

# In the Beginning...

## An Examination of the Genesis Account of Creation and the Fall of Mankind

### Genesis 3

#### 12- The Fall of Man, the Suicide of Satan, and the Glory of God's Grace

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April 8, 2018

#### Genesis 3

**1** Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"

**2** The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat;

**3** but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'"

**4** The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die!"

**5** "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

**6** When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

**7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

**8** They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

**9** Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"

**10** He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."

**11** And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"

**12** The man said, "The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."

**13** Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

**14** The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life;

**15** And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

**16** To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you."

**17** Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.

**18** "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;

**19** By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

**20** Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all *the* living.

**21** The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

**22** Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" —

**23** therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.

**24** So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.

To the Glory of God

Now this is the written Account of the Fall of Mankind and the entry of Sin into the world that God the Holy Spirit moved upon Moses

to write down 1,450 years before Jesus was born. And, like the Account of Creation, this is the *only* record that exists that tells us how Sin entered the world. And this Record seeks to discuss the entrance of Sin into the world by utilizing interesting aspects like:

- ✓ A talking snake
- ✓ Forbidden fruit
- ✓ The Damnation of God

... and so, as those who believe the Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of the living God, we are challenged to explain very serious things like "war" and "injustice" and "crime", and even "death" itself by considering what we are given. And basically, what we are given in the Chapter that Brother Vern just read to us is that Eve was deceived by a talking snake (who was satan), and Adam cowardly *acquiesced* to her deception, and they both disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit, thus damning the entire human race. And then, in various other verses and Passages (most vividly in **Hebrews 7**), the Bible goes on to say that Adam's Sin somehow affects every *succeeding* generation (through the seed of the father). And *that* is the Bible's answer as to why there is Evil, in all of its variations, on the earth.

And, like with Creation, we find that much about the modern practice of "science" categorically *disagrees* with this Biblical portrayal, and puts forth an entirely *different* concept that has to do with things like "chemical imbalances" and "syndromes" and the "lack of money, opportunity, and education".

Now those of us born after the 19<sup>th</sup> Century have been *inundated* with the so-called "sciences" of Psychology, Psychiatry, and Sociology, that seek to understand two things:

1. What is wrong with the human race
2. How to fix them

Now even though these "sciences" have gained great credibility in the mind of most modern Americans (to the point that many people simply accept what they are told without question), there are a few facts that you should know that might help you to see things better.

First of all, there is *no consensus* among the various disciplines of Psychiatry and Psychology about either of these two issues. For example, what the Freudian School teaches about “what is wrong with people” differs from what the Schools of both Maslow and Kant teach. But as diverse as they are about “what is wrong with us”, they differ even *more* about what the solution is, on how to fix us. And yet, with all of this diversity, there is one area in which all of the various Schools dealing with human behavior seem to agree. They all agree that the Bible is wrong. And so, the Psychiatrists and the Psychologists and the Sociologists join in with the Biologists and the Geologists and the Physicists, and they tell us that thinking people, who live in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and who enjoy a technologically advanced civilization, simply *cannot* believe what the Bible says about Creation and the Fall of Mankind.

And many of them are quick to point out that Moses was an uneducated nomad, who didn’t have access to all the research and data that we have today. And so, even though he was obviously, very sincere about what he wrote, we have to discount it altogether now because we can’t be taken seriously with myths and children’s fairy stories about a young earth, and six-24 hour “days” of Creation, and a real Adam and Eve.

And so, the world of Bible-believing bond-slaves of Jesus Christ is becoming smaller and smaller as what we believe and teach about both Creation and the Fall affects less and less of our lives. For example, so far, we are still free to believe and teach that God created everything out of nothing (ex-nihilo) by His spoken Word in six-24 hour divisions of time called “days” in our Church and in our homes. But we are repeatedly told that we *must not*, yea, we *should not* allow what we believe and teach about Creation and the fall to spill over into the public arena that has already “bought into” Darwinian Evolution lock, stock, and barrel.

