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EPHESIANS 2:3c AND PECCATUM ORIGINALE

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INTRODUCTION

THE student of hamartiology soon discovers that Eph 2:3c is a standard proof text for and often occurs in the various presentations of original sin (*peccatum originale* or *habituale*). It may well be that after Rom 5:12-21 this passage is the most important in the NT on this doctrine. All branches of Christendom, including Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican, Arminian, and Roman Catholic[1] have depended

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[1] *Reformed:* The Calvinistic theologians normally view this verse as asserting hereditary depravity. See for example: Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1941) 240; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (LCC 20, 21; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 1. 249, 254; 2. 1340; R. L. Dabney, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976 reprint) 328, 341; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (3 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975 reprint), 2. 243-44; W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (3 vols.; reprinted; Minneapolis: Klock and Klock, 1979), 2. 217-19; and A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1907) 578-79. See also the Westminster Confession (6:4) and Shorter Catechism (Question 18): *The Confession of Faith* (Halkirk, Caithness: Publications Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, 1962 reprint) 40, 290. *Lutheran:* It is evident that Martin Luther viewed Eph 2:3c as support for hereditary sin. For brief citations from Luther and references to relevant passages see E. W. Plass, ed., *What Luther Says* (3 vols.; St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 3. 1295, 1300, 1361 (#4151, 4167, 4385). See also article 2 of the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord (1. 1-3) in the *Concordia Triglot: The Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921) 44, 105, 779. The Lutheran theologian Francis Pieper also views Eph 2:3c in this manner. See his *Christian Dogmatics* (4 vols.; St. Louis: Concordia, 1950), 1. 427, 528, 530, 542. *Anglican:* While the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England do not contain proof texts, the language of Article 9 shows that its framers understood original sin to refer to "the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam." This definition implies a reference to Eph 2:3c. For an exposition of the conservative Anglican view, see Gilbert Burnet, *An Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England*, rev. by J. R. Page (London: Scott, Webster, and Geary, 1837) 139-51 and W. H. Griffith-Thomas, *The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty-nine Articles* (6th ed.; London: Vine Books, 1978) 155-75. *Arminian:* Theologians such as Miley and Sheldon spend considerable time with Eph 2:3c. While they admit "original sin," they deny that man is held responsible or guilty because of it. See John Miley, *Systematic Theology* (2 vols.; New York: Eaton and Mains, 1892), 1. 512;

upon this passage in formulating their hamartiological positions. There are those, however, who deny that this passage has any relevance to original sin.[2] Their arguments are not to be taken lightly. The purpose of this paper is to determine whether Eph 2:3c actually supports the concept of original sin, and if so, what that contribution is.

One point of definition must be clarified first: this paper deals with original sin proper rather than the broader area of man's depravity. Kuehner thus explains this term:

> It is so named because (1) it is derived from the original root of mankind; (2) it is present in each individual from the time of his birth; (3) it is the inward root of all actual sins that defile the life of man.[3]

It is true that "original sin" is often used with all three of these concepts in mind. As "original sin" is used in this paper, however, a narrower concept is implied: "the phrase original sin designates only the hereditary moral corruption common to all men from birth."[4]

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and H. C. Sheldon, *System of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1903) 316-17. John Wesley preached a sermon on original sin, evidently from Eph 2:3c on January 24, 1743 at Bath, England. This message showed he certainly believed that original sin was taught in this text. However, his doctrine of prevenient grace probably caused him to deny that man was guilty or under wrath due to original sin. See John Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley* (4 vols.; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., n.d.), 1. 413; and A. S. Wood, *The Burning Heart: John Wesley, Evangelist* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967) 232-36. *Catholic*: Both Augustine and Aquinas used Eph 2:3c to support original sin, though they had quite different understandings of man's sinfulness. See Saint Augustine, *Saint Augustine's Anti-Pelagian Works*, trans. by P. Holmes and R. E. Wallis; rev. by B. B. Warfield, *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (vol. 4; New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1887) 50, 122, 150, 236, 290-91. One wonders why G. M. Lukken translates Augustine's *natura* (Latin for nature = φύσις) as "second nature." See Lukken's *Original Sin in the Roman Liturgy* (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 330. For Aquinas, see *Original Sin* (*Summa Theologiae*, 26; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963) 11 (Question 81:1). For a modern Catholic perspective see A. M. Dubarle, *The Biblical Doctrine of Original Sin*, trans. by E. M. Stewart (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1964) 188-89 and Ferninand Prat, *The Theology of St. Paul*, trans. by J.'C. Stoddard (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Bookshop, 1956), 2. 589.

[2]Among many denials, see Markus Barth, *Ephesians* (AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 1. 231; N. P. Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and Original Sin* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., Ltd., 1927) 113, n. 1; and George B. Stevens, *The Pauline Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), 152-58.

[3]Fred C. Kuehner, "Fall of Man" in the *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*, ed. by C. F. Pfeiffer, et al. (2 vols.; Chicago: Moody, 1975), 1. 589.

[4]A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972 reprint of 1879 edition) 324. It cannot be asserted too strongly that "original" does not refer to man's original character as created by God, but to his original character as a descendant of Adam.

The investigation, then, relates to the legitimacy of using Eph 2:3c as a proof text for the hereditary moral corruption of man's nature.

The term "nature" is used incessantly in articulating the doctrines of theology proper (specifically relating to the trinity), Christology (one person with two "natures"), anthropology (human "nature"), and hamartiology (sin "nature," old "nature"). However, there is often confusion in the way this term is used. In this writer's view, it is imperative to distinguish between a "person" as a substantive entity and a "nature" as a complex of attributes in any of these branches of theology.[5] Therefore, the term "nature" will be used here to refer to a complex of attributes. Attributes are viewed as innate characteristics, not acquired habits.

Only an exegetical theology can be a valid biblical theology. Therefore, the paper is primarily exegetical. The three sections handle (1) preliminary matters of exegesis, (2) the Semitic nature of τέκνα . . . ὀργῆς, and (3) the crucial word φύσει. The conclusion summarizes the exegesis and briefly interacts with other views from the perspective that Eph 2:3c does indeed support the idea of hereditary moral corruption.

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

Context

A well-known approach to the book of Ephesians views its first three chapters as primarily doctrinal and its second three chapters as primarily expounding duties based upon doctrine. After his normal epistolary introduction (1:1-2), Paul breaks out into praise to the triune God for his glorious salvation (1:3-14). Next he explains his prayerful desire that the Ephesians might apprehend a greater knowledge of their glorious position in the body of Christ (1:15-23). The first three verses of chap. 2 serve to remind the Ephesians of their sinful past so that they might better appreciate the love, mercy, and grace of God who saved them by grace through faith for good works 2:4-10). The remainder of chaps. 2 and 3 further explains God's gracious program of uniting Jew and Gentile in Christ's body, the church (2:11-3:13). Chap. 3 ends, as did chap. 1, with a majestic prayer for the Ephesians' spiritual growth which concludes with a stirring doxology (3:14-21).

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[5]See J. O. Buswell, Jr., *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 1. 55, 2. 56. R. E. Showers comes to the similar conclusion that nature refers to character or "inherent disposition." See his "The New Nature," (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Grace Theological Seminary, 1975) 23.

Text

At first glance into the critical apparatus of the U.B.S. text,[6] it appears that there are no textual variants in 2:3. The Nestle text's apparatus reveals that manuscripts A and D have the second person ὑμεῖς instead of the first person ἡμεῖς in the first clause of the verse.[7] Tischendorf's more exhaustive apparatus shows that manuscripts A, D, E, F, G, K, L, and P have ἦμεν instead of ἤμεθα as the main verb in 2:3c.[8] Since these two forms are parsed identically, no change in meaning is involved. A variant more important for exegesis changes the word order of the phrase from τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς to φύσει τέκνα ὀργῆς (mss A, D, E, F, G, L, and P, and some versions).[9] At first glance, this reading seems to place much more emphasis upon the crucial term φύσει. However, none of the above variants have sufficient support to render the text of the passage questionable. This study, therefore, will proceed with the text of Eph 2:3c as it stands in the Nestle, U.B.S., and Trinitarian Bible Society (*textus receptus*) texts.

