

THE FALL OF MAN

WE BELIEVE . . .

. . . that man was created perfect and without sin, but that he willingly and deliberately chose to transgress the command of God which brought sin and death to all men.

Creation of Man

Genesis 1:26-31

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ²⁹ And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. ³⁰ Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so. ³¹ Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

God did not create the animals in His own image. Only man has this honor and distinction. Man was created in the very image of God. Notice also that God gave man dominion over every animal. Were there dinosaurs at creation? We don't know, but if there were, man had no fear of them or any other living being. Imagine Adam taking a nap with a lion, or Eve riding a bear! There was no fear of death at all.

Then God blessed man, told him to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it. Adam and Eve were to subdue the earth and have dominion over everything. Nothing would intimidate or harm them. They were told they could eat everything, too. Think of how wonderful each plant must have tasted, and there was no fear that any certain plant would make them sick or kill them.

How pleased God must have been with His creation. Have you ever created something? Have you sewn a quilt, built a house or a fence, rebuilt an engine, painted or sculpted, written a song or felt the satisfaction of knowing you did a good job raising your children? Surely, you have

experienced that moment when you looked at what you made, and you felt a certain sense of pleasure. That is just a hint of how God felt when he looked at what He created. (That is also how He feels about us when He now sees how you we growing in Him. He's proud of us!)

It is safe to say that Adam and Eve had it made. They had every need met. They had a constant source of food. They had no fear. There was no possible way they could die. They spent their days enjoying God's presence and each other's. They played with any animal and ate anything their hearts desired.

Well, almost anything. In Genesis 2:15-17 it is written,

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ 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."

One limitation in life, just one. Don't eat of that tree. You may eat from thousands of other trees, but not that tree. Now, Adam, here is a garden for you to tend and keep. You have dominion over every animal. Name them. Enjoy them. To top it off, I will make you are companion who is equal to you. What do you think of her, Adam? Be fruitful and multiply! He had it all. Just one very small limitation. Don't eat of that tree in the midst of the garden.

Forever have theologians speculated, what would have happened if Adam obeyed? It seems reasonable to say that Adam and Eve would have had children whom they would have taught to honor and respect their Creator, and not to eat that tree. They would have all been in fellowship with God. The serpent would have tested each one, and they would have ignored him. Yet, it is probable that eventually, one of their descendants would have broken that commandment, and we would have ended up in the same condition. Spiritually dead.

Please read Chapter 3 in the book of Genesis before continuing.

Fall of Man

In 1 Timothy 2:14, we read that Eve was deceived. She actually believed what the serpent told her. However, Adam willingly transgressed. He knew what the serpent was saying was against God's commandment. He made a fully knowledgeable decision to disobey God. By doing so, he submitted himself and mankind and the entire world to the authority of Satan. Before this, Adam and Eve had dominion over the whole earth. By disobeying God, they forfeited their authority to Satan. By Adam's

transgression, death came to all men. Even the animals would begin to eat each other, and man would no longer have total dominion over the animals. Somehow, even certain plants became poisonous. Death entered man, and death entered the earth.

Foreshadow of Redemption

In Genesis 3:21 it says that right after the fall of man, “Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin and clothed them.” There is something very tender in this statement. God did not abandon man. He was naked. He needed clothing. God, the Almighty everlasting God, made Adam and Eve clothes. To do this, an animal had to be killed. Some have concluded that this shedding of blood was a foreshadow of blood covering sin. Others hotly disagree. Without arguing one side or the other, we can simply say that blood was shed by God to make clothing to cover Adam and Eve.

Also in Genesis 3, we read that God said to the serpent, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

The Seed that would bruise the serpent’s head is referring to Jesus. Even in the judgment of the serpent, God promises a Redeemer. In fact, the Redeemer had been provided even before man fell. In Revelation, Jesus is referred to as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” This means that before the world was founded, the provision for man’s sin had been made.