And so, Pastors, who stand before the people saying that the Bible is the Word of God, increasingly send the Lord’s sheep down the road to clinical Psychologists to handle “deep-seated emotional issues”. And when asked why they do that, they give two main answers:

1. The Bible may be fine in Church and in the Home, but with serious emotional and psychological disorders we need to let the "professionals" deal with it.
2. The fear of lawsuits.

So, even though we are seeing the results of what indoctrinating children with the tragic notion that their existence is nothing more than a random accident of evolution, in more and more school shootings, we are told to keep our beliefs to ourselves, and that "science" will deal with this tragedy. And so, more and more, blatant and obvious acts of Evil are relegated to being a "mental disorder", or even a failure of Society itself.

The point, as I have repeatedly told you, is that *disbelieving* the **Genesis** Record affects a whole lot more than just the **Genesis** Record. For example, rejecting what God moved upon Moses to write about *Creation* affects what we believe and understand about *Salvation*. And this morning I am telling you that rejecting what God says about the Fall, and replacing it with Man-made and fabricated ideas affects how we look at Sin and Evil and Salvation and Eternity.

If we cannot trust what the Bible says about how all things *began*, there is no reason to trust what it says about how all things are going to *end up*. And to deny the Fall, with all of its implications, results in developing a completely different "gospel" of how fallen Man is redeemed.

So, it truly is "all or nothing". We must believe what the Bible says *entirely*, or don't believe it *at all*. We must embrace it *fully*, or cast it out. We must study and learn and teach it, without apology, or we must deny it and do the best we can. If we are not going to believe and teach the hard and difficult parts, there is no reason to believe and teach the easy parts. So, if we are not going to defend what the Bible says about Creation and the Fall, why would we struggle to defend any other part?

The Apostle Paul believed the **Genesis** Record and he quoted from it frequently. Paul believed in a real biological man named "Adam". And he believed that God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit created everything out of nothing through a series of non-repeatable miracles. Paul believed in a talking snake and forbidden fruit and the Fall. And everything Paul taught about Salvation, in

every single one of his Epistles, was based on what **Genesis** taught about the Fall.

So, if you believe in what Paul wrote about Heaven, and if you believe in what he taught about Salvation, and if you believe that lost people are justified by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone, and *not* by participating in the Sacraments or by being baptized or by making a decision, then you have to believe in what **Genesis** says about the Fall. Because *everything* Paul taught about these issues is based on what **Genesis** says about the Fall being true.

But let me do you one better than Paul. If you believe in what Jesus said about Heaven, and if you believe in what he taught about Salvation, and if you believe that lost people are justified by Grace alone through Faith alone in Him and in His finished Work, then you have to believe in what **Genesis** says about the Fall. Because *everything* Jesus said and taught about these issues is based on what **Genesis** says about the Fall being true.

So, if you believe in Jesus, and you believe that Jesus was God, and you believe that the Words of Jesus are true, and you believe that Salvation is given through Faith in Him and in His finished Work, then you *cannot* discount what **Genesis** says about both Creation and the Fall.

So, the real issue is nothing less than the integrity of the 66 Books of the Holy Bible. And one of two things is true:

- A. **The Bible is the infallible Word of the living God**, and therefore, what it says about Creation and why people act the way they act and how they can be fixed is true. Therefore, we must obey what it says and follow its teachings, not just in Church on Sunday, but in every area of life, *including* human behavior.
- B. **Medicine and Science and Technology have made the Bible to be an outdated and irrelevant Book** (except for a few clever phrases about morality), and therefore, we should not consult the Bible about areas that Medicine, Science, and Technology specialize in.

In a nutshell, Psychology, Psychiatry, and Sociology teach that what is “wrong” with people is all *external* to them, in their environment, in their lack of money, education, and opportunity. These

"sciences" teach that what is "right" with humans is all *internal* to them, in their "fundamental basic goodness". Therefore, the goal of these people is to teach people how to look *inwardly*, into their "good heart", and to learn how to build up their "self-esteem".