Change in person

The attentive reader of Ephesians 1-2 will notice that Paul speaks in the first person plural[10] and addresses the Ephesians in the second person.[11] The question arises as to why Paul shifts from first person to second person and then back again to first person (see 1:12-14; see also 2:1-3 for the opposite shift). Does his first person plural "we" refer to himself and the Ephesians or does it mean "we Jews," as opposed to "you (Ephesians) Gentiles"? In interpreting 2:3c ἤμεθα

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[6]Kurt Aland, et al., ed.; *The Greek New Testament* (3rd ed.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1975) 666-67.

[7]Nestle, Eberhard, ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (24th ed.; Stuttgart: Württembergischen Bibelanstalt, 1960) 491.

[8]Constantine Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (3 vols.; *editio octava critica major*; Lipsiae: Giesecke and Derrient, 1872), 2. 671. The *textus receptus* also has ἦμεν instead of ἤμεθα; see H KAINH ΔIAΘHKH (London: Trinitarian Bible Society, 1976) 355.

[9]Tischendorf, *NT Graece*, 2. 671. Another very obscure reading listed by Tischendorf is τέκνα ὀργῆς φύσει. For a rather full textual apparatus on this verse see S. D. F. Salmond, "The Epistle to the Ephesians" in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, ed. by W. R. Nicoll (5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974 reprint), 3. 285.

[10]Notice the first person plural pronouns in 1:2, 3 (2x), 4 (2x), 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 17, 19; 2:3, 4, 5, 7, 14 and the first person plural verbs in 1:7, 11; 2:3 (2x), 9, 10, 14, 18. The question is whether these first person plural expressions ("we," "us") relate to Paul and the Ephesians or to Paul and other Jews, exclusive of the gentile Ephesians.

[11]Notice also the second person pronouns in 1:2, 13 (2x), 15, 16, 17, 18; 2:2 (2x), 8, 11, 13, 17, 22; 3:1 and the second person verbs in 1:13; 2:2, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 19 (2x), 22. These expressions undoubtedly refer to the Ephesians collectively.

then refers either to Paul and his readers[12] or to Paul and other Jews.[13] The final comparative clause, ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποί, refers either to the rest of the Gentiles,[14] or to humanity in general, including Jews and Gentiles.[15] The position taken here is that "we" is a reference to Paul and the Ephesians, and "the rest" is a reference to mankind in general. It is not until 2:11ff. that a discernible distinction can be made between "we" (Jews) and "you" (Gentiles).[16]

Word order

That the word order of 2:3c was considered difficult at one time or another is evident from the textual variants which change the order from τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς to φύσει τέκνα ὀργῆς and τέκνα ὀργῆς φύσει. Robertson notes that this word order is unusual, but offers no explanation.[17] Winer lists some other instances in Paul where the genitive is "separated from its governing noun by another word" and suggests that this word order was necessary so that "an unsuitable stress . . . was not to fall on φύσει."[18] Abbott finds the position of φύσει to be unemphatic and even uses this as an argument against interpreting it to support the doctrine of original sin.[19] Alford agrees that there is no emphasis on φύσει but states that "its doctrinal

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[12]For the view that "we" in 2:3c refers to Paul and his readers, Jews and Gentiles alike, see John Eadie, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (reprinted; Minneapolis: Klock and Klock, 1977) 130-31; Charles J. Ellicott, *Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (reprinted; Minneapolis: James Family, 1978) 45; William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1967) 109-10; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961) 410; and S. D. F. Salmond, "Ephesians," 285-86.

[13]For the view that "we" in 2:3c refers to Paul and other Jews, excluding the gentile Ephesians (ὑμᾶς, 2:1), see T. K. Abbott, *The Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1897) 43; Francis Foulkes, *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians* (*Tyndale New Testament Commentary*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963) 70; Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of Ephesians* (Wilmington, DE: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., n.d.) 37; and H. A. W. Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Ephesians*, trans. by M. J. Evans (reprinted; Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979) 363.

[14]Abbott, *Ephesians*, 46; Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 70; and Meyer, *Ephesians*, 368.

[15]Eadie, *Ephesians*, 137; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 46; and Lenski, *Ephesians*, 412.

[16]The writer agrees entirely with Hendriksen on this point. See his *Ephesians*, 109-10.

[17]A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934) 419, 503.

[18]G. B. Winer, *A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament*, rev. by G. Lünemann; trans. by J. H. Thayer (Andover: Warren H. Draper, 1886) 191.

[19]Abbott, *Ephesians*, p. 45 states that the original sin view "gives a very great emphasis to φύσει, which its position forbids."

force . . . is not thereby lessened."[20] Another differing opinion is offered by Nigel Turner:

> I would say the position is very emphatic: the word comes as a hiatus in a genitive construct construction (Semitic), so that it must go closely with *tekna* and suggests a meaning, "natural children of wrath."[21]

At this juncture, it seems that Abbott's contention lacks proof. As Alford stated, even if φύσει is not emphatic, its doctrinal force is not negated. The meaning of φύσει is more crucial to its doctrinal import than its position in the sentence. However, Turner's view deserves careful consideration, especially when it is noted that this is the only place in the NT where this type of construction is interrupted in this way.[22]

Syntax of 2:1-3

Only three questions can be noted briefly here. The first concerns the logical and grammatical connection of 2:1 (καὶ ὑμᾶς . . .) with the preceding prayer of Paul. Westcott's view that καὶ ὑμᾶς in 2:1 is "strictly parallel" to καὶ πάντα ὑπέταξεν and καὶ αὐτὸν ἔδωκεν in 1:22[23] seems untenable in view of the climactic nature of 1:22-23 in concluding Paul's prayer. Rather, 2:1 is better viewed as a specific application to the Ephesians (The position of καὶ ὑμᾶς is emphatic.) of the power of God mentioned previously (1:19ff.).[24]

A second consideration is the anacoluthon in 2:1. Paul's exposition of sin in 2:2-3 breaks the sentence begun in 2:1. Evidently the main verb lacking in 2:1 (for which ὑμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς . . . was to be the direct object) is finally supplied by συνεζωοποίησεν. The adjective νεκρούς, describing man's problem in 2:1, is answered by the verb συνεζωοποίησεν in 2:5.

The third syntactical question relates to the connection of 2:3c to the preceding. In 2:3 the subject ἡμεῖς has a compound predicate.

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[20] Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, rev. by E. F. Harrison (4 vols.; Chicago: Moody, 1958), 3. 91.

[21] Nigel Turner, personal letter to this writer, February 2, 1980.

[22] The Semitic construct construction mentioned by Turner will be discussed in the next chapter. Table 2 lists every NT instance of this construction. Eph 2:3c is the only instance where another word interrupts between metaphorical υἱός or τέκνα and its following genitive.

[23] B. F. Westcott, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (reprinted; Minneapolis: Klock and Klock, 1976) 29.

[24] For this view see Abbott, *Ephesians*, 38-39; Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 42; and Meyer, *Ephesians*, 356. Perhaps the καὶ in 2:1 is to be understood as emphatic ("indeed"). See H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1955) 250-51.

