# The Pelagian Controversy Part 1

Christian Bland | SMPC | 5.19.2024

I. A brief history of the controversy.

A. Central figures.

i. Heretics: Pelagius (died c. _____) and Coelestius (dates: fl. _____).

ii. Heroes: Augustine (dates: _____) and Jerome (dates: c. _____).

B. Act 1: Pelagius in Rome (c. 380's).

i. Drawn to Rome by moral preaching of Jerome; while there, _____.

ii. _____ by Augustine: "Give what you command, and command what you will" (10.29.40).

C. Act 2: Pelagius and Coelestius in North Africa (c. 410).

i. When Rome was sacked in _____, Pelagius and his followers fled to North Africa.

ii. Coelestius sought ordination as an _____ in Carthage, but was tried & condemned for heresy.

1. "Adam was made _____, and would have died, whether he sinned or did not sin;
2. The sin of Adam injured himself alone, not the human race;
3. New-born children are in that state in which _____ was before his sin;
4. The whole human race does not, on the one hand, die on account of the death or the fall of Adam, nor, on the other, rise again on account of the resurrection of Christ;
5. Infants, even though not baptized, have _____;
6. The law leads to the kingdom of heaven in the same way as the gospel;
7. Even before the Lord's coming, there had been men without _____" (B.B. Warfield).

D. Act 3: Pelagius's first writings forwarded to Augustine (c. 412).

i. Augustine heard that Pelagius was spreading "a heresy which, under the color of defending free will, disputes against the _____ of God" (*Proceedings*, 61).

ii. But he was reserved: "I thought it right not to mention any of their names, hoping and desiring that by such reserve they might the more readily be set right" (*Retractations*, 2.23).

iii. Augustine's verdict: Pelagius _____ the necessity for the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

E. Act 4: Pelagius tried and acquitted in Palestine (c. 415).

i. Finally, Pelagius was tried in Palestine, but he was _____ (essentially a mistrial).

ii. Pelagianism was condemned at other councils, most notably the Council of _____ (431).

II. Summary of the main issues.

A. Nature and grace.

i. Pelagianism

1. Heart of Pelagianism: redefining grace as _____ & affirming man's plenary ability.
2. _____ is the free will that God created us with, his laws, and Christ's example.

ii. Augustinianism

1. Heart of Augustinianism: not predestination, but salvation by _____.
2. Grace is God's _____ to sin, without which we could never have eternal life.

B. Original sin.
    i. Pelagianism
        1. Sin is only an _____, not in any way a _____ of nature.
        2. There is no original sin, infants are born just like Adam in the garden.
    ii. Augustinianism
        1. "It did not indeed once occur to me that anybody was capable of thinking such sentiments" (*On Merits*, 3.1).
        2. If there is no original sin thru Adam, then _____ thru Christ was not necessary.

C. Sinless perfection.
    i. Pelagianism
        1. Any man can easily be _____, and many men have been and are sinless.
        2. He saw examples of sinless men in _____: Job, Daniel, etc.
    ii. Augustinianism
        1. Views developed over time: at first, a man may possibly be sinless by grace.
        2. Later: It is impossible for man to be sinless except _____.

D. Romans 7.

E. Infant baptism.
    i. To justify infant baptism, Pelagius said that baptism imparts a _____ of salvation.
    ii. Augustine also waded into muddy water in order to defend infant baptism.

F. Justification.
    i. Pelagianism
        1. Justification is the extent in which a person _____.
    ii. Augustinianism
        1. Augustine didn't have the protestant doctrine of justification _____.
        2. But we see foundational aspects to the protestant doctrine:
            a. An _____ (extrospective) faith (*On Merits*, 2.33).
            b. _____ (free) grace (*Proceedings*, 33).
            c. Justification by _____ (*Letter and Spirit*, 22).
            d. God gives us _____ (*Spirit and Letter*, 15).
            e. Distinction between _____ and _____ (*On the Letter and the Spirit*).
            f. _____ of the law (*Grace of Christ*, 9).
            g. CoW and CoG in seed form: the two men, Adam and Christ.
            h. _____ with Christ (*On Merits*, 3.8).
            i. Scripture _____ (*Nature & Grace*, 71; *Grace of Christ*, 47).