But the Bible paints an entirely different picture. The Bible says that what is wrong with people is all *internal*, in their "fallen nature", their desire to rebel against God", and in their "love of darkness". The Bible repeatedly and clearly teaches that what is "right" and "true" is all *external* to human beings, in Heaven, and in the Bible, and on the Cross. So, rather than look *inwardly*, Christianity teaches people to look *outside* of themselves, *away* from themselves, to a Savior Who lived and died and rose again, and to a collection of infallible Books.

"Salvation" to a student of Freud is for him to trust *himself* and to lean on what he can do for himself. While Salvation to a Christian is to *deny* himself and embrace what Jesus alone did for him. So, I hope you can see that there is no "middle ground", no "area of commonality", no basis on which Psychology, Psychiatry, and Sociology can agree with what Christianity teaches about the Fall, any more than there is with what the naturalists and evolutionists teach about Creation. It is "either/or". We either adopt what Man says is wrong with us and how to fix us, or we embrace what God has infallibly spoken in Scripture. But we cannot do both. It is schizophrenic and confusing to seek to do both.

Now, with the exception of two Lord's Days, I have spent every week this year (2018) on why we can trust what the Bible says about Creation. And this morning I am seeking to get you to trust what the Bible teaches about the Fall of Man and our great need for Salvation. And I am not, in any way, seeking to belittle or discount or marginalize any sincere effort by anyone to help suffering people do better in this life. I am simply seeking to be faithful to the sacred Scriptures, and believe and teach that what the Bible says about the Fall of Mankind is true. And so, by default, what others say that disagrees with Scripture are wrong. And the reason this matters is because if you don't understand correctly what is wrong with you, then you are not going to be able to fix what is wrong.

Now the reality is that Biblical history is simply unintelligible without believing what the Bible says about Creation. The Record of events from Adam and Eve through the history of Israel, the coming of

Jesus Christ, the rise of the Church, and the future Consummation of all things makes no sense apart from this Truth:

God the Father, through the Agency of God the Son and God the Spirit, created, out of nothing, all that is not God, by His Word of Command. And, by this same Word, God so precisely upholds all things that everything that happens serves only to make God look glorious.

So, the reason Biblical history does not make sense apart from this Truth is that all Biblical history is a Record of God acting in and over history as the Owner of all that is. The God, Who is revealed in nature and Scripture:

- ✓ Subjects all of Creation to futility (**Romans 8:20**).
- ✓ He disperses the nations over the whole face of the earth, determining their allotted periods and boundaries (**The Acts 17:26**).
- ✓ He chooses a people and makes an irrevocable Promise to give them a land and a great posterity (**Genesis 12:1-3, 15:5; 17:8**), and sends famine or gives prosperity (**2Kings 8:1, Psalm 8:1, Psalm 105:16**).
- ✓ He gives life and takes it away (**Job 1:21**).
- ✓ He lifts up one king and casts down another (**Daniel 2:21**).
- ✓ He brings all time to its fullness.
- ✓ Takes on human flesh and is born of a virgin.
- ✓ Brings Him to the Cross according to His Own Plan and Foreknowledge (**The Acts 2:23; 4:28**).
- ✓ Raises Him from the dead on the third day.
- ✓ Builds His Church.
- ✓ And will one day come in unimaginable Glory to save and to judge, so that the knowledge of His Glory will fill the earth like the waters fill the sea.

Biblical history is the Record of a God Who:

- Acts like He is the Owner and Creator over all things.
- Assumes absolute Rights over the world and nations and individuals.
- Has a Purpose and Plan for the world.



- Cannot and will not be defeated (**Isaiah 46:9&10**).

... therefore, Biblical history makes no sense at all without the Doctrine of Creation. It is the Story of a Creator Whose Goal is to display in history the many-faceted diamond Glory of His:

- Wisdom (**Ephesians 3:10**)
- Power (**Exodus 14:4**)
- Justice (**Romans 9:22**)
- Mercy (**Romans 11:32**)
- Grace (**Ephesians 1:6**)

But there is another Reality, another Doctrine, another Truth without which the History of the world and God's Work in it makes no sense. And this is the Reality of Sin and Misery, the Truth which is often called *The Doctrine of Original Sin*. And this Biblical Truth is best expressed in two statements:

1. All people, everywhere and in all times, since the Fall of our first parents into sin, have an innate "depravity of heart" which leads us to sin as soon as we are able to sin, and this universal condition of Mankind is owing to the disobedience of Adam and God's judgment upon it.
2. Every human born after the Fall is *personally guilty* of the Sin of Adam.