The two main verbs, ἀνεστράφημέν and ἤμεθα, vividly portray first the acts and then the state of the Ephesians' past lives. Two ἐν plus relative pronoun phrases are the means of connecting both v 1 to v 2 and v 2 to v 3.[25]

THE ALLEGED SEMITISM

General definition of Semitisms

The precise nature and literary identity of the language of the NT has long been a matter of scholarly debate. Gone are the days when the NT was viewed as "Holy Ghost Greek," written in a mystical language unrelated to the secular world.[26] It is commonly recognized today that the NT was written largely in *koiné* Greek, the language of the people, rather than in the polished literary style of classical Greek.[27] More controversial is the degree of influence exercised by

[25]The writer would like to introduce the question of a chiastic arrangement in 2:1-3. This is merely a tentative suggestion, not a dogmatic conclusion. Note that vv. 1 and 3b both have verb forms which refer to a *state of being* (ὄντας, present participle of εἰμι and ἤμεθα, imperfect indicative of εἰμι). Also note that vv. 2 and 3a, both of which begin with prepositional phrases in ἐν, have verbs which present analogous concepts of *habitual behavior* (περιεπατήσατε and ἀνεστράφημέν, probably constative aorists. The possible ABBA chiasmus, diagrammed below, has as its first and fourth elements the idea of sin as a *state*, while its second and third elements view sin as *activity*. Let the reader analyze this and decide whether it is intentional or merely coincidental. Whether or not chiasmus is accepted, it is evident that *conceptually* 2:3b is similar to 2:1, and that 2:2 is similar to 2:3. For some insights and additional sources on chiasmus, see Nigel Turner, *Syntax* (*A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 3; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1963) 345-47; and J. H. Moulton, *Style* (*A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 4; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1976) 3, 65, 87, 97ff., 116, 147. 116, 147.

2:1   A : καὶ ὑμᾶς ὄντας νεκροὺς
      τοῖς παραπτώμασιν καὶ ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ὑμῶν,
          2:2   B : ἐν αἷς ποτε περιεπατήσατε κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ κόσμου
              τούτου, κατὰ τὸν ἄρχοντα τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ ἀέρος, τοῦ
              πνεύματος τοῦ νῦν ἐνεργοῦντος ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς
              ἀπειθείας.
          2:3   B¹: ἐν οἷς καὶ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἀπεστράφημέν ποτε ἐν ταῖς
              ἐπιθυμίαις τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν, ποιοῦντες τὰ θελήματα
              τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν,
2:3b A¹: καὶ ἤμεθα τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς ὡς καὶ οἱ λοιποί

[26]See Adolf Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, trans. by A. Grieve (reprinted; Winona Lake, IN: Alpha, 1979) 64ff. Deissmann viewed the "Holy Ghost Greek" theory as a corollary of verbal inspiration. In deprecating one, he deprecated the other, as if the doctrine of verbal inspiration ruled out the personalities and culture of the human authors of Scripture. This indicates a need for conservatives to adequately articulate a Bibliology which avoids the pitfalls of both errantism and docetism.

[27]This writer is aware that this statement is perhaps over-simplified. Obviously the style of the NT writers varies exceedingly; Luke and the author of Hebrews both used a rather polished style.

Semitic culture and language upon the NT writers. Related to this influence are the literary similarities and disparities between the NT and the LXX.[28] Deissmann directed much of his labors against an extreme theory of heavy dependence on the LXX and emphasized the living nature of language and the various circumstances present in the lives of the NT writers.[29] One must take care, however, to notice the Semitic background of the NT writers.[30]

The terms Hebraism, Aramaism, and Semitism are all used to describe Semitic influence upon the vocabulary and style of NT Greek. As Moule states, "this ugly and rather jargonistic word seems to have 'come to stay' as a term to describe features of Greek which are tinged with either Aramaic or Hebrew."[31] Moule's definition is perhaps over-simplified, since other works distinguish between "Semitisms" and "secondary Semitisms." A Semitism proper (or primary Semitism) is defined as "a deviation from genuine Greek idiom to a

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[28]For a concise discussion of Semitisms and a valuable bibliography on the subject, see C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (London: Cambridge University, 1959) 171-91. For a more current discussion and bibliography see Weston Fields, "Aramaic New Testament Originals?" (unpublished Postgraduate Seminar paper, Grace Theological Seminary, 1975). H. St. John Thackeray discusses the nature of LXX Greek from the perspectives of its κοινή basis and its Semitic element. See his *Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge: University Press, 1909) 16-55.

[29]Deissmann stated "The theory indicated is a great power in exegesis, and that is not to be denied. It is edifying and what is more, it is convenient. But it is absurd. It mechanises the marvellous variety of the linguistic elements of the Greek Bible and cannot be established either by the psychology of language or by history." See his *Bible Studies*, 65. In Deissmann's view the key to understanding NT Greek was not found in the "translation Greek" of the LXX but in the inscriptions and papyri of the NT period (80-84).

[30]While respecting the work of Deissmann and J. H. Moulton in relating NT Greek to secular Greek, C. F. D. Moule cautions that "the pendulum has swung rather too far in the direction of equating Biblical with 'secular' Greek; and we must not allow these fascinating discoveries to blind us to the fact that Biblical Greek still does retain certain peculiarities, due in part to Semitic influence . . . , and in part to the moulding influence of the Christian experience, which did in some measure create an idiom and a vocabulary of its own." See his *Idiom-Book*, 3-4; cf. 188. Similarly Nigel Turner speaks of the "strongly Semitic character of Bibl. Greek." Turner views the language of the NT to be as unique as its subject matter. See his *Syntax*, 9.

[31]Moule, *Idiom-Book*, 171. For additional dicussions of Semitisms see F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. by R. W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961) 3-4; James H. Moulton, *Prolegomena* (*A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 1; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1908) 1-20; J. H. Moulton and W. F. Howard, *Accidence and Word Formation* (*A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, 2; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1920) 412-85; A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 24-29, 88-108; and G. B. Winer, *Grammar*, 238.

too literal rendering of the language of a Semitic original."[32] In this sense, Eph 2:3c is not a Semitism (primary). A secondary Semitism, however is a possible but unidiomatic Greek construction, which strains ordinary Greek usage to conform to a normal Semitic construction."[33] It is only in this secondary sense that the term Semitism relates to Eph 2:3c.

A specific Semitism: τέκνα ὀργῆς

Hebrew syntaxes and lexicons often note the use of בֵּן in the construct state followed by a noun expressing quality, character, or other attributes.[34] According to Gesenius, this construction is used "to represent a person . . . as possessing some object or quality, or being in some condition."[35] While normal Greek or English idiom would simply supply an adjective, Davidson states,

> The genius of the [Hebrew] language is not favourable to the formation
> of adjectives, and the gen. is used in various ways as explicative of the
> preceding noun, indicating its material, qualities, or relations.[36]

Certain other Hebrew words are used comparatively, often with this type of "qualifying genitive:" אִישׁ, בַּעַל, and בַּת. Two good examples of בֵּן in this construction are בִּן הַכּוֹת (Deut 25:2, a "son of stripes" = "deserves beating") and בְּנֵי־חַיִל (2 Kgs 2:16, "sons of strength" = "strong men"). For further examples, see Table 1.

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[32]Moulton and Howard, *Accidence and Word Formation*, 14, 477. This definition assumes Hebrew or Aramaic NT source documents or perhaps even originals. This theory has been evaluated in Fields' work cited in n. 28.

[33]Moulton and Howard, *Accidence and Word Formation*, 477. Nigel Turner's definition is similar. He describes Semitisms as "those Greek idioms which owe their form of the frequence of their occurrence to Aramaic, or Hebrew, or to an influence which might equally well apply to both languages." See his *Style*, 5.

[34]See A. B. Davidson, *Hebrew Syntax* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1901) 30-33; W. R. Harper, *Elements of Hebrew Syntax* (5th ed.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899) 30-31; S. P. Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 126, sec (7); Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 1. 133; and Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906) 121, § 8; H. Haag, "בֵּן" *TDOT*, 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 152-53. For this in the LXX see Thackeray, *Grammar*, 41-42.

[35]W. Gesenius and E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (2nd English ed.; ed. by A. E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon, 1910) 417. Examples of the construction are given on 418.

