

4. Why There is Evil in the World – Part 2

Previously...

We saw that before Yahweh created the world, He created spirit beings. Even though He created them to be His servants, they had free will. They could make choices and could decide if they would be obedient or rebellious towards Yahweh.

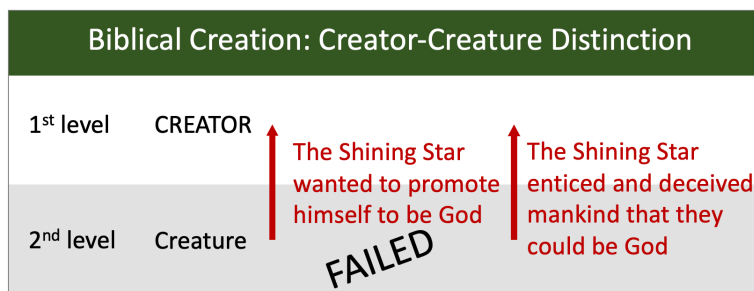


One spirit being, Shining Star, had great power, beauty and intelligence, but he was not satisfied. He wanted to be God. So He turned against Yahweh and led a rebellion in heaven. Yahweh held Shining Star accountable for his choice and banished him from his role among the angels and Yahweh will one day permanently cast him away into the lake of fire.

Shining Star, now known as Satan or the devil, hates God and also mankind who is made in the image of God. He approached Eve with evil intention and lies, telling her she could become like God.



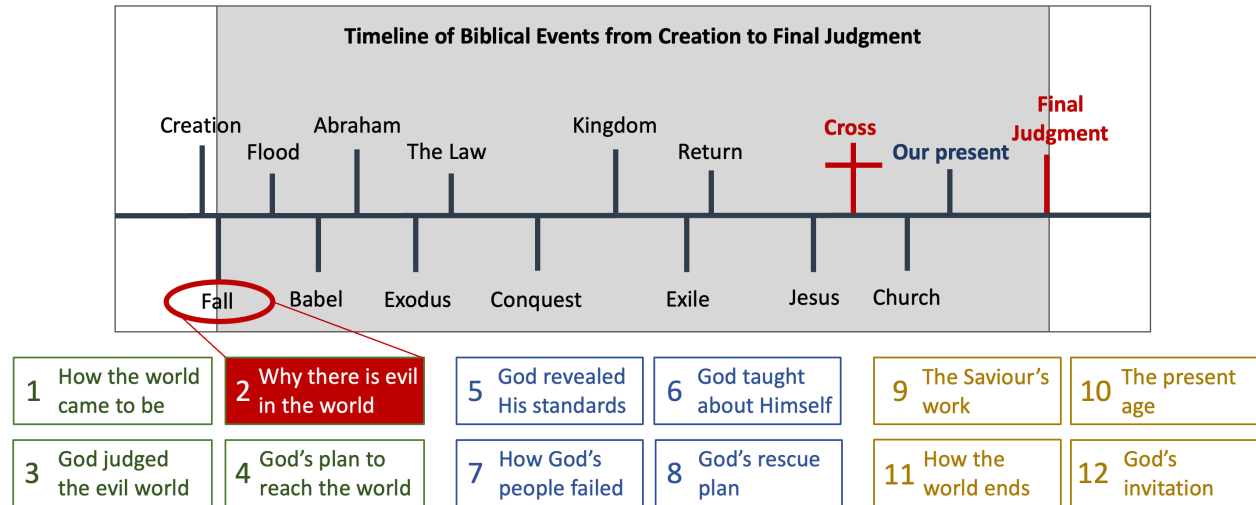
And unfortunately, instead of believing Yahweh, mankind chose to trust in Satan's words.



Yahweh had created mankind and gave them responsible choice. They could choose to trust Him or reject Him and His word. And the choices were real because there were real consequences.