There are two things that are crystal clear from honestly reading and studying 6,000 years of human history:

1. God is the Creator of the world and has the Right and the Power to use it for His Glory.
2. **"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"** (Romans 3:23).

.. or in the words of Jonathan Edwards: *"God is a great God, and I am a great sinner."* When these two truths are brought together, what emerges is *Redemptive History*, the History of God's redeeming, reclaiming, renewing, and saving Work. It is the Reality of Sin and Misery that makes Redemption *necessary*. And it is the Reality of God's

absolute Power and Rights over His Creation that makes Redemption *possible*, even *certain*.

So, when these two Truths are clearly understood, then the mind is set for understanding the History of Redemption. Since this new year started, we have been looking at Creation and the necessity of believing what the **Genesis** Record says. Today we look at the emergence of sin and misery, not out of an intellectual or psychological interest, but because, if what the Bible says is true, then all of us have all so dishonored our Creator by our sin that we stand under Eternal Condemnation, unless we find Forgiveness in the Redeemer and make it our vocation to resist sin by His Power.

To know the extent, origin, nature, and consequences of Sin not only helps make sense of History, but more importantly will cause us to flee with urgency to Christ (**Hebrews 10:19-22**), and devote ourselves to the Holiness without which no one will be saved (**Hebrews 12:14**). So, there are five things about Sin that I want us to see from the Bible this morning:

1. The power of sin over all people in their natural condition
2. The origin of sin in the world
3. The essence or nature of sin
4. The consequences of sin
5. The Divine Remedy for sin

We believe the Bible is the Word of God. It is the best diagnosis of the human condition that has ever been written. May God help us to listen with our minds and hearts, and to follow his redemptive therapy to the full.

### **1. The power of sin over all people in their natural condition**

The whole Bible witnesses implicitly and explicitly that every person is a sinner:

- ✓ **1 Kings 8:46: there is no man who does not sin**
- ✓ **Ecclesiastes 7:20: Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins.**
- ✓ **Psalms 143:2: in Your sight no man living is righteous.**
- ✓ **Romans 3:23: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**

So, are we to think that the fact that all people everywhere sin is also just another random accident of evolution? Is there not compelling evidence that all people have an innate depravity of heart that inclines them to sin? On the editorial page of the *Sun Herald* newspaper several years ago, one of the writers pondered a poll that says that 68% of Americans expect us to be in a war in the next few years. She wrote:

“Like history, students who study the human saga using war as the highlight, the dateline, the climax of each era—peace seems sometimes, in our despair, like nothing more than the set-up for another war. So today we even wonder whether there is an intrinsic flaw in the human character, whether we are all like nursery school children who keep building towers and destroying them to build and destroy again.”

And she closed with a quote from Albert Einstein:

"The splitting of the atom has changed everything save man's mode of thinking . . . thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe."

Now whether Einstein thought this fatal "mode of thinking" was part of human nature or not, Ellen Goodman can only "*wonder* whether there is an intrinsic flaw in the human character." But those who accept the witness of Scripture have ceased to wonder. There *is* most definitely an intrinsic flaw in all human character.

Not only do all men sin. They do so because they are under the "*Power of Sin*" (**Romans 3:9**). So, it is no fluke that the statistical probability of a person sinning is 100%, and that there has been but one exception, Jesus the Christ. But the insulting reality is that we sin because of "who we are" down at the DNA level. We sin because our "nature" is corrupt, and our hearts are depraved. There is a "fatal flaw" in the human character. Here is the way Paul put it in **Ephesians 2:1-3**. He explains that apart from Christ all people are "dead through trespasses and sins", they are "sons of disobedience." "Among these," he says, "we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of body and mind, and so we were *by nature* children of wrath like the rest of mankind." "*By nature* children of wrath."

