

The Fall

- All of creation was created to reveal and reflect the majesty and glory of God. (Isa. 43:1-7; 44:23; 48:9-11; 49:3, 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 1:16; Ps. 86:12)
- God created mankind in His image. (Gen. 1:26-27)
- God's creation was designed for our joy and sustenance.
- God created all things very good. (Gen. 1:31)
- God lovingly planned a history of merciful redemption and permitted sin to enter the world through our first parents Adam and Eve, so that God the Son (Jesus) could display His love, mercy and grace fully on the cross for sinners and glorify the Father in heaven. (Jn. 17: 1-5; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:4; Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:15-21)

2 Timothy 1:8-9 // Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of His own purpose and grace, which He gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,

- The apex of God's love, mercy and grace is displayed most fully on the cross of Christ.
- God created the world to put His glory on display that His people might know Him, and love Him, and show Him.
- Everything God does is for His glory and ultimately our eternal joy in Him.
- Every aspect of God's creation has been tainted or distorted by sin.
- Everywhere we look we see pain, rebellion, brokenness, hopelessness and despair.

Even in our own hearts, we see the influence of sin. We are in a battle, and we feel it every day. As Christians, no matter how badly we want to honor God, sin screams at us from all sides, begging us to rebel against God and pursue our own desires. We struggle with temptations, and we have a hard time making sense of the things we see happening around us. Every one of us has a profound sense that the world is not now as it was intended to be.

The Story Takes a Sudden Turn

- God intended everything in this world to be good; no sin, sorrow, pain, or death. Humanity living in perfect fellowship with God, each other, and with the creation. (Gen. 1 - 2)
- In Gen. 3 we see the tragic fall of mankind.

Life in the garden of Eden was full of good things enjoyed through the grace and presence of God. But Satan began to promise goodness apart from God. With this simple twist, the world that God created to be "very good" changed dramatically.

1. Based on the first three chapters of Genesis, why was it such a big deal for Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil?

Satan is subtle. He does not show up dressed in a red cape with a pitchfork saying, “I am Satan, and I am here to destroy you. Follow me.” Instead, he comes to us in ways that we would not expect and offers us things that seem good. This is what he did in the garden, and he does it to us today. He deceives people by making false promises. He takes what is evil and makes it appear beautiful. He takes truth and twists it. It is also important to notice that Satan enters the biblical scene as part of God’s creation. This means that he is not all powerful. He is only alive because God gives him life. He is a deadly deceiver, but his power is infinitely less than God’s power. So we shouldn’t be terrified of Satan’s power, but we do need to be wary of his lies and manipulation.

In the case of Adam and Eve, Satan cleverly avoided asking them to reject God outright. Instead, he offered them the knowledge of good and evil. He gave them an opportunity to be in charge, to decide for themselves the difference between good and evil. God made people to be dependent upon Him (that’s not a bad thing, by the way!), but from this moment on, every sin has involved men and women claiming the right to govern themselves. Sin is always a declaration of autonomy.

- Satan asked Eve a simple question: “Did God actually say?”
- Satan will always question God’s word.
- Whatever is not from faith is sin. (Rom. 14:23)
- Adam was not deceived, he sinned consciously and deliberately. (1 Tim. 2:14)
- Adam and Eve treasured their own desires over and above God. They believed the lie of the serpent (Satan: Rev 12:9) to be made like God, not understanding that God had already created them in His likeness. They disobeyed, believing a lie from a creature that God had already given them dominion over, God then cursed the world to death and futility (unfruitfulness). (Gen 3; Rom. 5:12, 8:20)
- Though they sinned against God, God immediately covered their shame and nakedness with the sacrifice of animal blood. A type of what He would do for them on the cross to atone for sin once and for all, through the seed of the woman.

God had given Adam and Eve specific words to follow, but they failed to view the word of God as the supreme authority. They allowed someone else’s words to carry weight. They treated God’s word as a lesser authority, putting their own desires above His. Whenever we disobey His commands, we are rejecting His authority and asserting our own. We basically say, “God, You may be the author of my life, but You’re not the authority in my life. I choose what I do, not You. I’m in control here, not You.”

2. Analyze the sin in your life in light of the rebellion of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3. Do you see the same tendency toward independence and rebellion in your actions? How so?

The World Became a Different Place

- At this point all of creation and every future event would be saturated with the effects of the fall.