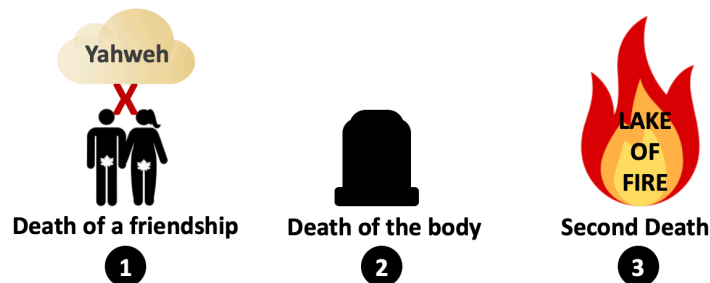
God had told Adam and Eve that if they ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would die. Adam and Eve knew this. Yet they chose to eat the fruit.

We'll continue to see what happened to the perfect world God had created.



THE RESULT OF SIN IS DEATH

The moment Adam and Eve made the decision to rebel against the one warning that God gave them, everything changed. And just as Yahweh had said, their choice to eat the fruit resulted in death. The Bible talks about death in a few different ways.





1. Death of their friendship with Yahweh

When God created Adam and Eve, He created them as complete people. They both had human bodies, human souls and human spirits. Their souls were the immaterial side of who they are. And with their human spirits, they could have a relationship with God.

COMPLETE PERSON



God created Adam and Eve totally innocent. Even though they were naked when they were created, their minds were pure and so they felt no shame at being naked.

Genesis 2:25

Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

Being innocent, they had no problem having a good relationship with Yahweh. But they lost their purity and innocence after they ate the fruit.

Genesis 3:7–10

⁷ At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

⁸ When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

¹⁰ He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”



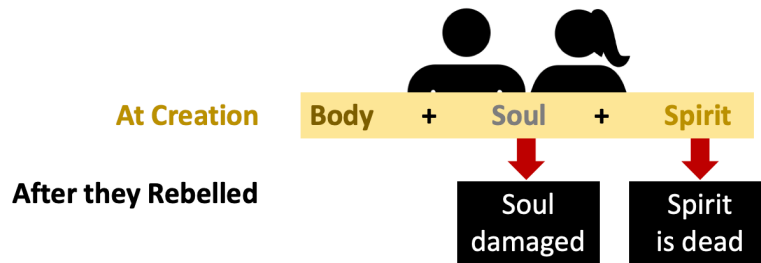
Their minds were no longer pure and innocent. So Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves from each other and from God.

Before they sinned, they had nothing to be ashamed of. But now, there was much to be ashamed of:

- They had mistrusted Yahweh’s loving warning about the danger of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- They had decided Yahweh could not be trusted.
- They had taken and eaten from the tree.

Once they ate the fruit, they knew immediately that something was wrong. Guilt and shame filled their minds and hearts. Something in them had changed. They were no longer the innocent, complete people that God had created them to be.

- They were now spiritually dead: their human spirits died. They could no longer have a relationship with God.
- And their souls were no longer innocent. Their souls were now damaged.
- (We will see what happened with their physical human bodies later.)



So they hid from their Creator-God. They were now afraid of Him. They did not want Him to see their nakedness. They were too ashamed to have a relationship with Him.

Friends don't hide from each other. But Adam and Eve hid because they had broken trust with God. They had chosen to trust Satan (a created being) over God (the Creator).

Yahweh is **infinitely** good, righteous and true, and could not lie to them. But Satan is not infinitely good; he is **finite** and could choose to be evil. Yet, Adam and Eve had given equal weight to God's and Satan's words. They had rejected the Creator-creature distinction.

Biblical Creation: Creator-Creature Distinction		
1 st level	CREATOR	Yahweh's Words
2 nd level	Creature	Satan's words

NOT THE SAME!
But Adam and Eve gave equal weight to both

They had chosen to treat God as the liar. As a result, their friendship with God was broken.

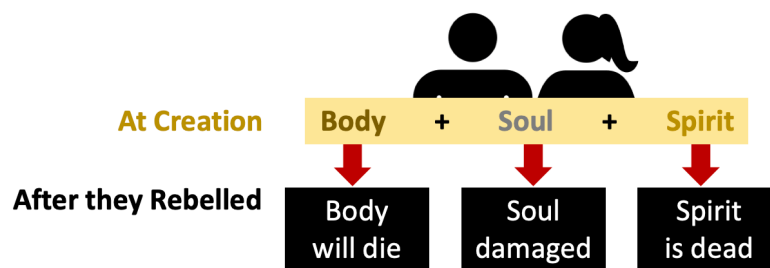


2. Death of their physical bodies

God had planned for Adam and Eve to live forever, but now, their bodies would die. This was what Yahweh told Adam.