[36]Davidson, *Syntax*, 32.

Many Greek grammars and lexicons note that υἱός and τέκνον are sometimes used in a manner equivalent to this Hebrew construction. It is described in various sources as the "Hebraic genitive,"[37] the "genitive of relationship,"[38] the "attributive genitive,"[39] the "adjectival genitive,"[40] the "genitive of quality,"[41] and the "genitive of a thing."[42] All of these terms describe the same grammatical feature: instead of modifying a noun with a simple adjective, the word υἱός or τέκνον is followed by a noun in the genitive which modifies the noun. For example, instead of describing a person as "peaceful" (εἰρηνικός), he is described as a "son of peace" (υἱὸς εἰρήνης, Luke 10:6). For further NT examples, see Table 2.[43]

Although an impressive array of scholars view Eph 2:3c as a Semitism,[44] some deny or diminish the Semitic influence. Adolf Deissmann in his *Bible Studies* made a case for υἱός or τέκνον followed by the genitive as a genuine Greek idiom. Distinguishing such expressions in the gospels (which he regarded as translation Greek) from those in the Pauline and Petrine epistles, he concluded concerning the latter:

> In no case whatever are they un-Greek; they might quite well have been coined by a Greek who wished to use impressive language. Since, however, similar turns of expression are found in the Greek Bible [LXX], and are in part cited by Paul and others, the theory of analogical formations will be found a sufficient explanation.[45]

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[37]Moulton and Howard, *Accidence and Word Formation*, 440. M. Zerwick similarly refers to the "Hebrew genitive." See his *Biblical Greek* (English ed.; Rome: Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici, 1963) 14.

[38]Blass-Debrunner-Funk, *Grammar*, 89.

[39]Robertson, *Grammar*, 496-97.

[40]Moule, *Idiom-Book*, 174-75.

[41]Turner, *Style*, 90.

[42]J. H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1901) 635; and W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979) 834.

[43]Table 2 has been adapted from a list in Moulton and Howard, *Accidence and Word Formation*, 441.

[44]To mention only a few scholars, see Arndt and Gingrich, *Lexicon*, 839; Alexander Buttman, *A Grammar of the New Testament Greek*, trans. by J. H. Thayer (Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1880) 161-62; C. F. D. Moule, *Idiom-Book*, 174; Moulton and Howard, *Accidence and Word Formation*, 441; Albracht Oepke, "παῖς . . . ," *TDNT*, 5 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967) 639; Thayer, *Lexicon*, 618; and Winer, *Grammar*, 238. Nearly all critical commentaries also view τέκνα . . . ὀργῆς as a Semitism.

[45]Deissmann, *Bible Studies*, 166. Evidently "analogical formation" meant that NT writers used a Greek idiom analogous to the Hebrew idiom.

Deissmann's argumentation was twofold. First, he supplied inscriptional evidence of similar pure Greek idiom.[46] Second, he pointed out that even the translators of the LXX did not slavishly translate metaphorical בֵּן with υἱός.[47] While Moulton and Milligan followed Deissmann,[48] this writer must agree with the majority of scholars, who view Eph 2:3c as a genuine Semitism. Nigel Turner's statement seems adequate: "The LXX translators so often faced the problem of the construct state in its adjectival function . . . that apparently the habit of using a genitive of quality had been caught by Paul. . . ."[49]

Three lingering questions

While most scholars view τέκνα in 2:3c as synonymous with υἱοί, there are a few dissenters. In 2:2 Paul used the Semitic τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας. Why then in the next verse did he switch from υἱός to τέκνα? Was this unconsious, or for literary variety, or was it a subtle emphasis of a birth concept (τέκνον from τίκτω, "to beget")?[50] It is interesting to note that there seem to be comparatively few instances in the LXX where τέκνον translates metaphorical בֵּן.[51] As seen in Table 1, υἱός is the predominant word. However, as shown in Table 2, there are six NT instances where τέκνον seems to be used in the Semitic metaphorical sense. Only further study will show whether this change from υἱός to τέκνον is exegetically significant. Presently, however, such significance seems doubtful.

[46]Ibid., 165-66.

[47]Ibid., 164.

[48]J. H. Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976 reprint) 649.

[49]Turner, *Style*, 649. It is interesting to note that scholars before Deissmann (when NT Greek was explained as either Semitic or derived from classical) and after Deissmann (when NT Greek is viewed in its *koiné* context) are agreed that Eph 2:3c is a Semitism.

[50]C. F. Ellicott, citing Bengel as in agreement, states that τέκνα "is not simply identical with the Hebraistic υἱοί, ver. 2 . . ." He believes that the word connoted "a near and close relation" to God's wrath. See his *Ephesians*, 46 and Alford, "Ephesians," 3. 91. M. R. Vincent views τέκνα as emphasizing the connection to wrath by birth. See his "The Epistles of Paul" (*Word Studies in the New Testament*, 3; reprinted; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 375. The great American theologian Jonathan Edwards also noted the change from υἱός to τέκνον and saw in it an emphasis on birth. See his *Original Sin* (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, 3; New Haven/London: Yale University,1970) 301. In opposition to this view see J. Armitage Robinson, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (2nd ed.; London: James Clarke and Co., n.d.) 51.

[51]This writer has not done the concordance work necessary for dogmatism on this point. However, thus far he has found τέκνον for metaphorical בֵּן only in Hos 2:4; 10:9. Isa 57:4 has τέκνα ἀπωλείας for יִלְדֵי־פֶשַׁע.

In the introductory section on word order, the writer has already presented several opinions on the sequence of words in this phrase. At this point the question of word order must be directed to the question of Semitic influence. Of all the OT examples of metaphorical בֵּן and the NT examples of metaphorical υἱός/τέκνον, only in 2:3c does a word intervene between the term "son" and the qualifying genitive. This fact seems to make φύσει quite emphatic. Is this unique word order relevant to the question of Semitism? Perhaps this indicates that 2:3c is more emphatic than a normal Semitic construction.[52] construction.[52]

While the nature of the genitive—whether subjective or objective—is not broached in many sources, it is an important question.[53] The ambiguity of such constructions is evident from the NIV's translation ("those who are anointed:" objective) and margin ("two who bring oil:" subjective) of Zech 4:14. In Eph 2:2 τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας must be subjective. However, 2:3c is normally taken as objective: τέκνα . . . ὀργῆς means those who are presently under God's wrath (cf. John 3:18, 36; Rom 1:18; 9:22) or those who are worthy of God's wrath (Eph 5:6; Col 3:6). It is *grammatically* possible that τέκνα . . . ὀργῆς should be understood as those characterized by wrath in the same sense that the τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας are characterized by disobedience. In other words, is this wrath another aspect of man's rebellion against God? Is it his own wrath against others? While this interpretation does not commend itself to this writer, it deserves further consideration.[54]

THE CRUCIAL WORD: φύσει

In many ways, the doctrinal import of this passage depends upon the sense of this word. The preceding discussion of the Semitic background of the phrase ἤμεθα τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς does not really assert or deny that *peccatum originale* is taught in Eph 2:3c. While the Semitic idiom certainly does not specify *why* men are under God's wrath or *when* they come under it. These two questions must be answered from the exegesis of φύσει. If φύσει refers to innate character, then the sense of hereditary moral corruption is supported. If φύσει legitimately can be viewed as an acquired characteristic ("second nature"), then this verse should not be used to support the

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[52]Buttmann (*Grammar*, 387) views this as hyperbaton, an inverted construction used for emphasis and perspicuity. Arndt and Gingrich (*Lexicon*, 877) cite an instance in Plutarch with φύσει in this position.

[53]In each case it must be asked whether the noun modified by the genitive is its subject or object. See Turner, *Style*, 90.

