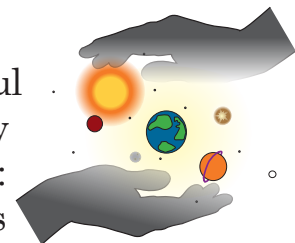


Part 1: The Creation

Where Do We Come From?

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*¹ Such powerful words are the first ones recorded in the Bible. This is the first of many big questions the Bible answers: where do we come from? The answer is: we come from God.² The Bible begins with a book called *Genesis*. This is a Hebrew word that means *Beginnings*. Genesis explains the beginnings of our universe, humanity, and the great history of our common heritage. While it may be difficult to completely understand, we can know that God has always been and that He created life out of nothing.³



The Creation

On the first day, God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. He separated the light from darkness. On the second day, God separated the waters and put space in between them. This is how the sea and sky were formed.⁴

On the third day, God created land. He adorned it with all nature like trees, grass, mountains and valleys. On the fourth day God created the sun, moon, and the stars.⁵ On the fifth day, God created all the animals that swim in the seas and fly in the sky. On the sixth day, God created all the animals that walk on land. He crafted each one just the way He wanted it.⁶

God’s Greatest Creation



God then said, “Let Us make man in Our Image.” So God took dust from the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. Man became a living being.⁷ This is what makes man so special in the world. There is no other thing in God’s creation that bears His image. Does this mean we all look like God with our skin and hair? No, it means we carry within us a spirit, an immortal part of our being that is made in the image of God. Our physical bodies will eventually waste away, but our spirit will remain.

¹ Genesis 1:1; See *Christian Basics: A Theistic Worldview*

² See *Christian Basics: God*

³ Psalm 90:2

⁴ Genesis 1:6-8

⁵ Genesis 1:14-19

⁶ Genesis 1:24-26

⁷ Genesis 1:27

⁸ Romans 8:15-16

Many people in this world will tell you that you are no better than any brute animal; that you are just a collection of flesh and bone that evolved from lesser animals. This mentality strips humanity of the holy place that we have in God's creation. Bearing God's image is an honor. You are special, unique, and crafted by the Almighty God. For this reason, He loves and cares about you. This special love is unique to all creation.⁸ An inspired Bible writer named David praised God by saying:

*I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well.*⁹⁻¹⁰

After the sixth day, Creation was complete. On the seventh day, God rested. Genesis records God stating that His creation as good six times within the first chapter! In fact, when He has finished, He called it very good.¹¹ Man and God lived in a state of perfect fellowship and harmony. There was yet to be anything bad, for God is good and only created good things.



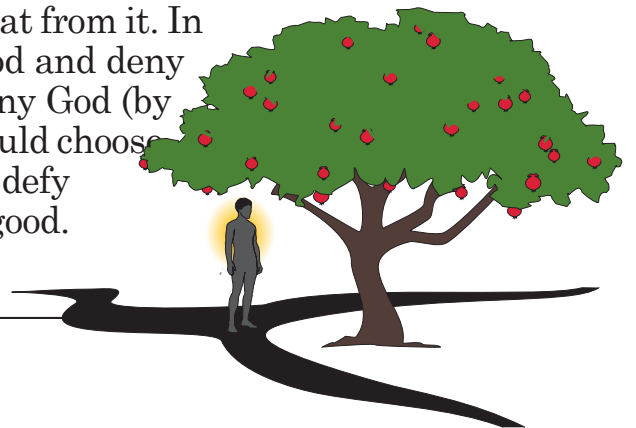
A Work to Do

The man formed from dust was named Adam.¹² In the Biblical language of Hebrew, Adam means *man* or *humanity*. Adam was a real person. He also serves as a type or example of all mankind. God put Adam in a beautiful garden called Eden. He was given a job to do. There were all sorts of trees and plants to care for. While some may look at work negatively, we should remember that work was given to Adam from God. God only creates good things. When done with a proper attitude, work can provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Gifts of Life and Choice

Within the garden were two special trees given as a blessing from God: the tree of Life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.¹³ The tree of Life indicated God was willing to share the gift of eternal life with Adam. Genesis shows that Adam could enjoy a perfect harmony with God continually.

God did not want His creation to serve Him only out of a sense of duty, but out of devotion. So, He gave Adam another gift: *choice*. This was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. With this tree came a command: do not eat from it. In this way, God offered Adam the choice to obey God and deny himself. The other choice was to obey Self and deny God (by eating from this special tree). In essence, Adam could choose to submit to God's definition of good, or he could defy God's command and choose what he thought was good.