Every one of us has a depraved heart, a natural corruption of the will. The Prophet Jeremiah meant “everybody” when he said in **Jeremiah 17:9**:

**The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?**

... and it was *not* “poetic overstatement” when David grieved over his own impurity with these words:

**Psalm 51:5**

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

God testifies to us in his Word, therefore, that *all* people sin, and in doing so they act according to their corrupt nature. The heart of every man, woman, and child is desperately corrupt. That's the first thing we need to see about Sin. And what a heart-breaking, pride-shattering experience it should be when we realize that we are sinners.

## **2. The Origin of Sin**

The inevitable question in response to this Truth is: “*Where did all this sin and depravity come from? How did we get to be this way?*” And the Bible does not give us an *ultimate* answer. But it does give us a *true* answer: in the Old Testament, in **Genesis 1–3**, and in the New Testament, in **Romans 5**. For example, when God finished creating Man and Woman in His Own Image, Moses wrote:

**Genesis 1:31**

**God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.**

So, God made Man “good”. God did *not* create a depraved Man. In addition, the point of **Genesis 2** is that God provided for Man *everything* he needed to make his life rich and happy. He was *bountiful* to His creature, not *begrudging*.

How, then, did Man become depraved and the world become miserable? The Old Testament answer is **Genesis 3**. In a moment of catastrophic (and to my mind inexplicable) disobedience, Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. Their innocence vanished, their eyes were opened, and they knew that they

were naked (3:7). And then to make plain the awful magnitude of what happened, Moses gives no exposition of Doctrine; he simply tells the terrible Story:

- The first lovers now blame each other (**Genesis 3:12**)
- The Curse of God falls on them (**Genesis 3:15-19**)
- Their first child becomes a murderer and fugitive (**Genesis 4**)
- The arrogant vengeance of Lamech (**Genesis 4:23**)
- The litany (**Genesis 5**) of how the descendants of Adam died, the increase of wickedness everywhere until the flood dooms the world (**Genesis 6–8**)
- The presumption of people to build a tower to heaven and make a name for themselves (**Genesis 11:1-9**).

... and on and on it goes through wars and tyrants and injustice to this day. But, it remained for the Apostle Paul (in **Romans 5:12-21**) to give us the Divinely inspired *exposition* of what happened back in **Genesis 3**.

#### **Romans 5:12-21**

**12** Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned —

**13** for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

**14** Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

**15** But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

**16** The gift is not like *that which came* through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment *arose* from one *transgression* resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift *arose* from many transgressions resulting in justification.

**17** For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

**18** So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

**19** For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

**20** The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

**21** so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now I went into this Passage in gear detail in my "Journey through Romans" several years ago. But, for this morning, this much should be clear:

- ✓ Verse 12, "**through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin**"
- ✓ Verse 15, "**by the transgression of the one the many died**"
- ✓ Verse 16, "**the judgment *arose* from one *transgression* resulting in condemnation**"
- ✓ Verse 17, "**by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one**"
- ✓ Verse 18, "**through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men**"
- ✓ Verse 19, "**through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners**"

... and it's just real hard to get "chemical imbalances" from this. The Teaching of Scripture is unmistakable and crystal clear: the universality of Sin and Misery in the world is due to the Fall of our first parents into disobedience.

But there are two reasons why I said the Bible does not give us an *ultimate* answer to the question of how sin came into the world. One is that even *before* the Fall, we encounter an evil, lying tempter in the Garden of Eden, and Moses wrote not a word about where this serpent comes from. Later, the New Testament identifies the tempter as Satan (**The Revelation 12:9**), and refers in passing to angels who left their position (**Jude 1:6**) and fell under God's judgment (**2Peter 2:4**), but we are told nothing about how the first actual Sin of the universe occurred.