Genesis 3:19

By the sweat of your brow
will you have food to eat
until you return to the ground
from which you were made.
For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return.”



Some people wonder why Adam and Eve didn't die immediately. A plucked flower does not look dead immediately, but you know it is dead because it has no access to the life-giving root of the plant.

Similarly, Adam and Eve were no longer connected to God, the One who gives life and the One who sustains life. Soon, their bodies would die, just as the flower would truly look dead after a time.



3. The Second Death

When Yahweh created mankind, He did not create their human souls to ever die. This means that even when the physical body dies, the human soul of the person goes on living forever.

But as the infinitely good God, Yahweh will one day separate good from evil permanently by confining all evil in a place He created, called the lake of fire.

Why is God going to do this? This is because Yahweh is the source of all that is good. When people reject Him, they are rejecting all that is good. And so, as a good God, He will confine rebellious people after they die physically by placing them in the lake of fire permanently. The Bible also calls this the “second death” or eternal death.

People who choose to rebel against the infinitely good God, and reject all relationship with Him, will be confined in the lake of fire forever, along with Satan and the demons.

Revelation 20:14b–15

¹⁴ This lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

The Bible tells us that Yahweh has a book containing the names of people. All who have chosen to rebel against Him will not have their names recorded in this Book of Life. Instead, these rebellious ones will spend eternity in the lake of fire. We will discuss more about the Book of Life in a later lesson.



Even though the lake of fire was originally created for Satan and the demons, the Bible tells us that all enemies of God, whether human or spirit, will be sent there.

What is this lake of fire like? It is a place of great suffering and torment.

Revelation 20:10b

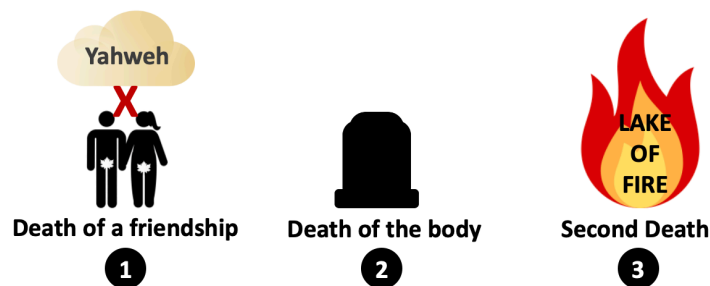
the fiery lake of burning sulfur... There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

It is an eternal prison, separated from the all-good Creator-God of the universe. No one ever leaves the lake of fire. And no one there ever dies.

2 Thessalonians 1:9

They will be punished with eternal destruction, forever separated from the Lord and from his glorious power.

Yahweh was not lying when He warned Adam that eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would lead to death.



Victim mentality: It's not my fault

After making the choice to eat the forbidden fruit, instead of taking responsibility for their decision, the man and the woman started behaving as if they were the victims. They started blaming others for their own poor choice.

Genesis 3:9–13

⁹ Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”

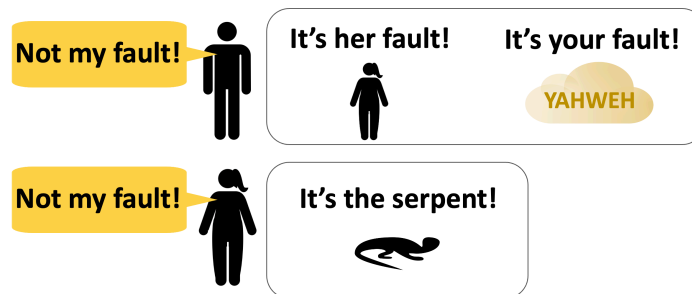
¹⁰ He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.”

¹¹ “Who told you that you were naked?” the LORD God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

¹² The man replied, “It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it.”

¹³ Then the LORD God asked the woman, “What have you done?”

“The serpent deceived me,” she replied. “That’s why I ate it.”



The man blamed God (for giving him the woman who led him to eat the fruit) and he also blamed the woman.