⁹ Psalm 139:14

¹⁰ See *Christian Basics: Why Should We Worship God?*

¹¹ Genesis 1:27-31

¹² Genesis 2:19

¹³ Genesis 2:8-15

This is how God offered Adam (and all of us) a relationship of love and harmony: through free-will.¹⁴ To not allow the choice would deny God and man the opportunity to enjoy each other's fellowship and love completely. To allow the choice (and for man to choose to obey God) would complete the perfect relationship that God desired.¹⁵

With choices come consequences. If Adam chose to obey God, he would live in this state of harmony and life. If Adam chose to obey Self, he would die.¹⁶ This is the first mention of death in the Bible. It indicates that there was not a problem with death yet. The consequence of death would be twofold: physical death (separation of body and spirit) and spiritual death (separation of spirit from God).

The First Family

Adam grew lonely as he worked. All the animals had mates; they produced offspring; yet, Adam was alone. God took notice of this, and put Adam into a deep sleep. He took from his side a rib and fashioned a helper for the man. When the man awoke, he found this helper near him—a woman! The woman's name was Eve. Her name means *life* or *living*.¹⁷ Like Adam, she was a real person and also a figure or example of humanity.



Eve was created to be Adam's perfect helper.¹⁸ Genesis says that she was *comparable*, meaning she was his perfect counterpart. Eve was not created inferior. She was everything that Adam needed. God brought Adam and Eve together in marriage as husband and wife to become the first family. He gave them a principle of human nature: to become one flesh. This means that a husband and wife share a unique physical, emotional, and spiritual relationship that they are to have only together. God said:

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*¹⁹

God had given another wonderful gift to His creation: the family. Bible students can observe the blessings of the first family and apply them to all families today. God's principles of the family were given for the benefit of all mankind. What universal principles can we learn from the first family?

- A family begins with one man and one woman.
- Woman was created as a helper, not a slave.
- Man is the head of the family.
- Marriage creates a new family.

¹⁴ See *Christian Basics: Free Will: God's Gift of Choice*

¹⁵ Romans 6:17-18

¹⁶ Genesis 2:17

¹⁷ Genesis 3:20

¹⁸ Genesis 2:18-25

¹⁹ Genesis 2:24

An Enemy Comes

Adam taught Eve about God's gift of choice. Now both were given the opportunity to choose to obey God or to serve Self. Adam and Eve enjoyed a relationship with God that was based on choice and motivated by love. Away in the spirit realm, God had created heavenly beings to minister and help Him. One of these spirits soon chose to obey Self over God. The consequence of this choice corrupted his heart. He deceived many angels into serving him instead of God. There was a great war in the spirit realm. The corrupted one and his followers were cast out of heaven. He soon found his way to the Garden of Eden.



Temptation + Sin

This enemy's name was Satan. In the Biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek, Satan means *adversary* and *lying in wait*. Satan is also called the devil which means *false accuser*. The Bible reveals the devil's nature and motivation.¹ He chose to be an adversary who lies in wait to tempt humans into denying God and obeying Self. Satan's temptations take God's gift of choice and corrupts it. Temptation makes denying God appear more attractive or satisfying than obeying Him.²

After being banished from Heaven, the devil decided to lie in wait and spoil the perfect fellowship between man and God. One day, Adam and Eve were near the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil. The devil took the form of a snake and approached Eve. He said, "Did God really tell you that you should not eat from the fruit of this tree?" Innocent Eve told the snake about God's command for them not to eat from the tree or they would die. The devil lied by saying she would not die but would be like God.³ In essence, Satan falsely accused God of being selfish by not allowing Eve to enjoy the "knowledge of good and evil."

Eve took some fruit and ate it.⁴ (She wasn't forced to take it. By her own free-will she ate.) Then, she gave some to Adam, and he ate too. With this choice, Adam and Eve decided that they could determine what was "good" by rejecting what God had commanded. Their their actions denied God and obeyed Self.



The Bible provides a special word for when someone disobeys God. It is called *sin*. Sin is any action or attitude that disobeys God's authority or law.⁵ When someone sins, they seek to please Self apart from God while denying God's good ways. This is a rebellion against the love and harmony God designed for man.

¹ See *Christian Basics: Satan: Mankind's Great Enemy*

³ Genesis 3:1-5

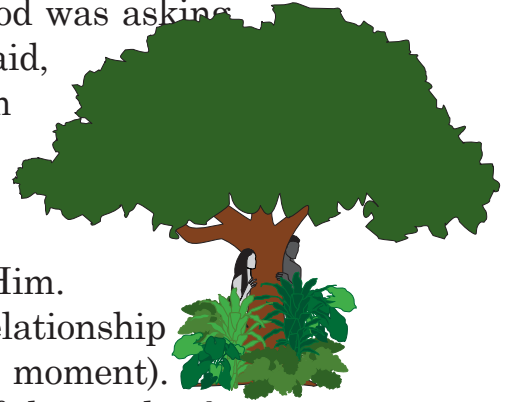
⁴ Genesis 3:6

² James 1:13-15

Perfect Fellowship Lost

Adam and Eve did gain knowledge of good and evil when they ate from the tree. Instantly, they realized that what they had done was wrong and sinful. They realized that they were naked and became ashamed. They tried to cover their nakedness by sewing fig leaves over themselves.⁶ This was a silly idea because the leaves could not cover their nakedness properly. It also represented a bigger problem. No matter how they may try to cover their sin, they could not solve the problem on their own.