And to me, it is a great mystery why any angelic being in the very Presence of God would ever cease to delight in God and instead seek joy in his own self-esteem. So, the ultimate Origin of Sin is shrouded in the darkness of Eternity Past, which is a very complicated way of saying, "*We don't know*". But the second reason I said the Bible's Answer is "true", but not "ultimate", is that it does not *specifically* tell us *how* the Sin of Adam is *transmitted* to his posterity. We are given a vague solution over in **Hebrews 7**, but we are simply told that it *is*. And the Bible *assumes* that we will trust the Justice of God. And the Bible leaves the issue of whether it is Just for God to subject all men to Adam's condition, to hang on whether God, as the Creator and Owner, has the "Right" to establish a kind of "unity" between Adam and his posterity which results in that fatal flaw being passed on from one generation to the next. And we simply don't have time this morning to probe more deeply into the mysteries of "Moral Accountability" and God's "subjection" of all Humanity to Sin and Misery.

But at least two things I think should be said as pointers. First, God did not *add* some "evil principle" to us when Adam fell. The depravity of the human heart is *not* due to some "addition" on God's part, but rather to a "privation". Concerning the Source of depravity in the heart, the Apostle John was moved along by God the Holy Spirit to write:

### **1 John 2:16**

**For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.**

So, what happened in the Fall is that God *took away* from Man the Light by which man could see the glorious desirability of God over all things. And without this Light, Man was left a merely natural being. And, as such, all his desires were swallowed up in darkness and went after things of the world: pleasure, power, esteem, status. So, God did not "add" these evil desires to Man, He simply put a distance between Man and the holy Light of God's Glory.

And the other pointer is this: our conscience witnesses unmistakably that we are *accountable* before God. And our experience witnesses unmistakably that we are *corrupt* before God. We know we are prone to wander from God due to some fatal flaw in our nature. But

we also know, just as strongly, that even though we are corrupt, we are still fully accountable to God not to wander. And it may be that for as long as we look through this glass darkly (**1 Corinthians 13:12**), we will not satisfy ourselves with how these two Truths fit together (our accountability and our innate natural depravity). That may have to wait. But when our experience, our conscience, and the holy Word of God unite to teach these Truths, we do well to believe and to be humbled. All people sin due to the depravity of their heart. And all people come into the world with this depraved heart because God established a unity between Adam and his posterity which results in that fatal flaw being passed on from generation to generation.

### 3. The Essence or Nature of Sin

Something very important is overlooked when we simply say that the First Sin was disobedience, the eating of the forbidden fruit. The forbidden tree was given a name because it stood for something. It was called "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (**Genesis 2:17**). That phrase, "the knowledge of good and evil," has a very *distinct* meaning in the Old Testament. **It refers to the ability to determine for one's self what is good and evil, what is helpful and harmful.** But in **Genesis 3:5; 22**, we see that God *alone* has this Ability and Right. And the people of the Old Testament understood this, so that in **1 Kings 3:9**, we hear Solomon praying for it so he can rule well. In **Deuteronomy 1:39**, we read that little children don't have it yet. And in **2 Samuel 19:35**, senile people have lost it.

The "knowledge of good and evil" refers, therefore, to the capacity and the right to decide *for one's self* what is "Good" and what is "Bad", what is "helpful" and what is "harmful". Therefore, what God was forbidding was *not* an arbitrary fruit, but what the fruit *symbolized*. So, for Adam to eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" would mean he was rejecting God, as the all-wise, all-caring Father Who knows what is Good for us, and in His place, Adam would put *himself*. Another way of looking at this is that by even *wanting* to eat the forbidden fruit, Adam was seeking to do the very *same* thing that Lucifer did in Heaven, he was seeking to make *himself* to be "god".

Therefore, what God forbade Man to do was to exchange roles with Him. He simply said: *"Don't seek to dethrone Me. Don't take My Place. Trust Me to fill your life with maximum Joy and Meaning."*



And when the Temptation came, Satan knew exactly what he had to do: "*Naaaaah, you won't die! God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil*" (**Genesis 3:5**). And that is what happened when they disobeyed, because God said in **Genesis 3:22**:

**Behold, the Man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil.**

Man has chosen the way of the prodigal son. He no longer desires to stay under his Father's Authority. He wants to decide *for himself* what is "Good" and "Bad". So, the *deepest* Essence of the Fall and the most *basic* Nature of our depraved heart and of all its various sins is *the desire to not be dependent on God, but to be "self-dependent" and "self-sufficient"*.