The woman blamed the serpent.

Neither of them admitted that their desire and lust to be like God caused them to reject God’s warning and trust the serpent rather than Yahweh.

As the all-knowing God, Yahweh knew exactly what had happened, but by asking Adam and Eve questions, God was gently guiding them to reflect on what they had done. God was giving them the opportunity to confess. However, instead of appealing to God’s mercy, the man and the woman passed the blame.

This incident in the garden of Eden is referred to as “the Fall”. Adam and Eve “fell” from their place of innocence and became rebels against God.

Yahweh immediately made a promise to rescue mankind

At this point, Yahweh, as Creator-Owner of the whole world, could have decided to destroy mankind entirely. But He did not.

Instead, in His love and mercy, God made a promise that He would do something about this problem of death that mankind now had. As a God who is completely just, He wanted to deal with the issue of their rebellion, but as an equally merciful God, He did not want them to suffer eternal punishment in the lake of fire.

But first, God sentenced or cursed the serpent with punishment. We're not sure how God had created the original serpent to move around before this incident, but God now cursed the serpent to crawl on its belly.

Genesis 3:14

Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, you are cursed
more than all animals, domestic and wild.
You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as you live.



God has every right to pass judgment on His creatures because He is the Creator-Owner of the whole universe. He is the ultimate standard of right and wrong and because He is all-righteous and all-just, His judgments are always right.

Immediately after Yahweh announced the judgment against the serpent, He also gave some initial information about how He would rescue mankind. This was what He said to the serpent.

Genesis 3:15 (NKJV)

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.”



God said that the serpent and the spiritual power behind the serpent, that is, Satan, would be enemies with the woman. And Satan's seed or offspring (meaning anyone, spirit being or person, who serves and obeys Satan) would be enemies with Eve's seed or offspring (people).

Then God mentioned a particular offspring or seed of the woman: “**He** will strike your head.” God used the word “seed”, like the “seed” of a plant or the “seed” of a man.

The “seed of a man” is a common expression meaning a man's offspring, but God specifically said it would be the “seed of the woman” who would bruise Satan's head. It seemed God was hinting that this special man would not have a human father!

Bruising or striking the head means a fatal wound. This offspring of the woman would destroy Satan. This special individual would become known as the promised Saviour. He would destroy Satan as well as solve the problem of sin and evil.

But Satan would also strike this promised Saviour, but only at the heel. This means the Saviour would be injured, but it would not be a fatal injury.

 Satan	Promised Saviour 
God says Satan and his followers (offspring) will be at war with the promised Saviour.	The special offspring of the woman will be at war with Satan. He will destroy Satan.
Satan will receive a head wound, a fatal wound that would destroy him.	This promised Saviour will receive a wound on the heel but will recover.

At this point in Genesis 3, this was all the information God gave but it already tells us that the Creator-God had a plan and goal in mind to restore the world and His relationship with mankind.

He made the promise to send a human rescuer, or Saviour. God would not allow Satan to continuously cause evil. Through the Saviour, God would put an end to Satan one day.

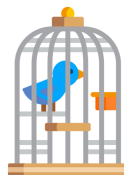
Adam and Eve would pass along this information to their descendants so that future generations would know that Yahweh had a rescue plan.

Why did God put the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden?

Some people wonder why God put the tree in the garden when He didn't want Adam and Eve to eat from it.

It is important to remember that Yahweh created mankind with free will, that is, the ability to make responsible choices. People were not created as programmed robots. Mankind was created to think, feel, understand choices, evaluate choices and make decisions.

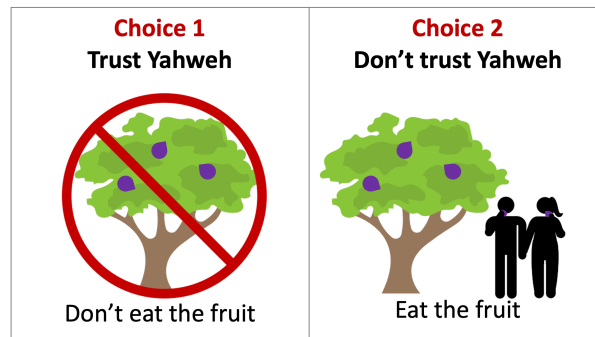
We can think of it this way. If a person owned a bird and kept it in a beautiful large cage, full of delicious food, water and plants and even a lovely swing for it, but never ever opened the door of the cage, the bird would have no choice but to remain there. But if the cage door were opened, the bird would be able to choose if it wanted to remain in the cage or leave.



