

THE FALL OF MAN (PART 1)

INTRODUCTION

- Genesis 3 is one of the most important chapters in the Bible as it explains the reason for the way things are in this broken world
- Genesis 3 is the record of how Adam’s sin plunged the whole human race into a helplessly fallen state of enslavement to evil
- It is necessary to understand this since sin and evil are part of the very air we breathe...we cannot even imagine an existence where they are not present
- Each day provides us evidence that we live in a world of disorder, chaos, conflict, struggle, pain, discord, deterioration, tragedy, and death
- The once-perfect world created by God was subjected to futility and it groans and longs for the day when it will be set free from such corruption (Rom 8:18-22)
- Because of sin, no part of creation exists as God originally made it...it has been spoiled and cursed, rendered unable to fulfill the purpose for which God originally designed it

- Genesis 3 marks the turning point in human history since everything prior to it had been described as “very good” (Gen 1:31)
- Everything after it is affected by the fall of mankind into sin
- A short survey of Genesis reveals this to be true:
 - Genesis 4 – the first murder, the first mention of polygamy
 - Genesis 5 – the repetition of the phrase “and he died”
 - Genesis 6 – “the wickedness of man was great in the earth and every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”
 - Genesis 19 – the first occurrence of homosexuality (vv. 1-5), incest (vv. 30-38)
 - Genesis 34 – the first mention of rape (vv. 1-2)

- The only correct worldview is one that incorporates Genesis 3 into its understanding of how we got from the original paradise of unimaginable perfection to where we are today
- “Evolution offers no explanation for the human dilemma, much less any solution to it. Why is human existence fraught with so many more and spiritual problems? Evolution will never be able to answer that question. In fact, pure naturalistic evolution cannot account for anything that is moral or spiritual.”¹

- Despite this, many so-called “evangelicals” deny that Genesis 3 is the record of mankind’s fall into sin
- It is no surprise that those who deny a historical Adam would also deny a historical Fall in Genesis 3
- They argue that the doctrine of the Fall of man is something that has been forced upon the text
- “It has...been pointed out that because Genesis 3 contains none of the language associated with disobedience, such as *sin*, *evil*, *rebellion*, *transgression*, and *guilt*, it therefore cannot be a passage that teaches the doctrine of the Fall.”²

- “Part of the problem has to do with what we mean by calling the Fall “historical.” For some this means a punctiliar event perpetrated by an original couple that automatically changed human nature, such that every

¹ John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning*, 195.

² https://answersingenesis.org/bible-questions/does-genesis-3-teach-fall-of-man/?utm_source=facebook-aig&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=facebook-aig

person born after comes into the world with a sin nature (this is sometimes thought of as a genetic inheritance). But this interpretation of the Fall (a version of “original sin” as formulated by Augustine) is not the only plausible way to read the Garden story.”³

- “This might mean that the narrative of disobedience in Genesis 3 is not simply about a single event in the past (though that is not thereby excluded), but describes what is typical in the process of temptation and sin in human experience.”⁴
- “This entire conversation is a profound representation of the inner dialogue of conscience...The entire conversation realistically depicts the way temptation works, either as an intra-human, psychological process or as an inter-human, communal process. And this could be applicable either to each person throughout history wrestling with the demands of conscience or to an “original” fall among early *Homo sapiens*.”⁵

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

Not from God

- God Himself did not sin, nor is He to be blamed for sin...God is not the source of sin!

Job 34:10 ~ Therefore, listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do wickedness, And from the Almighty to do wrong.

Habakkuk 1:13 ~ Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You cannot look on wickedness with favor

James 1:13 ~ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

- But what about those verses that seem to indicate that God did, indeed, cause evil events to come about and evil deeds to be done?

Exodus 4:21; 7:3 ~ I will harden Pharaoh’s heart

1 Samuel 16:14 ~ Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him.

2 Samuel 12:15, 18 ~ So Nathan went to his house. Then the Lord struck the child that Uriah’s widow bore to David, so that he was very sick...Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died...

