

The Whole Counsel of God: Creation-FALL-Redemption
The Christian Faith and Contemporary Challenges
January 31, 2021

“That there is sin and misery is something, after all, which we know not merely from Scripture; it is something that is preached to us daily and every moment by the whole of a groaning creaturedom.” – Herman Bavinck

I. Review: Creation Ordinances

- A. **MARRIAGE – Gen 2:24** – *“Therefore a man shall leave ... and hold fast to his wife ...”*
- B. **PROCREATION – Gen 1:28** – *“Be fruitful and multiply ...”*
- C. **DOMINION – Gen 1:28** – *“... and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion ...”*
- D. **LABOR – Gen 2:15** – *“The Lord God ... put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”*
- E. **WEEKLY SABBATH – Gen 2:3** – *“So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy...”*

II. The FALL in Heaven

- A. **Jude 6** – *“And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day ...”*
- B. **1 Tim 3:6** – *“He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil.”*
- C. **Ezek 28:13, 15, 17** – *“You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering ... You were blameless in your ways, from the day you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you ... Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground ...”*

“God by his providence permitted some of the angels, willfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to his own glory.” (WLC 19).

D. Effects of the Fall in Heaven

- 1. **Job 1:7** – *“The Lord said to Satan, ‘From where have you come?’ Satan answered the Lord and said, ‘From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.’”*
- 2. **1 Pet 5:8** – *“Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”*

III. The FALL on Earth

- A. **Gen 3:1** – *“Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.”*
- B. **2 Cor 11:3** – *“But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.”*

“Adam and Eve were true theists at the first. They took God’s interpretation of themselves and of the animals for granted as the true interpretation. Then came the tempter. He presented to Eve another, that is, an antitheistic theory of reality, and asked her to be the judge as to which was the more reasonable for her to accept. And the acceptance of this position of judge constituted the fall of man.” – Cornelius Van Til

“For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.” – Psalm 36:9

B. Effects of the Fall on Earth (in us as creatures)

1. Spiritual alienation from God, hostility against God, and wrath from God

- a. **Rom 8:7** – *“For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.”*
- b. **Rom 1:21** – *“For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.”*
- c. **Rom 1:18–20** – *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹ For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”*

B. Guilt and Corruption

- a. **Guilt – Ezra 9:6** – *“... our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens.”*
- b. **Corruption – Eph 2:1–2** – *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air ...”*

C. Relational hatred and discord

- a. **Gen 3:12** – *“The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.’”*
- b. **Titus 3:3** – *“For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.”*
- c. **Rom 1:32** – *“Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.”*

D. Idolatry, Intellectual futility, Emotional confusion, Social Disintegration

- a. **Gen 6:5** – *“The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*
- b. **Eph 4:18** – *“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. ¹⁸ 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.”*

“Above all, first to last, sin is ‘theocentric.’ It is primarily against God and then, derivatively, against human beings, including the self (e.g. Rom. 1:18–32; Eph. 4:17–19). Accordingly, sin is relational or, better, ‘antirelational.’ It is essentially rebellion against God, the image-bearing (1 Cor. 11:7–9) creature’s effective renunciation of God as creator ... [A]s ‘anti-relational,’ as flouting and even denying the creator-creature relationship that cannot be escaped, sin is deeply rooted hostility, particularly toward God (Rom. 8:7) and so, again inevitably, it is also against others and even the self, as made in God’s image, again, in nearly countless ways (e.g. 1:26–27, 29–31; Gal. 5:19–21; Eph. 4:19).” – Richard Gaffin

IV. God's Response to the Fall

- A. Redeeming Grace!
- B. Common Grace!

"[T]he term 'common grace' should...be defined as *every favor of whatever kind or degree, falling short of salvation, which this undeserving and sin-cursed world enjoys at the hand of God.*" – John Murray

- 1. God's DELAY of final judgment
 - A. **Gen 8:22** – *"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease."*
- 2. God's RESTRAINT of the outbreaking of fallen man's "suppression of the truth"
 - A. **Gen 20:6** – God to pagan king Abimelech: *"Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her."*

V. Lessons for Us

- A. Because fallen human beings "suppress the truth" (Rom 1:18) of the knowledge of God in them and revealed around them ...
 - 1. ... they construct harmful interpretations of themselves and the world in ways the directly conflict with a Christian worldview.
- B. Because (1) fallen human beings remain the image of God (albeit rebellious image) and (2) God restrains the destructive outbreaking of their sinfulness ...
 - 1. ... there are sometimes elements of "truth" in a non-Christian interpretation of the world that Christian can appreciate and "untwist."
- C. Christians seeking to "think God's thoughts after him" under the light of Scripture should evaluate non-Christian worldviews to see...
 - 1. ... what is opposed to the Christian account of reality; and
 - 2. ... what "common grace insights" might be present.

E.g., The "Progressive" Yard Sign