- The perfect relationships that Adam and Eve once had with creation, each other and God would be damaged forever by sin.
- Now they would experience shame, distrust, and blame, childbearing pain, the curse upon the ground, and the promise of toil in the work they had once enjoyed.
- The effects of the fall are also known as “the curse.”
 - God first cursed the serpent to crawl around on his belly and, along with his offspring, to live in enmity against the offspring of the woman.
 - Eve was cursed through pain in childbearing and strife with her spouse.
 - Adam was cursed with pain and frustration in working the ground.
 - All of creation was cursed to produce thorns and thistles, or as Paul later stated it, the creation was “subjected to futility” and was placed in “bondage to corruption” (Rom. 8:20–21).
 - The greatest consequence of sin was death—spiritual death immediately, and physical death eventually.

Adam and Eve literally lived in Paradise. They inhabited a perfect world where everything and everyone did exactly what God designed them to do. They actually experienced a perfect human relationship! They enjoyed relationship with God—to the point that they would walk with Him through the garden! We are so far from this reality that it is entirely unimaginable.

But then they lost it. The action itself might appear harmless (how much harm can a piece of fruit cause?), but the outward act represented something far more sinister. The first sin was rebellion, idolatry, treason, and pride, all rolled into a single bite. Both Adam and Eve made a conscious choice to rebel against their Creator and live on their own terms. And we imitate their decision every time we choose our desires over God’s.

3. Think back to the world of Genesis 2. Spend a few minutes imagining what our world would look like without sin, if everything had stayed the way God intended it to be. Make some notes below.

4. Now consider the ways that sin has affected our world. How is our experience of the world shaped by the fall? Be specific and describe how it affects you today.

From Cain to Babel (Genesis 4-11)

- Eve bore Cain and Abel. When Abel’s sacrifice pleased God and Cain’s did not, Cain acted in jealous passion and committed the first murder.
- Lamech writes the first poem recorded in the Bible in order to brag about being more vengeful than Cain. (Gen. 4)
- Adam’s descendants to Noah (Gen. 5)
- The creature whom God crafted into His image is now described as “only evil continually” (Gen. 6:5).
- The downward spiral continues, sin and rebellion spread so quickly that before we get very far into the story, God tells Noah (son of Lamech and a “righteous man”) that He will destroy “every living thing that was on the face of the ground, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens.” with a flood. (Gen. 6-7)

- God provides Noah with a plan of salvation.
- God's covenant with Noah; "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth. Neither will I ever again strike down every living creature as I have done. While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." (Gen. 8:21-22)
- All nations descend from Noah and his family. (Gen.10)

God's purpose for the human race would start over through Noah and his descendants. You would think that the horror of the flood would cause Noah's descendants to live in obedience, but soon after the flood we find humanity joined together in rebellion against God.

This time people gathered together at Babel to build a tower to the heavens. Their purpose was to unite themselves in this great project and make a name for themselves. Once again, God looked down on humanity's declaration of autonomy and destroyed the fruit of their rebellion. This time He confused their language and scattered them across the face of the earth. As we come to the end of Genesis 11, humanity's ability to accurately represent God on earth—to live as His image bearers—is in serious question.

5. Think about the current state of the world. In what ways is humanity still caught in the rebellion that led to the flood and the tower of Babel?

6. In what ways are you involved in this rebellion?

The Story Continues in Spite of Sin

Thankfully, the biblical story does not end with Genesis 11! We need to understand that the Bible could have stopped at Genesis 11, and God would have been completely fair and loving to end the human race right there. But in His perfect wisdom, God kept the story in motion. Now the stage was set for God's plan of redemption. God gave humanity a responsibility, but they completely failed, and now they needed someone to redeem them. A Savior.

Even in these early stages of the story, we see snapshots of God's willingness to rescue and redeem. Immediately after Adam and Eve rebelled against God, we read God's promise in Genesis 3:15 that there will be enmity between the serpent and the woman, and between the serpent's offspring and the woman's offspring. God says, "He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." This imagery is a picture of a forthcoming battle between Christ and the serpent, and we are guaranteed that the serpent will be crushed. When we arrive in the New Testament, we find Paul encouraging Christians in Rome by promising that, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet" (Rom. 16:20).

We receive even more hope when God makes a covenant with Noah (Gen. 6:18, 9:9). A covenant is a promise from God, an agreement between God and His people that He will bless them in accordance with certain terms. As the story unfolds, we see God establishing a people through covenants. These covenants play a major role in how God

relates to His people. With Noah, the covenant was about saving a people for Himself. Amid all of the people who would justly experience His judgement, God made a covenant with Noah. He called out a people by His grace and promised to preserve His creation.

The plan will continue to unfold as we continue in the biblical story, but Genesis 1–11 lays the groundwork and orients us to what is coming.

7. As you think back over Genesis 1–3 (and even the events we discussed from chapters 4–11), briefly describe how these chapters lay the groundwork for what is to come in the biblical story.

8. How should our understanding of the first chapters of the Bible affect the way we view ourselves and the world around us?