2 Samuel 24:1 ~ Now again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and it incited David against them to say, “Go, number Israel and Judah.” (see 1 Chron 1:1)

Isaiah 45:7 ~ The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.

Lamentations 3:38 ~ Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth?

Amos 3:6 ~ If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?

Acts 2:23 ~ this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death

³ <https://biologos.org/articles/series/evolution-and-biblical-faith-reflections-by-theologian-j-richard-middleton/evolution-and-the-historical-fall-what-does-genesis-3-tell-us-about-the-origin-of-evil>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

- Considering the weight of this Scriptural testimony, we must conclude that God actually ordains (not simply permits) evil in such a way that He is not morally responsible for it
- “God does bring about sinful human actions. To deny this, or to charge God with wickedness on account of it, is not open to a Bible-believing Christian. Somehow, we must confess both that God has a role in bringing evil about, and that in doing so he is holy and blameless.”⁶
- How is it that God is not the culpable cause of sin, even though He ordains that it occur?
- The answer that Scripture seems to give can be boiled down to two propositions.
 1. First, though God is the *ultimate* cause of all things – even evil – He is never the *proximate*, or *efficient*, cause of evil
 2. Second, Scripture regards only the efficient cause of evil as the chargeable or blameworthy party
- The solution to the problem of evil is called Divine Compatibilism: God predetermines wicked events in such a way that He is not directly responsible for the wicked free acts of men. His determination of wicked events is compatible both with human freedom and responsibility.
- Compatibilism states that when people perform free acts (i.e. not constrained or compelled in their actions), they do that which God wants them to do
- Explanation:
 1. God sovereignly predetermines all events – Eph 1:11
 2. God uses all things to fulfill His purposes and even uses evil for His glory and our good – Gen 50:20; Rom 8:28
 3. God predetermines sin but in such a way that man is the responsible party – Acts 2:23; 4:27-28
 4. In this process, God never does evil nor tempts anyone to do evil – James 1:13
 5. Man chooses freely in that he does what he wants to do and is therefore blameworthy
 - Scripture never blames God for evil or shows God enjoying evil – Gen 50:20
 - But God is in control of the sin of individuals in some mysterious way – cf. 2 Sam 24:1 with 2 Sam 24:10
 - God, in fact, uses Satan for His ultimate purposes – 1 Chron 21:1; 1 Kings 22:23; story of Job
 - In inciting sin, God punished David/Israel for its iniquities – 2 Sam 24:12-17
- This shows that God can be the ultimate cause of all things (even evil) while never being the proximate or efficient cause of it (i.e. the chargeable or blameworthy party)

The Existence of the Serpent/Satan

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?’”

- The serpent appears for the first time before the Fall of man
- While the Bible is not clear as to whether or not the serpent stood up or walked before the curse, it appears likely that, like other reptiles, it probably did walk on four legs (this would seem to be the best explanation of Genesis 3:14)
- From the rest of Scripture, we learn that this serpent was really Satan masquerading (or indwelling) an animal

2 Corinthians 11:3 ~ But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Revelation 12:9 ~ And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

⁶John Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 175.

- As an angel, Satan was part of God’s original creation that was designated “very good” (Gen 1:31)
- Although Genesis does not record the creation of angels, it is likely that they were created very early on day one of creation

Job 38:4-7 ~ Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding, 5 Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it? 6 On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, 7 When the morning stars sang together And all the sons of God shouted for joy?

- Although Genesis does not tell us when Satan’s rebellion occurred, it had to have taken place sometime between Genesis 1:31 (end of day 6) and Genesis 3:1
- How much time elapsed between the end of creation and Satan’s rebellion? → we don’t know for sure but likely only a few days
 - It didn’t occur within the six days of creation since everything was pronounced “very good” at the end of that day
 - It probably didn’t happen on the seventh day since it seems unlikely that God would have “blessed...and sanctified” (Gen 2:3) a day in which Satan rebelled
 - God commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28) and, if they had waited very long, they would have been sinning against God by not being fruitful
 - We also know that, since they were created with perfect bodies, it would not have taken long for Eve to conceive
 - We also know that Eve conceived Cain after being kicked out of the Garden (Gen 4:1)
 - So, the time between the creation and Satan’s rebellion must have been short
- “Archbishop Usher, the great 17th century Bible scholar, placed Satan’s fall on the tenth day of the first year, which is the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement seems to reflect back to the first sacrifice when God made coverings for Adam and Eve from the coats of animal skins (Genesis 3:21). It may be that the generations to come...followed this pattern of sacrificing for sins on the Day of Atonement.”⁷
- Some of Satan’s characteristics:
 - He is a created being – he is not God’s equal, nor is he omniscient, omnipotent, or infinite in any way