Likewise, for mankind to be truly free, they had to be given the ability to choose. But choose what? God had created the entire world for mankind to live in, enjoy and look after. But if they were given no alternative, or choice, then they would not have had real “freedom of will”. The tree of knowledge of good and evil represented that choice.

Choice 1: Mankind could trust Yahweh and believe His warning about the tree and therefore, not eat its fruit. In this way, they would have a trusting relationship with Him.

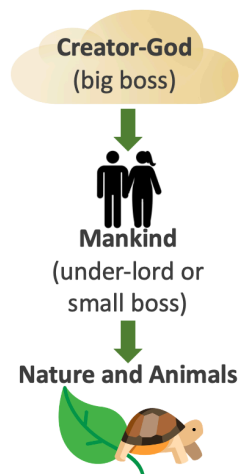
Choice 2: Mankind could mistrust Yahweh and eat the fruit. In this way, they were telling God they didn’t believe Him nor did they want a relationship with Him.



Just this particular tree in the garden allowed mankind to have free will to decide how they would live.

Other people wonder about the type of tree itself. Yahweh had given one instruction to man: do not eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Why? Didn't God want mankind to be wise about what was good and what was evil?

Yes, but God wanted mankind to ask Him about good and evil. Again, the tree represented mankind's ability to make free-will decisions. If mankind wanted a relationship with God, they could go to Him to get all their questions answered. In this way, they would show trust in Him. Mankind was not created to live independent of God. Instead, the all-wise Creator-God would teach them. After all, mankind was God's representative and this meant that mankind had to learn from God how to be a good representative.

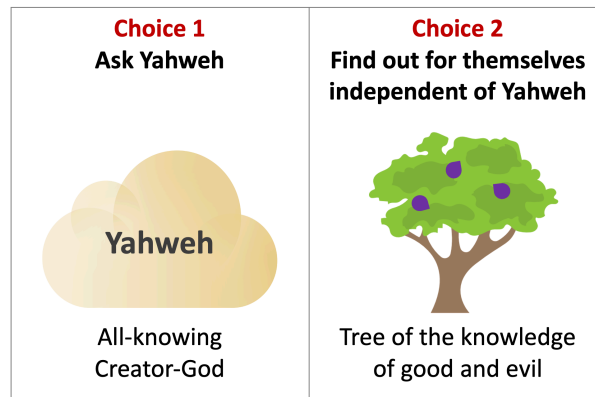


So, regarding how to gain wisdom, mankind had choices:

Choice 1: Mankind could depend on Yahweh and learn from Him about good and evil.

Choice 2: Mankind could find out all about good and evil, independent of God.

This one tree represented the free choice that mankind could make.



But whichever way they chose, they would be responsible for the consequences. That's why it's called responsible choice.

So, Yahweh put the tree in the garden not because He was trying to sabotage Adam and Eve and cause them to fail. And He told them not to eat from it, not because He didn't want them to have knowledge.

The tree was there to honour the genuine free will that He had given them when He created them.

Unfortunately, mankind chose to mistrust Yahweh and not go to Him for knowledge. They chose to trust the deceiving serpent and try to learn about good and evil on their own. Instead of relying on the all-good and all-wise God, they decided they wanted to live independent of Him. They wanted to be their own ultimate authority.

Death however, was not the only consequence of their choice to rebel against God. The whole world was affected by this choice.

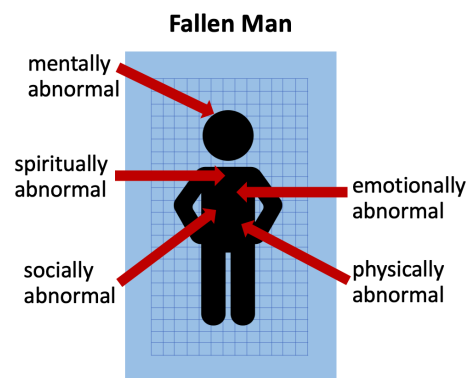
SIN DAMAGE TO THE DIVINE INSTITUTIONS

1. Sin damage to the first divine institution: Responsible Dominion

God had created mankind for responsible dominion. As under-lords, they were supposed to turn to Yahweh for guidance and instruction on how best to manage and care for the world that He had created.