[54]Ellicott, *Ephesians*, 171 and Alford, "Ephesians," 3. 91 react against the subjective sense.

doctrine. This section of the paper will survey the etymology of φύσις and its use in both the extra-biblical and biblical literature.[55] Then the meaning of the word in Eph 2:3c will be discussed.

Etymology

The noun φύσις seems to be a "verbal abstract"[56] derived from φύομαι or φύω, meaning "bring forth, produce, put forth" (transitive) or "grow, wax, spring up or forth (intransitive).[57] It is often used of the natural growth of the *physical* creation, especially of plant life. Thus, the noun φύσις is related to the external form of plant life as a state of its growth. It came also to be applied to the natural state of humanity resulting from birth.[58]

Extra-biblical use

In addition to its botanical and anthropological senses, φύσις "became a key concept among the Pre-Socratic philosophers in considering the nature of the world, and similarly the Sophists in the question of the foundation and basis of law."[59] In Stoic philosophy, φύσις became a god of the universe, with whom man must live harmoniously.[60] The following outline summarizes the diverse usages of the word.[61]

I. Origin (of persons and plants)
    A. origin or birth
    B. growth

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[55]Due to lack of space, this survey must necessarily be quite brief. For more detailed information see G. Harder, "Nature," (*NIDNTT*, 2; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 2. 656-62; H. Köster, "φύσις . . .," *TDNT*, 9 (1974) 251-77; and H. G. Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. and aug. by H. S. Jones (9th ed.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 1964-65.

[56]Köster, "φύσις . . . ," *TDNT*, 9. 252. It is attested as early as Homer (eighth century B.C.). See Harder, "Nature," 656.

[57]Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon*, 1966.

[58]Köster, "φύσις . . . ," *TDNT*, 9. 252. Other related words are the adjective φυσικός ("natural, inborn, native"), the nouns φυσίωμα and φυσίωσις ("natural tendency, character"), and the verbs φυσιόω ("to dispose oneself naturally"), φυσιολογέω ("to discourse upon nature or natural causes"), and φυσιοποιέω ("to remould as by a second nature").

[59]Harder, "Nature," *NIDNTT*, 2. 656.

[60]Ibid., 2. 657-58. The citation of Marcus Aurelius' words ὦ φύσις, ἐκ σοῦ πάντα, ἐν σοὶ πάντα, εἰς σε πάντα (cf. Rom 11:36) may provide a vivid illustration of ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα (Rom 1:25).

[61]Adapted from Liddell and Scott, *Lexicon* 1964-65.

II. Natural form or constitution resulting from growth (persons or things)

    A. nature, constitution
    B. outward form, appearance
    C. constitution
    D. mental character or nature or instinct (animals)

III. Regular order of nature (men, plants, the world in general

IV. Philosophical

    A. originating power of the universe
    B. elementary substance of the universe
    C. concretely for the universe

V. Concrete term for men, animals or plants collectively

VI. Kind, sort, or species (of plants)

VII. Sex (organs or characteristics)

"There is no Hebrew equivalent in the Old Testament for *phy-sis*,"[62] due to the creator/creature distinction in OT revelation. God is the ultimate reference point instead of φύσις. Thus φύσις does not occur in the LXX canonical writings, but only in the apocryphal books of Wisdom and 3 and 4 Maccabees. In these books, usage generally parallels Greek literature. Probably the most significant occurrence is Wis 13:1: μάταιοι μὲν γάρ πάντες ἄνθρωποι φύσει. Does φύσει here mean "birth" (cf. NEB "born fools")[63] or "nature" (created nature)? If innate created nature is in view, this concept is in contrast to Paul's explanation (Rom 1:19ff.) of the perspicuity of natural revelation.[64] The Jewish writer Philo modified φύσις in his unsuccessful attempt to harmonize the OT and Greek philosophy.[65] Josephus similarly adapted φύσις, using it often to describe the natural topography of the land, human character, and nature as a whole.[66]

    [62]Harder, "Nature," *NIDNTT*, 2. 658.

    [63]*The New English Bible with Apocrypha: Oxford Study Edition* (New York: Oxford University, 1976) 107.

    [64]Köster, "φύσις . . . ," *TDNT*, 9. 267.

    [65]Φύσις is extremely common in Philo, who viewed it as divine power and agency. See Köster, "φύσις . . . ," *TDNT*, 9. 267-69 and Harder, "Nature," *NIDNTT*, 2. 658-59.

    [66]See Köster, "φύσις . . . ," *TDNT* 9. 279-81; Harder, "Nature," *NIDNTT*, 2. 659-60. One passage from Josephus has been urged in proof that φύσις need not always refer to innate character but also may refer to acquired characteristics or habits. Thus φύσις in Eph 2:3c need not refer to sin as in inherited or innate trait but instead to an acquired sinfulness. The passage is found in the *Antiquities*, 3:8:1. In it he describes the Pharisees' philosophy of punishment in the words of ἄλλως τε καὶ φύσει πρὸς τὰς λίαν ἐχαλέπηνε which is translated "any way they are naturally lenient in the matter of punishments." Eadie describes this as "constitutional clemency" (*Ephesians*, 135). While it appears that this use may include habitual practice, it is practice which

New Testament use

Φύσις occurs 14 times in the NT (12 of these are in Paul). Three related words also occur: (1) the adjective φυσικός (three times); (2) the adverb φυσικῶς (once); and (3) the verb φύω (three times). All of these occurrences are listed in Table 3. According to Köster, the relative rarity of φύσις in the NT (as compared with its frequency in extra-biblical literature) is noteworthy.[67] Abbott-Smith's summary of its occurrences is accurate and concise:

  (1) nature (natural powers or constitution) of a person or a thing: Jas 3:7; 2 Pet 1:4; Eph 2:3
  (2) origin or birth: Rom 2:27; Gal 2:15
  (3) nature, i.e., the regular order or law of nature: 1 Cor 11:14; Rom 1:26; 2:14; 11:21, 24; Gal 4:8[68]

Scholars are agreed that the concept of natural, innate character is present in all but three of these passages: Rom 2:14, 1 Cor 11:14, and Eph 2:3c. Rom 2:14 and 1 Cor 11:14 will be briefly discussed before a more extensive treatment of Eph 2:3c.

Φύσις *in Rom 2:14.* While this may not be "the most important and also the most difficult passage in which Paul uses φύσις,"[69] it is certainly not an easy text, as the discouraging comments of Sanday and Headlam show.[70] The hermeneutical problem here is to determine in what sense, if any, do Gentiles (ἔθνη is anarthrous) by nature

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emanates from natural characteristics. For the original Greek and the English translation see Flavius Josephus, *Josephus (Jewish Antiquities, Books 12-14, The Loeb Classical Library,* 7 [London: Wm. Heinemann, 1943]) 374-75 (13:294).

[67]Köster ("φύσις . . . ," *TDNT,* 9. 271) finds the absence of φύσις from such passages as Acts 17 and Romans 1:18-25 as an indicator that Paul would say *"nein"* to natural theology!

[68]G. Abbott Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (3rd ed.; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1937) 476. The analysis of W. E. Vine is identical. See his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1966 reprint) 103. Arndt and Gingrich's classification (*Lexicon,* 869-70) differs slightly: (1) natural endowment or condition, inherited from one's ancestors:" Gal 2:15; Rom 2:27; Eph 2:3; Rom 11:21, 24; (2) "natural characteristics or disposition:" Jas 3:7b; 2 Pet 1:4; Gal 4:8; (3) "nature as the regular natural order:" Rom 1:26; 2:14; 1 Cor 11:14; and (4) "natural being, product of nature, creature:" Jas 3:7a. It is difficult to distinguish between the first and second categories. Other possibilities for φύσις are simply "physically" in Rom 2:27 and "species" in both instances in Jas 3:7 (cf. NASB, NIV, and Harder, "Nature," *NIDNTT,* 660-61.