Psalm 33:6 ~ By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host

Psalm 148:2, 5 ~ Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!...Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created.

Colossians 1:16 ~ For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created by Him and for Him.

- He is a spirit being – Ephesians 2:2 calls him the “spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience”
- He possesses attributes of personhood

1) Intellect

2 Corinthians 11:3 ~ But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity [of devotion] to Christ.

2) Emotion

⁷ Bodie Hodge, “What About Satan and the Origin of Evil?,” in *The New Answers Book 2*, ed. Ken Ham, 272.

Revelation 12:17 ~ And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and went off to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

3) Will

2 Timothy 2:26 ~ and they may come to their senses [and escape] from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

○ He has a number of different names in Scripture

<i>Satan</i> (Job 1:6)	Adversary or opposer
<i>Devil</i> (Matt 4:1)	Slander, falsely accuse
<i>Beelzebub</i> (Luke 11:15)	Chief of the demons
<i>Belial</i> (2 Cor 6:15)	Worthless, wicked
<i>Lucifer</i> (Isaiah 14:12)	The Vulgate translation of “son of the morning”
<i>Evil One</i> (1 John 5:19)	Evil in character
<i>Dragon</i> (Rev 12-13)	Fierce nature
<i>Prince of Demons</i> (Matt 12:24)	Leader of demonic realm
<i>Accuser</i> (Rev 12:10)	Accuses the brethren
<i>Tempter</i> (Matt 4:3)	Tempts people to sin
<i>Ruler of this World</i> (John 12:31)	Leader of current fallen world system
<i>Prince of the Power of Air</i> (Eph 2:2)	Ruler of fallen world
<i>God of this World</i> (2 Cor 4:4)	Deceiver of unbelievers
<i>Deceiver</i> (Rev 12:9)	Deceiver
<i>Adversary</i> (1 Pet 5:8)	Opponent of believers
<i>Father of Lies, Murderer</i> (John 8:44)	Liar
<i>Angel of Light</i> (2 Cor 11:14)	Disguises of Good, but is Evil
<i>Abaddon/Apollyon</i> (Rev 9:11)	Destruction/destroyer

- Although God did not make Satan evil, sin originated with him and is his constant practice

1 John 3:8 ~ The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning...

The Fall of Satan



- Although Satan existed for a short time in a state of innocence (unconfirmed holiness), he was created as a free moral agent with the capacity for choice...and he acted in accordance with his desires
- His choice to rebel against God was the very first sin in the universe
- Jesus spoke of being an eyewitness to Satan's fall and explained that the reason the demons were subject to the disciples was because He had delegated His authority to them

Luke 10:17-20 ~ The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." 18 And He said to them, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. 20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven."

- There is no place in Scripture which describes the nature of Satan's fall with absolute certainty but there are two possible passages that make reference to it

Isaiah 14:12-15 ~ How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! 13 But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north. 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' 15 Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.