But sin damaged mankind.




Their human spirits were already destroyed because of their sin. But Adam's and Eve's physical bodies were also damaged: instead of living forever, their bodies would now die. And while alive, they would suffer from illnesses, diseases and physical disabilities. The perfect bodies that God created for them would no longer be perfect.

Adam's and Eve's souls were also damaged by sin. From that day on, they stopped being normal emotionally, socially and spiritually. They no longer functioned the way God had created them to. For example, in their social relationships, they would abuse and dominate each other. They would manipulate each other emotionally, or be manipulated by their own emotions.

Sin also caused mankind to be mentally abnormal as well. It affected the way they thought, how they processed information and the flow of their logic and reasoning.

For example, the holy God created mankind in His image. When the Bible describes God as holy, it means He is set apart from all that is evil. His very essence is full of righteousness and there is no hint of evil in Him. That is what it means for God to be holy. So when God created mankind in His own image, mankind also had no evil in them originally.

When people have a relationship with Him, they would learn His standards of right and wrong. And their God-given conscience would guide them on how to live their lives well and make good decisions.

Creator-Creature Distinction						
1 st level CREATOR (Yahweh)	Infinite	All-loving	All-knowing	All-Powerful	Holy	
2 nd level creature (man)	finite	limited in love	incomplete, imperfect knowledge and understanding	limited in ability	conscience must be tied to the Creator-God	

But when people are separated from God, they replace God's righteous standards with their own subjective standards. In fact, each person creates their own standard of what is right and what is wrong. This means that different people may not agree with each other. What is right to one person may be seen as wrong to another.

Who is really right? Once Yahweh and His objective standards are ignored, then the one who is "right" is most likely the one who has the loudest voice or the most money and power.

Mankind's sin damaged nature

While sin damaged people, sin also damaged nature.

This is what Yahweh said to the man.

Genesis 3:17–19

¹⁷ And to the man he said,

"Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree

whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,

the ground is cursed because of you.

All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

¹⁸ It will grow thorns and thistles for you,

though you will eat of its grains.

¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow

will you have food to eat

until you return to the ground

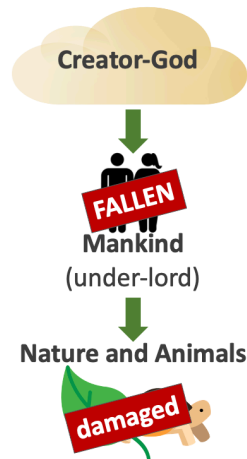
from which you were made.

For you were made from dust,

and to dust you will return."

The earth became cursed because of the Fall. That means the good planet that God had created was damaged because of sin. The work of planting and growing food, which was originally easy, now became hard. Production would cost far more. It was no longer efficient and instead of easy harvests of sweet fruits and vegetables, there would be thorns and thistles after hours of sweat. Responsible dominion would be impossible without great struggle.

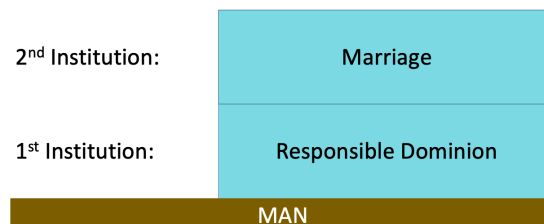
Why? Why should mankind's sin affect nature? It is because God had made mankind the under-lord. People are the guardians of nature and animals. And when people became rebellious towards the Creator-God, what they were responsible for also turned bad.



So Adam and Eve's sin not only damaged their bodies and spirits, it damaged nature and animals. It also damaged their ability to live responsibly and it damaged their ability to take care of the world responsibly.

2. Sin damage to the second divine institution: Marriage

When God created Adam and Eve, their relationship was supposed to be mutually interdependent. Both of them were to care for each other and submit to one another.