[69]Köster, "φύσις . . . ," *TDNT,* 9. 273.

[70]The impression received when one reads their note on this verse is that rationalists have taken it more literally than orthodox theologians. See William Sanday and A. C. Headlam, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902) 59-60. The treatment given this verse

fulfill the law's demands? The clause in question reads ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη τὰ μὴ νόμον ἔχοντα φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν, . . . While orthodox scholars have proposed some plausible solutions to the problem, most of them assume a questionable point. That is, most of them take φύσει with the following clause, making it modify ποιῶσιν. This writer tends to agree with Cranfield in taking φύσει with what precedes, modifying ἔχοντα. Thus, the difficulties of either toning down φύσει (viewing it as an acquired "second nature") or implying Pelagianism are eliminated. Instead, the passage is interpreted as describing regenerate Gentiles who practice the law, though by their birth and natural circumstances they do not possess the law. This allows φύσις to retain its normal meaning. This passage cannot be legitimately used to deny that φύσις refers to innate character in Eph 2:3c.[71]

Φύσις *in 1 Cor 11:14*. Paul's teaching on hair length is reinforced in 11:14-16 with two arguments. Paul first states that "nature" confirms his teaching (11:14) and then adds that this is the custom (συνήθεια) of all the churches. While some expositors may tend to blur the distinction between φύσις and συνήθεια, making φύσις equivalent to acquired habit or style, such exegesis is untenable in light of Pauline usage. Paul in Rom 1:26-27 stated that homosexuality was παρὰ φύσιν, obviously referring to mankind's innate sexual orientation resulting from his being created by God.[72] Therefore, it would seem that Paul in 1 Corinthians again appeals to the God-given natural order for men and women. The innate sexual orientation of men and women is the basis of Paul's position on hair length. Again, this passage provides no evidence for those who wish to make φύσις in Eph 2:3c an acquired "second nature."

Use in Ephesians 2:3c

In this writer's view, φύσις in this passage retains its normal meaning of innate or natural character. While this passage alone

by C. E. B. Cranfield is a decided improvement. See his *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1975), 1. 155-57.

[71]Francis Foulkes does just this with this passage. See his *The Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians* (*Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963) 71. Cf. Cranfield's stimulating discussion in *Romans*, 1. 156, 157 with footnotes. Hodge (*Romans*, 55) takes φύσει with ποιεῖν but distinguishes between merely Turner, outwardly *doing* the law and actually spiritually *fulfilling* the law. This view is also possible.

[72]This refutes the current claim that homosexuality is the "natural" orientation for some people.

certainly would not sustain the developed Christian doctrine of original sin, it does make a contribution. While the word φύσις is neutral and in itself has no sinful connotation, this can be supplied from context. There is no contextual connection with Adam's first sin, nor is there any explicit proof of Traducianism. However, this passage does seem to have its place in asserting the hereditary moral corruption of the human race, which corruption results from Adam's first sin and is passed along by natural generation. In addition to the lexical support for this view, many scholarly commentaries have also advocated it.[73]

The form of φύσις in this verse is dative. What is its precise significance? The answer to this question is admittedly subjective and interpretive, for the dative case is used to express a wide range of nuance. From most of the English translations, the idea of instrumentality surfaces ("by nature").[74] Turner and Winer, however, favor the dative of respect idea, which seems milder than instrumentality. Instead of being under wrath "by nature," it is thus "with respect to nature."[75] A third option is supported by Green who views φύσει as

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[73]Karl Braune, "Ephesians," *Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan) 76-77; John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 141-42. Calvin says that "by nature" means "from their very origin, and from their mother's womb. In further comments he critiques Pelagianism and makes an important distinction between two ways the word nature is used: (1) man's original nature created by God, and (2) man's fallen nature corrupted by Adam's sin. John Eadie, *Ephesians*, 133-40. Eadie's extended treatment of 2:3c is one of the best this writer has found. He cites evidence from classical and Jewish Greek writings and interacts with sources who hold opposing views. He concludes thus: "The *modus* may be and is among 'the deep things of God,' but the *res* is palpable; for experience confirms the divine testimony that we are by nature 'children of wrath,' *per generationem*, not *per imitationem*." Charles Hodge, *Ephesians*, 38-39. In his fairly full treatment Hodge briefly deals with the Semitic background, the use of φύσις, and other views. Hodge cautiously states "this doctrine [hereditary depravity] may be fairly implied in the text but it is not asserted" (38). Lenski, *Ephesians*, 412-13. While viewing φύσις as innate here, Lenski concedes that φύσις may sometimes mean a "habitually and gradually developed . . . 'second nature.'" This writer is not convinced that such a concession is necessary. It seems that even when φύσις refers to development or growth it does so in the context of an outward development of an inner nature. Salmond, "Ephesians," 286-87. He also makes the questionable concession that φύσις can mean habit, but his treatment is very helpful, especially the section refuting Meyer's view, which will be explained later. E. K. Simpson and F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on the Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians* (*New International Commentary on the New Testament*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 46-50. In a stirring manner Simpson defends this view by citing classical authors and interacting with J. A. Robinson, whose views will be explained later.

[74]Robertson, *Grammar*, 530, speaks of this as "instrumental of manner."

[75]Nigel Turner, personal letter; Winer, *Grammar*, 215.

dative of sphere.[76] While the instrumental idea seems most accept-
able, in reality there is little difference between the three possibilities.

The view of φύσις favored above has not gone unchallenged.
Several other views have been suggested and are briefly summarized
here.[77] First, it is asserted by some that φύσει is the equivalent of an
adverb such as ὄντως, ἀληθῶς, or γνησίως. Thus Paul only says that
"we were truly or genuinely children of wrath." The problem with this
view is that, while φύσις may imply this sense, it means much more.[78]
A second view takes the whole expression (τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς) as a
subjective genitive. In this view ὀργῆς is human wrath which char-
acterizes the individuals described. This view is grammatically pos-
sible but exegetically and contextually doubtful. A third view is that
φύσει simply means "in or by ourselves," apart from God's grace.[79]
While φύσει certainly includes this idea, it means much more. Fur-
ther, this view is vague and does not really answer the question of
whether φύσει refers to original or actual sin.[80] A fourth view, that
φύσις refers to developed or habitual behavior,[81] (a "second-nature")
cannot be sustained from the NT and extra-biblical usage of the
word.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that Eph 2:3c is relevant to the
doctrine of original sin. The Semitic phrase τέκνα . . . ὀργῆς places
the unsaved individual as a worthy object of the wrath of God.
Perhaps even more is implied by this phrase. The word φύσει
presents the reason or cause for this most perilous of all positions.
While it is true that God's wrath is upon all men for their actual sins,

[76]Samuel G. Green, *Handbook to the Grammar of the Greek New Testament*
(New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1912) 228. He defines sphere in a logical sense as "that
in which a quality inheres."

[77]For more detailed interaction see the works of Alford, Eadie, Hodge, Simpson,
and Salmond cited previously. These works cite sources holding the opposing views
listed here.

[78]Only one source consulted by this writer said that this was a legitimate meaning
of φύσις, but the source viewed φύσις as having this meaning only in Gal 4:8. See
Markus Barth, *Ephesians*, 1. 231. Even Meyer, who would not agree with the original
sin view, denies the validity of this view. See his *Ephesians*, 368.

[79]For advocates of this view see F. W. Beare and T. O. Wedel, "The Epistle to the
Ephesians" (*The Interpreter's Bible*; 10; Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953) 641;
C. F. D. Moule, *Idiom-Book*, 174 ("perhaps"); J. A. Robinson, *Ephesians*, 50; and N. P.
Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and Original Sin*, 113 n. 1.

[80]As Meyer points out (*Ephesians*, 367), in this view "*nothing* is explained."