- The context of this passage is God's judgment upon the king of Babylon (Is 14:4-11) but verses 12-15 make it clear that the power behind him was Satan
- Thus, this is likely more than just a reference to the king of Babylon...it is also likely a description of Satan's fall
- Some observations about this passage:
 - Satan is called "O star of the morning, son of the dawn" (v. 12) – this is the name "Lucifer"
 - He had "fallen from heaven" because he was "cut down to the earth" – this speaks of him being cast out of heaven for his rebellion
 - His rebellion is described in the five-fold "I will" statements
 - "I will ascend to heaven" (v. 13)
 - "I will raise my throne above the stars of God" (v. 13)
 - "And I will sit on the mount of assembly" (v. 13)
 - "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds" (v. 14)
 - "I will make myself like the Most High" (v. 14)
 - The result of his rebellion was to be "thrust down to Sheol" (v. 15)
- It was Lucifer's pride, his desire to be like God Himself, that led to his fall
- This ultimate form of pride fits the New Testament description of Satan's fall

1 Timothy 3:6 ~ and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

- Satan literally intended to usurp the throne of God

Ezekiel 28:12-18 ~ Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared. 14 You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created Until unrighteousness was found in you. 16 By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned;

Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, That they may see you. 18 By the multitude of your iniquities, In the unrighteousness of your trade You profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, And I have turned you to ashes on the earth In the eyes of all who see you.”

- The context of this passage is God’s judgment upon the King of Tyre but the power behind him was Satan
- Thus, most likely this is a reference to the fall of Satan, which the King of Tyre illustrates
- This is a prophetic lamentation over the “King of Tyre” who is described in language that fits Satan’s fall and not a mere human king

- The terminology in this passage about his pre-fall perfections point beyond a human king to Satan
 - “seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty” (v. 12) – he was the epitome of created perfection, a creature whose beauty and majesty were unsurpassed
 - “you were in Eden, the garden of God” (v. 13)
 - “you were the anointed cherub” (v. 14) – he was once a holy angel, perhaps the highest-ranking angel
 - “you were on the holy mountain of God” (v. 14)
 - “you were blameless in your ways” (v 15)

- There came a time when this “anointed cherub” became unrighteous
 - “until unrighteousness was found in you” (v. 15) – how sin arose in him is unclear, but where it originated is clear in that it was found “in you”
 - “you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned” (v. 16) – the defect was not in how he was made...rather it came from within
 - “your heart was lifted up because of your beauty” (v. 17) – Satan’s pride in his own beauty and abilities overtook him

- As a result, God cast Satan out of heaven
 - “I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God” (v. 16)
 - “I have destroyed you, O covering cherub” (v. 16)
 - “I cast you to the ground” (v. 17)
 - “I have turned you to ashes on the earth” (v. 18)

- In his rebellion, Satan took a third of the angels (demons) with him

Revelation 12:4 ~ And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

- How many angels fell with Satan in his rebellion? → the number is not known but it is vast
- The number of angels around God’s throne is described in Rev 5:11 as “myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands”...in other words, nearly innumerable
- Since one third of the angels fell with Satan and Rev 9:16 says that 200 million demons will be released during the 6th trumpet judgment, there must be at least 400 million holy angels
- But we know the number is higher than those since there will be other demons released from the abyss during the 5th trumpet judgment...and still other demons are free to roam the earth currently

- Although Satan has been kicked out of heaven and cast to earth, he retains a limited access to heaven for now

Job 1:6 ~ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

THE FALL OF MAN

The Restriction

Genesis 2:16-17 ~ The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

- Concerning the restriction of eating from the tree, we are simply told that God prohibited it
- Although in itself it may not have been wrong, what makes it sin is the fact that God has prohibited it
- Whether it seems good to us, appears to do no damage, or may even feel good, is irrelevant...God’s Word is sufficient to establish something as right or wrong

The Temptation



Genesis 3:1-5 ~ 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 And 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, lest you die.’” 4 And the serpent said to the woman, “You surely shall 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.”

