augustine's 'inherited guilt' that led to the proclamation and final establishment of this new dogma. Had this notion of transmission of defilement and guilt from Adam to his descendants not been so strong in the West there would have been no need for such a theological development.

⁷³ Bonner, *ibid.*, col. 83.