[81]For advocates of this view see Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 71; Thayer, *Lexicon*, 660 sec.
c; and the Arminian theologians John Miley, *Systematic Theology*, 1. 512; and H. C.
Sheldon, *System of Christian Doctrine*, 316-17.

Paul's use of φύσις here indicates a more basic problem. Men's evil deeds are done in a state of spiritual and moral separation from God (2:1). Man is in this state of spiritual death due to his sinful nature—his hereditary moral corruption. And it is this innate condition which ultimately brings the wrath of God upon him. Men are "natural children of wrath."[82]

Opposition to this view

Diverse arguments have been offered by the opponents of this view. Some of the arguments are exegetical and deserve an answer. While this could not be done in detail in this study, Appendix I has begun the task. Other arguments are more "logical" in nature but actually seem to place reason over revelation, as in the extreme case of those who would dismiss original sin an an immoral monstrosity on *a priori* grounds.[83] The answer to this objection must emphasize that man's present natural state is in a sense also unnatural.[84] His sinfulness, though included in God's plan, is viewed by God as man's own fault. God cannot be blamed for original sin for he did not create man sinful, but holy. All this aside, however, the final answer is "who are you, O man, to talk back to God?" (Rom 9:20, NIV).

While some would admit to a doctrine of original sin, they would deny that men are accounted guilty for this reason. Shedd summarizes the situation quite well:

> The semi-Pelagian, Papal, and Arminian anthropologies differ from the Augustinian and reformed, by denying that corruption of nature is guilt. It is a physical and moral disorder leading to sin, but is not sin itself.[85]

[82]"Natural children of wrath" is the translation suggested by Nigel Turner in his letter to this writer.

[83]For example see Charles G. Finney, *Systematic Theology* (Whittier, CA: Colporter Kemp, 1946 reprint) 244. Finney said that Eph 2:3c "cannot, consistently with natural justice, be understood to mean, that we are exposed to the wrath of God on account of our nature. It is a monstrous and blasphemous doctrine. . . ." On a more modern note, C. H. Dodd spoke of the "figment of an inherited guilt." He asked, "how could anything so individual as guilty responsibility be inherited?" In the same context he also speaks of the "monstrous development of the doctrine of total depravity." See his *The Meaning of Paul for Today* (New York: The New American Library, 1974) 61.

[84]See Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 2. 219: "As opposed to what is natural in the sense of created by God, man's inability is moral, not natural; but as opposed to what is moral in the sense of acquired by habit, man's inability is natural. When "natural means innate, we assert that inability is "natural." When natural means "created" we assert that inability is "moral," that is, "voluntary." See also Calvin, *Ephesians*, 141-42.

[85]Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 2. 198. Even in reformed circles, however, some theologians have attempted to dilute the idea that corruption of nature is guilt. See Nathaniel W. Taylor, *Concio ad Clerum: A Sermon Delivered in the Chapel of Yale*

The Romanist perspective alleviates the guilt of original sin with its understanding of *limbus infantium* and infant baptism.[86] The Arminian position as articulated by Miley is "native depravity without native demerit."[87] This position is exegetically and logically untenable. It does not handle φύσις properly. Neither does it make sense, for the innate disposition to sin, which leads to sin, is not viewed as sinful or guilty. How can the effect be worthy of wrath and the cause be innocent?[88]

Implications for Christian living

The study of Scripture (What does it mean?) is incomplete unless the student asks, "What does it mean *to me?*" In the context of Eph 2:1-10 the answer is not hard to find. The believer is God's workmanship, created for good works. When one contemplates his sinfulness in all its degradation, and when he realizes he deserves only the wrath of God, he then begins to appreciate the glorious gospel of God's grace and realizes a true incentive for a holy lifestyle. C. H. Spurgeon said

> A spiritual experience which is thoroughly flavored with a deep and bitter sense of sin is of great value to him that hath had it. It is terrible in the drinking, but it is most wholesome in the bowels, and in the whole of the after-life. Possibly, much of the flimsy piety of the present day arises from the ease with which men attain to peace and joy in these evangelistic days. . . . Too many think lightly of sin, and therefore think lightly of the Saviour. He who has stood before his God,

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College, September 10, 1828 (New Haven: A. H. Moltby and Homan Hallock, 1842) 1-43. Taylor represented "New School" Presbyterianism.

[86]See S. Harent, "Original Sin" (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 11; New York: Robert Appleton Co., 1911), 2. 314; and P. J. Toner, "Limbo," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 9. 256. To a lesser degree one wonders whether the Lutheran and Anglican views of baptismal regeneration for infants have also tended to minimize the guilt of original sin.

[87]Miley, *Systematic Theology*, 1. 521ff. This is also the basic position advocated by Meyer, *Ephesians*, 367. Meyer believes in a sinful natural constitution which eventually awakens and vanquishes man's "moral will," thereby incurring guilt and wrath. He bases this on his view that Romans 7 describes the experience of the natural man. Overall, the Arminian doctrine of universal prevenient (preliminary) grace has probably tended to obscure the guiltiness of man by nature. This seems to be the position of John Wesley. See the analysis of his views on original sin in Mildred B. Wynkoop, *A Theology of Love: The Dynamic of Wesleyanism* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill, 1972) 150-55.

[88]See Calvin, *Ephesians*, 141-42; Eadie, *Ephesians*, 136; and Salmond, "Ephesians," 287. Salmond correctly observes that this "is to make a nature which originates sinful acts and which does that in the case of all men without exception, itself a neutral thing." Cf. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 2. 199-202.

convicted and condemned, with the rope about his neck, is the man to weep for joy when he is pardoned, to hate the evil which has been forgiven him, and to live to the honour of the Redeemer by whose blood he has been cleansed.[89]

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TABLE 1

SOME OCCURRENCES OF בֵּן IN THE CONSTRUCT STATE USED METAPHORICALLY*

Text	NASB	NIV
Num 17:10	rebels or sons of rebellion	the rebellious
Num 24:17	sons of Sheth or tumult	sons of Sheth or the noisy boasters
Deut 25:2	deserves to be beaten or a son of beating	deserves to be beaten (LXX ἄξιος πληγῶν)
Judg 18:2	valiant men or sons of valor	warriors
Judg 19:22	worthless fellows or sons of Belial	wicked men
Judg 21:10	valiant warriors	fighting men
1 Sam 14:52	valiant man	brave man
1 Sam 26:16	must surely die or are surely sons of death	deserve to die
2 Sam 2:7	valiant or sons of valor	brave
2 Sam 7:10	the wicked or sons of wickedness	wicked people
2 Sam 12:5	deserves to die or is a son of death	deserves to die
1 Kgs 1:52	a worthy man	a worthy man
2 Kgs 2:3	sons of the prophets	company of the prophets
2 Kgs 2:16	strong men	able men
2 Kgs 14:14	hostages	hostages
1 Chr 17:9	the wicked or sons of wickedness	wicked people
Neh 12:28	sons of the singers	the singers
Ps 79:11	those who are doomed to die or children of death	those condemned
Ps 89:22	sons of wickedness or wicked man	wicked man
Isa 57:3	sons of a sorceress	sons of a sorcercess
Dan 11:14	violent ones	violent men
Hos 10:9	the sons of iniquity	the evildoers (LXX τὰ τέκνα ἀδικίος)
Zech 4:14	anointed ones or sons of fresh oil	two who are anointed or two who bring oil

* This chart is representative—not exhaustive. It was compiled from examples given in the lexicons and from a similar list compiled by Prof. Donald

[89]C. H. Spurgeon, *The Early Years* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1962) 54.

Fowler. In each case except Deut 25:2 and Hos 10:9 the LXX renders the construction with υἱός plus the genitive. Notice the varying degrees of literality or dynamic equivalence used in translating the Hebrew בֶּן constructions.