Communication with God

Many say that at this point, man was cut off from communion with God. Yet we go on to read that right after the fall of man, Adam and God communicated. He also communicated directly with Cain after he killed his brother Abel. Apparently, if someone wanted to communicate with God, they were able. Take Enoch for example. It says that he walked with God, “and was not, because God took him”. Enoch had some sort of relationship with God that pleased Him so much, He just took him right off the earth to be with Him. God spoke so clearly to Noah, that Noah was able to receive detailed instructions on how to build an ark that withstood the worst storm on earth. Few people today get that clear of communication for God. God spoke with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, too. He told them where to go. He allowed men to reason with him. He granted requests. He gave instructions. He made promises. So, it isn’t correct to say that when Adam fell, God refused to speak with mankind.

The Result of Adam’s Disobedience and of Jesus’ Obedience

Even though God still communicated with man, the results of Adam's fall were devastating. Death and sin entered the world and dominion of the earth was handed over to Satan. However, God loved the world in this way: He sent His only Son to redeem (buy back) man and the earth. He purchased man with His blood, and thereby brought righteousness and life back to man, to those who would believe in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is so clearly demonstrated to us in Romans 5:12-19 (underlining and boldfacing is the author's).

*Therefore, just as through **one man sin** entered the world, and **death** through sin, and thus **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 to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many **died**, much more the **grace of God** and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.¹⁶ And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from **one offense resulted in condemnation**, but the **free gift** which came from many offenses **resulted in justification**.¹⁷ For if by the one man's offense **death reigned** through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will **reign in life through the One**, Jesus Christ.)¹⁸ Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.¹⁹ **For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.***

There are some very important facts in the above passage worth noting.

1. Through Adam's transgression, sin entered the world.
2. Through Adam's transgression, death was spread to all men.
3. Death reigned from Adam to Moses. Amazingly, it says that their sin was not imputed to them (counted against them) until the Law.
4. Through Jesus Christ's obedience (his sinless life and willing death), the grace of God (underserved favor of God) abounds to many.
5. Adam's offense resulted in judgment and condemnation.

6. Jesus' obedience resulted in grace and justification.
7. By Adam's offense, death reigned.
8. Through Jesus Christ, those who receive His grace and the gift of righteousness, will reign in this life.
9. By Adam's transgression, many were made sinners.
10. By Christ's obedience, many (those who believe in Him) are made righteous.

LIFE APPLICATIONS

The Love of God as Seen in the Fall of Man

It is completely amazing that as soon as Adam transgressed, God did not kill them both! He told them that the day they ate of that tree, they would surely die, but obviously, God did not intend to kill them. However, death did come to all man through Adam's disobedience. Yet, we see the love of God, who not only let man live, but came to him at his moment of transgression, prevented him from eating of the Tree of Life (which would have allowed Adam to go on living forever in his sinful and dead state), and provided clothing for him. How wonderful are the tender mercies of God. He had also already provided for man, long before He created him, a Redeemer in the Lamb slain from the foundation of the earth.

He did not abandon man. He continued to communicate with His creation. He even imputed righteousness to those who believed in Him, as we see in the life of Abraham (Romans 4). He delivered His people from their enemies. He rescued those who believed in Him from the mouths of lions, from a fiery furnace, from the plots of evil men. He did miracle after miracle to show His love for man.

Many responded to this love and sought to please Him. However, many more rejected His kindness and rejected God. Even after a whole nation had completely turned against Him, He still brought them back from their captivity. When the fullness of time had come, He sent His Son to permanently provide life for those who believe in Him and receive Him as their Lord. Even though man has a history of disobeying God, He still loves us, His unique creation whom He formed in His very image.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION OR REVIEW

1. Describe in your own words, what is meant by "the fall of man".

2. What did God mean when He told Adam and Eve that they would die if they ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil?

3. Why is it not true to say that when Adam sinned man was no longer able to communicate with God?

4. Contrast what Adam's disobedience accomplished with what Jesus' obedience brought about.

5. What comparisons and/or contrasts do you see in the temptation of Adam and the temptation of Jesus? (Genesis 3 and Matthew 4:1-11)

6. What can we learn about God's love for us in studying the fall of man?