So, from that standpoint, Adam sinned *way before* he actually ate of the fruit. The reason Adam did not intervene to rescue his wife from being tempted by the devil (even though he was standing right there the whole time), was because before Satan ever uttered a single word to Eve, Adam was already *determined* to be his own "god". Now the Bible is silent about how a Man made in the very Image and Likeness of God, who did not already have a fallen nature, would desire to usurp God's Authority; we are only told that he did.

And the other side of the same coin is simply the desire to substitute *ourselves* for God, and for us to get the flickering glory and the puny sense of power that comes from *self-reliance, self-confidence, and self-determination*. So, all our sins flow from our "in-born unwillingness" to be like children and trust our heavenly Father to decide what is good for us and what is bad for us and to trust that whatever He says is best.

#### **4. The Consequences of Sin**

Sin has brought great Misery into human relations, and sinners who do not repent will be punished forever in Hell. And while those are not the only consequences of sin, they are enough to wake us up to our need for both Repentance and Vigilance. Three human relationships were corrupted in the Fall:

1. **The relation to ourselves was ruined.** "**Thy eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together**" (Genesis 3:7). Rebellion against God in the human heart is so contrary to the way Man is designed to be, that he must constantly put on airs, clothes, make-up, poses to try to convince himself that he is not really a naked, helpless child.
2. **The relation to God was ruined.** "**They heard the sound of the Lord God . . . and the man and his wife hid themselves**" (Genesis 3:8). And man has been running from God with his guilty conscience ever since. A youth who has said to his father, *"I don't want your counsel, I don't want your authority, I don't want your help,"* cannot bear to be in the presence of his dad. We are homeless fugitives, always on the run until we give it up and come home to God.
3. **Our relations with other people have been ruined.** "**Have you eaten of the tree which I commanded you not to eat?**" The man said, **'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree and I ate.'**" (Genesis 3:12). If anybody deserves to die, *she* does! Tender-hearted, loving, chivalrous husband! When the heart is in rebellion against God and is, therefore, wholly taken up with self-justification, other people turn into patsies. Therefore, all human relations, with ourselves, God, and other people, are corrupted in the Fall. And the misery that has resulted is untold.

The one other consequence of Sin that I feel I should mention, because it is such a sobering and life-gripping Warning, is found in **2 Thessalonians 1:7-10**. I won't comment on it, but simply let it stand:

**... the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed.**

## 5. The Remedy for Sin

Now so far, this message has not been good news. But it has been true news. And bad as it is, it is good for us. If we don't know that our diagnosis is terminal, we probably won't accept the doctor's remedy. **"It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick,"** Jesus said (**Mark 2:17**). And that is everybody. But we cannot *medicate* our way out of the disease of sin, dear friends. So, there is no pill to take, no surgery to have. You also cannot *legislate* yourself out of sin, so Government isn't the answer. You cannot educate your way out of sin, nor can you use Technology. The only cure for sin is Repentance, Forgiveness, and Salvation.

But we can't do this in our own power or strength. The depravity that grips our life is so strong that left to ourselves we will die in our sins. God giving Commandments never saved a single soul. God performing miracles right before their eyes never changed a single heart. Our lostness is so pervasive that God can promise eternal Joy or eternal Damnation and nobody will change. So, we don't need more rules. We don't need more law. We don't even need more information. What we need is a new heart.

And the Good News, the remedy, is this: Out of His great Love, God sent Jesus Christ into the world to die for our sins and to rise again so that all who follow Him in the humble obedience of faith will have Peace for their conscience, Purpose for their life, and Hope for the future, even into Eternity. And if you understand that, you will see that what satan thought was his crowning achievement ended up being his own suicide. And the Fall of Adam and Eve did not end anything, it paved the way for the Glory of God's Grace to be both manifested and magnified by saving unworthy rebels.

Amen. Let's pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.