But with the Fall, God said that Eve would desire to rule over her husband. But instead, her husband would rule over her. The battle of the sexes began after their rebellion against God.

Genesis 3:16

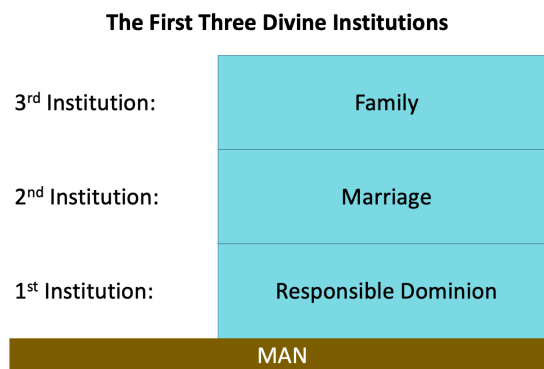
Then he said to the woman,
 “I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy,
 and in pain you will give birth.
 And you will desire to control your husband,
 but he will rule over you.”

Both man and woman would now seek the upper hand in marriage. The man who was to lovingly care for and nurture his wife would now seek to rule her, and the wife would desire to wrestle control from her husband through nagging and resentment.



3. Sin damage to the third divine institution: Family

Like marriage, the institution of family also suffered greatly after the Fall.



In fact, the first family, Adam and Eve’s, was torn apart by envy and murder. Let’s learn of an incident that happened later in their lives.



Let’s turn to our Bibles and read Genesis 4:1–10.

(The leader reads aloud. For reference, the verses are also here.)

Genesis 4:1–10

¹ Now Adam had sexual relations with his wife, Eve, and she became pregnant. When she gave birth to Cain, she said, “With the LORD’s help, I have produced a man!” ² Later she gave birth to his brother and named him Abel.

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. ³ When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the LORD. ⁴ Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The LORD accepted Abel and his gift, ⁵ but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected.

⁶ “Why are you so angry?” the LORD asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? ⁷ You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”

⁸ One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the fields.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

⁹ Afterward the LORD asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is Abel?”

“I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my brother’s guardian?”

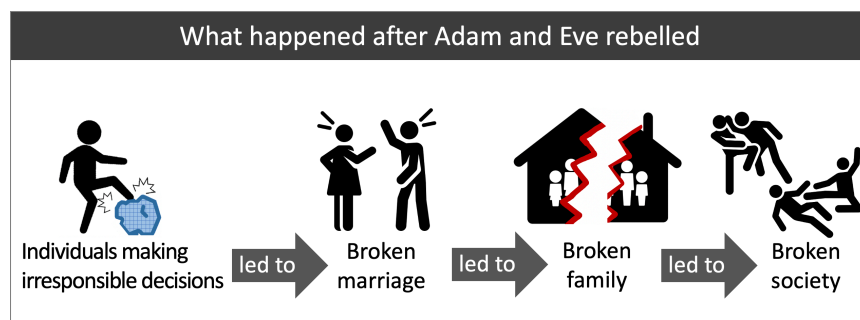
¹⁰ But the LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground!”

It appears God had told Cain and Abel the right thing to do when presenting a gift to Him, but Cain had intentionally not done it. God said that Cain refused to do what was right. However, Abel did what was right.

This made Cain envious and jealous. God described Cain’s sin nature as crouching, like a predator waiting to pounce or a trap just waiting to catch him. God advised Cain to overcome the evil desires in his heart by learning to do what was right. But he refused. Instead of humbly changing his mind and turning to do what is right, Cain murdered Abel.



Because the family is the basic unit of society, the breakdown in their family resulted in a breakdown in society.



AFTER THE FALL OF MAN

After mankind rebelled in the garden, God pronounced His judgment on the serpent, the woman and then the man. He also made the promise to send a Saviour. But He was not done.

God made clothes for Adam and Eve

After that, Yahweh did something curious there in the garden.

Genesis 3:21

And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.



God killed an animal, skinned it and used the skin or hide to clothe Adam and Eve. God was starting to demonstrate how a person's sin had to be paid for by death. The death of the animal resulted in clothes that covered over their nakedness and shame.