God found Adam and Eve hiding in the garden. He asked, “Where are you?”⁷ An all-seeing, all-knowing God had no problem locating them. God was asking Adam to give an account of his actions. In essence, God said, “Where are you in your relationship with Me?” Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the snake. No one accepted responsibility even though they had chosen to sin.



God pronounced judgment on those who had disobeyed Him. The devil would continue to attempt to ruin mankind’s relationship with God, yet would ultimately fail (more on that in a moment). Among other punishments, God cast Adam and Eve out of the garden.⁸ Their perfect relationship with God was broken by sin.

The Choice of Sin Brought Consequences

Eve’s choice would have consequences for all time. Because of sin, Adam and Eve would grow old and die. This is the first death warned about: physical death (separation of body from spirit). We all face the problem of death because of sin.⁹ As a result of sin, all evil became possible: such as pain, suffering, and disease. Sin also leads to a greater destruction: *spiritual death* (the separation of the spirit from God). This is an eternal damnation in Hell.¹⁰ If we do not find a way to remove sin from our spiritual body, we are doomed to an eternity of pain and suffering away from God. Sin is mankind’s greatest problem.

One might wonder how a God of love could banish the ones whom He had created to love. We must realize that as much as God loves us, He is also holy.¹¹ To be holy means *to be sacred or set apart*. God is set apart from sin. He desires us to live eternally in Heaven, an eternal reward of life without sin and its consequences: pain, suffering, and death. Would God really love us if He turned a blind eye to sin and allowed Heaven and all the saved to be once again corrupted by sin? God’s love for one will not jeopardize His love and reward for others.

⁵ See *Christian Basics: Sin & Spiritual Death*

⁶ Genesis 3:7

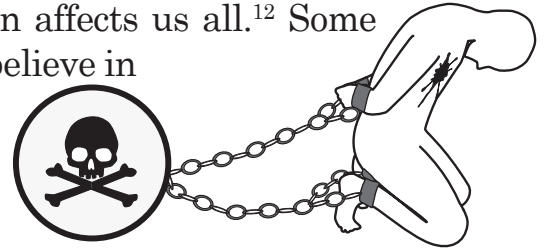
⁷ Genesis 3:9

⁸ Genesis 3:21-24

⁹ Romans 6:23

¹⁰ Matthew 25:41

The sad truth is that there is no way to remove sin by ourselves. Sin is like a disease. Once we disobey God, it is like being infected. There is no cure once the “infection” sets in. Everyone of age and understanding has known the right thing to do, and one way or another, we chose the wrong thing. For this reason, sin affects us all.¹² Some may think that sin is only for Christians or people who believe in God. The truth is that all people have sinned, regardless of our culture or beliefs. Humanity stands in need of relief from this great problem.¹³



But God Had a Plan

Before the creation of the world, God had a plan.¹⁴ His love for mankind motivated such a plan. Knowing that man would fall if given a choice, God took steps to secure fellowship with His image bearers again. Even though He is Holy and cannot fellowship sin, God planned for a sacrifice that would take away the sins of all who have faith. Through the willing sacrifice of someone innocent, the guilty could be redeemed. This plan was for Jesus Christ to come to this world. He alone would live a life without sin, and He alone would be the perfect sacrifice to take our sins away.

Genesis reveals God’s plan in a prophecy. A prophecy is a prediction or foretelling about something or someone in the future. While dispensing judgment to the devil, God declared Satan would be the enemy of mankind. He would continue to attempt to ruin mankind’s relationship with God, yet would ultimately fail.



*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will **crush your head**, and you will **strike his heel**.*¹⁵

Jesus Christ would eventually come. The devil would try to defeat Him by crucifying Jesus on a cross. Although this act would appear to work, it turned out to only *strike His heel*. Jesus’ death and resurrection would redeem man from sin, and in this figurative way, Jesus would *crush the head* of the devil.

We have had our first glimpse of the need for Jesus as a sacrifice for sin. Now, we can begin to see how great God’s love for mankind is! Even as man rebelled, denying God and obeying Self, God’s love would motivate a continual reaching out to restore man to his place as God’s children and image bearers.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16

¹¹ 1 John 1:5

¹² Romans 3:23

¹³ See *Christian Basics: Who Has Sinned?*

¹⁴ 1 Peter 1:20

¹⁵ Genesis 3:15 (Emphasis Added)