- Notably, Satan approached Eve first, showing his craftiness going after the most vulnerable
- Only Adam was given the prohibition in Genesis 2:16-17...Eve only learned it second hand from Adam, not from God
- Satan went around Adam (Eve’s spiritual leader) because he knew she would be more prone to deception because she was the “weaker vessel” (1 Pet 3:7)
- His aim was to deceive her while she was unprotected by Adam (2 Cor 11:3)
- Even though Eve was sinless, she was temptable and seducible
- If Eve was surprised to hear a serpent speak, Moses does not indicate it
- She was likely still learning and discovering all the wonders of creation and the Garden of Eden
- Also, she had never known fear or encountered danger of any kind so she had no reason to be suspicious
- Satan undermines God’s Word in a number of ways
 1. **He Casts Doubt About It** (v. 1 ~ Indeed has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’)
 - This is the first question in the Bible; before this there were only answers
 - His question had an overtone of criticism and doubt, implying that God is unfair

- His question was laced with a tone of ridicule: “You have to be kidding...God didn’t really say you can’t eat from any tree in the garden, did he?”
- But the original prohibition emphasized the generosity of God in that they were free to eat from any tree
- The serpent reversed this emphasis by asking whether God had said the man and woman were not to eat from any tree in garden
- In framing the question that way, he exaggerated the negative prohibition of God, not the positive generosity of God, implying that God was fencing them in with His restrictions
- “Satan’s strategy was to portray God as narrow, strict, uncharitable, and too restrictive – as if He wanted to limit human freedom and deprive Adam and Eve of enjoyment and pleasure. He was implying that evil and untruthfulness were par of God’s character. He was hinting to Eve that God might be cruel and uncaring. Moreover, the reptile Satan slyly insinuates that *he* is more devoted to Eve’s well-being than God is.”⁸
- Satan appeared as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14), feigning the ability to help her rightly understand God

2. **He Distorts It** (vv. 2-3 ~ ...God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.’)

- Comparing Eve’s response with God’s original command reveals some important differences
 - She omitted the word “all/any”...possibly giving evidence that she disparaged the privileges God did give them
 - She did state God’s prohibition...but in doing so, she fails to defend His goodness
 - She added to God’s original command with the phrase “or touch it”
- “Her heart had already set its course. She was not defending God and His goodness. She was not affirming His glorious majesty and holy perfection. She ignored the fact that God’s desire was only for her good. She did not take offense at the serpent’s insult against God’s character. And so she played right into his hands. She was already starting to believe Satan rather than God. The fall was inevitable from the instant Eve began to doubt.”⁹

3. **He Denies It** (v. 4-5 ~ “You surely will not die! 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.”)

- His first statement (“you surely will not die!”) is a flat-out denial of God’s Word...and a partial truth... although she would not experience physical death immediately, she would experience spiritual death
- His second statement (“God knows that in the day you eat from it...you will be like God, knowing good and evil”) is only a half-truth...she would know good and evil like God...but not in the way Satan implied...she would know evil inside herself rather than outside herself like God...she would know it experientially
- “The ultimate intent of Satan’s lie was to humanize God and deify man, to say that God can become like man and man can become like God. That lie still exists in many cults today.”¹⁰
- Satan continued to question the character of God, boldly stating that she could sin and get away with it
- He was suggesting to Eve that the only reason God would be so restrictive was because there was a flaw in His character
- His lie was that God must be defective in that He wanted to keep them from being all they could be, lest they rival His greatness
- Satan implied that God gave the original command because He was concerned that they would become a threat to Him...that He wanted to maintain His deity and not share it with anyone

⁸ MacArthur, *Battle for the Beginning*, 205.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 206.

¹⁰ John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 690.

- This entire encounter reveals the very character of Satan...he is a liar
- He deceives Eve by presenting himself as having her best interests at heart and by insinuating that she should trust him, not God

John 8:44 ~ You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

- “Satan has woven together an immense assault to pummel Eve with the thought that God’s Word is untrue and unreliable and that, therefore, she ought to follow the desires of her own heart rather than the dictates of God’s Word.”¹¹

4. He Encourages Disobedience to It

- Eve had a choice to make...would she believe God or the devil?
- Who was telling the truth? God or Satan?
- The devastating nature of this temptation is that Eve believed that she now had a choice
- God’s Word was no longer authoritative and no longer binding because there were now other options and alternatives
- At the very beginning of the experience in the Garden, we see the essence of sin: disobedience to the revealed will of God
- This is always where sin starts

¹¹ Ibid., 691.