TABLE 2

NT USES OF υἱός AND τέκνον WITH GENITIVE
IN A METAPHORICAL SENSE

Reference	*Text*
Matt 9:15	οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος
Matt 23:15	υἱὸν γεένης
Mark 2:19	οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος
Mark 3:17	υἱοὶ βροντῆς
Luke 5:34	τοὺς υἱοὺς τοῦ νυμφῶνος
Luke 10:6	υἱὸς εἰρήνης
Luke 16:8	οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου (also in 20:34)
Luke 20:36	τῆς ἀναστάσεως υἱοί
John 17:12	ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας
Acts 4:36	υἱὸς παρακλήσεως
Rom 9:8	τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας
Gal 4:28	ἐπαγγελίας τέκνα
Eph 2:2	τοῖς υἱοῖς τῆς ἀπειθείας (also in 5:6)
Eph 2:3	τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς
Eph 5:8	τέκνα φωτός
Col 1:13	τοῦ υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ
Col 3:6	τοὺς υἱοὺς τῆς ἀπειθείας (textual?)
1 Pet 1:14	τέκνα ὑπακοῆς
2 Pet 2:14	κατάρας τέκνα

TABLE 3

NT USES OF φύσις AND RELATED WORDS*

Reference	*Text*
	φύσις
Rom 1:26	μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν εἰς τὴν παρὰ φύσιν
Rom 2:14	ὅταν γὰρ ἔθνη . . . φύσει τὰ τοῦ νόμου ποιῶσιν
Rom 2:27	κρινεῖ ἡ ἐκ φύσεως ἀκροβυστία
Rom 11:21	εἰ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς τῶν κατὰ φύσιν κλάδων οὐκ ἐφείσατο

Reference	Text

Rom 11:24 εἰ γὰρ σὺ ἐκ τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ἐξεκόπης ἀγριελαίου, καὶ παρὰ φύσιν ἐνεκεντρίσθης εἰς καλλιέλαιον, πόσῳ μᾶλλον οὗτοι οἱ κατὰ φύσιν ἐγκεντρισθήσονται

1 Cor 11:14 οὐδὲ ἡ φύσις αὐτὴ διδάσκει ὑμᾶς

Gal 2:15 ἡμεῖς φύσει ᾿Ιουδαῖοι

Gal 4:8 ἐδουλεύσατε τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὖσιν θεοῖς

Eph 2:3 ἤμεθα τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς

Jas 3:7 πᾶσα γὰρ φύσις θηρίων τε καὶ πετεινῶν . . . δαμάζεται . . . τῇ φύσει τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ

2 Pet 1:4 ἵνα διὰ τούτων γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως

φυσικός

Rom 1:26 μετήλλαξαν τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν

Rom 1:27 ὁμοίως τε καὶ οἱ ἄρσενες ἀφέντες τὴν φυσικὴν χρῆσιν τῆς θελείας

2 Pet 2:12 ὡς ἄλογα ζῷα γεγεννημένα φυσικά

φυσικῶς

Jude 10 ὅσα δὲ φυσικῶς ὡς τὰ ἄλογα ζῷα ἐπίστανται

φύω

Luke 8:6 φυὲν ἐξηράνθη διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ἰκμάδα

Luke 8:8 φυὲν ἐποίησεν καρπὸν ἑκατονταπλασίονα

Heb 12:15 μή τις ῥίζα πικρίας ἄνω φύουσα ἐνοχλῇ

*Adapted from W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament*, rev. by H. K. Moulton (5th ed.; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1978) 997.

APPENDIX I

ORIGINAL SIN AND GOD'S WRATH: ARGUMENTS AND ANSWERS

I. *Argument from the Context of Ephesians 2:1-3:* The context treats actual sin, not original sin. (See Abbott, *Ephesians*, 45-46; Foulkes, *Ephesians*, 71; Meyer, *Ephesians*, 365-66; George B. Stevens, *Pauline Theology* [NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895] 152ff.)

    Answer: 2:1 speaks not only of actual sin but also of sin as a state of separation from God. Even so, this may be an example of an argument leading up to a climactic statement, *ab effectu ad causam.*

II. *Argument from the Word Order of Ephesians 2:3c:* The word order of the phrase must be φύσει τέκνα ὀργῆς for the original sin view to be true. The position of φύσει is unemphatic. (See Abbott, *Ephesians*, 45; Meyer, *Ephesians*, 366.)

    Answer: Interpretation of word order is quite subjective, but there is some reason to view φύσει in its position between τέκνα

and ὀργῆς as quite emphatic. Even if it is not emphatic it could possibly indicate that Paul was implicitly assuming hereditary moral corruption.

III. *Argument from the Time Reference of Ephesians 2:3c:* The original sin view "supposes καὶ ἤμεθα to refer to, or at least include, a time prior to ἐν οἷς ἄν." (See Abbott, *Ephesians*, 45.)

   Answer: Nothing in the original sin view necessitates this supposition."Ἡμεθα does refer to the same time as the previous context. At that time, before the Ephesians were converted, they were deserving objects of God's wrath due to innate depravity.

IV. *Argument from the Analogy of Scripture:* The ecclesiastical dogma of original sin is not Pauline. Paul views actual sin as the reason why man is under God's wrath. (See Meyer, *Ephesians,* 366.)

   Answer: This argument begs the question. It is true that Paul in other contexts views wrath coming upon men due to actual sin (Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6; e.g.). However, sin, like beauty, "is more than skin deep." The Scripture speaks of man's conception in a state of sin (Psa 51:5), of his sinful heart (Jer 17:9; Matt 15:17-19), of his sinful mind set (Eph 2:3ab; 4:17-19). The sinful heart (a term implying an innate nature or essence) is viewed in Matt 15:19 and Eph 4:18 as the root of sinful activity. Ultimately man's nature causes him to be under God's wrath.

V. *Argument from Romans 11:17-24:* If Paul views the Jews as inborn children of wrath, he contradicts his teaching in Rom 11:17-24 where he speaks of Jews as the "natural branches" of the olive tree of the theocracy. (See Meyer, *Ephesians*, 366.)

   Answer: Φύσις in Rom 11 is used in an illustration of Israel's favored position in God's program. The natural branches of the olive tree are Jews who are the objects of God's theocratic dealings. The unnatural branches are Gentiles who may become objects of God's grace in Christ. Paul's perspective in Rom 11 is national and positional: the Jews naturally enjoyed God's special theocratic favor and the Gentiles did not. The perspective in Eph 2:3 is quite different. Here individuals, both Jews and Gentiles, are viewed as naturally objects of God's wrath. This is no more contradictory than the words of Hos 3:2. Israel's special position in God's plan is viewed as a reason for her judgment.

VI. *Argument from 1 Cor 7:14:* Paul could not have taught an inborn liability to wrath for this would contradict his words about the children of believers in 1 Cor 7:14. (See Meyer, *Ephesians*, 366-67.)

> *Answer:* 1 Cor 7:14 is admittedly a difficult passage. It seems best to view the sanctification and holiness spoken of here not in an experiential moral sense. Instead there is a sense in which the unsaved marriage partner and the children in such a home are set apart by the believer there. This is a matter of privilege and exposure to Christian testimony. It should be noted, however, that whatever "holiness" is spoken of in the verse is true of the unbelieving adult as well as the children. This weakens Meyer's argument considerably.

VII.   *Argument from Matthew 18:2ff; 19:14ff:* This view of original sin contradicts the words of Jesus Christ concerning children, especially His promise that whoever becomes like a child will enter the Kingdom of heaven. (See Meyer, *Ephesians*, 367.)

> *Answer:* Our Lord's exhortation was not to become "morally neutral" or "innocent" as infants are sometime supposed to be. Instead His emphasis evidently was upon the humility (Matt 18:4) and faith (18:6) of the children. It is necessary to exercise child-like faith to enter the Kingdom. Jesus was certainly not making a blanket statement on infant salvation.