# Basic Christian Theology

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The study notes from previous sessions are available at www.fbcdandridge.org/wednesday-bible-study

## Anthropology: The Doctrine of Humanity (2)

1. **Understanding the Fall**

   a. **Genesis 1:31** – "*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*"

   - **Garden**: After God created Adam and Eve, uniquely making them in his image, he placed them in the Garden of Eden, where they would have a close relationship with him and with each other, worshiping the Lord and obeying his word. As image bearers, the first couple perfectly reflected God's holiness and love, and lived for his glory. Since God called them to "*be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth*," it was the Lord's will for them to have children and eventually fill the entire earth with image bearers who would also worship and glorify God. The world was free from sin, pain, violence, hate, dysfunction, and death, thus making the garden literally "heaven on earth."

   b. **Genesis 2:15-17** – "*The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*"

   - **Probationary Period**: Theologians have often called this scene a "probationary period," where God would see if they would obey and honor his commands. If they obeyed, Adam and Eve would be able to live with God forever, along with their global offspring. However, if they failed, they and everyone else would suffer devasting circumstances.

   c. **Genesis 3:1, 6-7** – "*Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" … So 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 to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.*"

- Fall: After Satan's own rebellion toward God, which resulted in him and a third of the angels being removed from heaven, he was given authority to tempt Adam and Eve in the garden. While God can't tempt anyone with sin (James 1:13), it must be understood that God allowed Satan to do this in order to fulfill his divine will (Eph. 1:5, 8). However, Satan deceives Eve by questioning God's goodness and judgment. In a moment of weakness, she sins and leads Adam to do the same. Some have questioned if this was truly the first sin. After all, Adam had been called to have "dominion" over the earth and protect his wife, but he allowed the serpent to approach Eve and lead her into sin. But because of this sinful act of rebellion, which has been called "cosmic treason," Adam and Eve, all future generations, and the entire universe are now under the severe judgment of God.

2. Consequences of the Fall

   a. God: "*And 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. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate*." (Genesis 3:8-13).

   - Separation: Following Adam and Eve's sin, the first indication that life with God had changed is that God had to look for them. Why? Adam and Eve sensed their sinful guilt and hid themselves from the Lord. Rather than embracing God in fellowship, they ran from him in fear of judgment. In addition, they realized that they were naked. Could this indicate that they were once in a glorified state but no more? Needless to say, their sinful guilt changed everything about them physically and spiritually, separating them from a loving relationship with God.

   - Fallen Nature: Rather than having a loving, obedient heart toward God, they were given over to their sin and developed a selfish, rebellious heart toward God. From this point forward, they would be enslaved to sin, where their desire would be to do what pleased them rather than God. This didn't mean they were as sinful as they could be, or incapable of doing some good, but their hearts would longer fully submit to God. In essence, rather than living for God's glory, they lived for their own glory. While this image of God wasn't removed, it was majorly distorted and weakened. However, worst of all, God cursed them with eternal death, where there was nothing they could personally do to make things right with God (3:22-24).

   - Transmission of Sin and Guilt: While Adam and Eve were guilty of sin, Scripture teaches that Adam served as humanity's "federal head," which means that he is every human's

representative. In other words, even though Adam sinned, every human that followed him was infected with his sinful nature and eternal curse. Therefore, we are all born separated from God with a sinful nature. Scripture later describes humans as spiritually "dead" and "hostile" to God, rebellious in nature, and personally unable to change or make things right with God.

- Romans 5:12 – "*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.*"

- Ephesians 2:1-3 – "*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, and the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience… [who] were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*" (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14)

- Romans 3:10-12 – "*None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.*"

- Colossians 1:21 – "*And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds…*"

- Ephesians 4:17-19 – "Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity."

- Romans 8:8 – "*Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*"

- Implications for Today: The Bible teaches that all of us were born sinners, spiritually separated from God, rebellious toward him in nature, and destined for eternal judgment. In the most basic sense, the evidence of our sinful nature is our desire to rule our own lives rather than being ruled by God. In other words, it's having a rebellious heart and mind that desires to live how we want to live rather than how God wants us to live and finding great joy in controlling our own lives. The evidence of this sinful nature isn't just found in those who commit the most horrific and harmful sins, but also in those who have impure thoughts, jealous hearts, hateful speech, unloving attitudes, and selfish spirits. And to make matters worse, Scripture teaches that none of us have the personal ability nor desire to change. This condition is what it means to be lost.

b. Eve: "*To the woman he said, 'I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.*" (Genesis 3:16)

- Family Strife: This curse indicates that life will be very difficult in the home. Husbands and wives will not always love one another and follow God's plan for their marriage. Not only will childbirth be painful physically (and impossible for some), but raising children will be a major challenge because they also have a sinful nature.

c. Adam/Creation: "*Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground from out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return*" (Genesis 3:17-19).

- Work Issues: While God gave Adam the task of working the garden before the fall, his work will be much harder now.

- Global Issues: Not only was Adam and Eve cursed, along with all of humanity, but the physical creation was cursed and broken. The world will no longer be as beautiful and peaceful as before. There will be diseases, disasters, demonic activity, dangerous wildlife, and eventual death (cf. Rom. 8:22-23).

- Death: Rather than living forever with God, humans would face earthly death.

d. Satan: "*The Lord said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*" (Genesis 3:14-15)

- Hope: Although humanity and the world fell under God's curse, we are given a life-changing promise of hope. God will one day bring judgment upon Satan and reverse the sinful effects of the fall by sending a Savior into the world, who will crush the head of the enemy and redeem God's people from sin and death.