In a later part of the Bible, God explains more about why He did that and what it means. For now, it is sufficient to know that what Yahweh did was related to how He would rescue Adam and Eve from their problem of sin and death.

God removed Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden

Next, Yahweh banished Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. God did this not because He hated them, but because He still loved them.

Genesis 3:22–23

²² Then the LORD God said, "Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!" ²³ So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made.

Aside from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, there was another special tree in the garden of Eden: the tree of life. Now that Adam and Eve were no longer perfect physically and spiritually, God didn't want them to eat from that tree and then live forever, trapped in a rebellious, broken body.

So Yahweh prevented them from eating the fruit of the tree of life by separating them from the tree. While God was allowing the consequence of sin, that is physical death, He was also starting to work out His plan to deliver mankind from the second death.

Genesis 3:24

After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cherubim are a type of angel. God gave them the power of the sword to kill, to prevent people from trying to re-enter Eden. God was giving a visible warning to Adam and Eve that they should not try to force their way back into the garden. That time of innocence was over and they could not fix the problem.



As we have seen, the Fall had massive consequences on mankind, nature and on the divine institutions that God had given. The result was a world in chaos. But in the midst of evil in the world, the Bible tells us that there is hope. God provides a solution.

All mankind today are descended from Adam and Eve

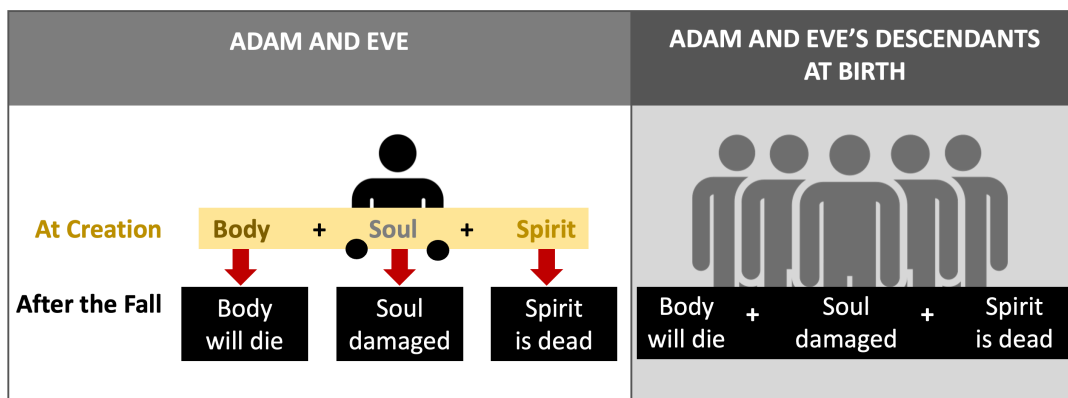
The Bible tells us that everyone in the world today comes from Adam and Eve. God personally created only two humans: one man and one woman, Adam and Eve. And from them has come everyone else in the world.

Genesis 3:20

Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live.

Because of Adam and Eve's choice to distrust God, they were banished from Yahweh's presence and had to live outside the garden of Eden. Likewise, all their children too, were born outside the garden of Eden. They were born separated from God.

Adam and Eve's rebellion had corrupted them. Their rebellion spoilt their innocent nature. From then on, this spoilt nature was in them and when they had children, they passed on the corrupted sin nature to all their descendants as well. Now no one would be born innocent.



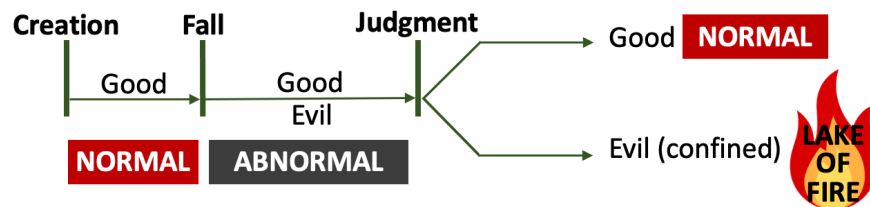
Some people wonder where all the people in the world came from. Since Adam and Eve were the first (and only) human beings that God created personally, their children would have intermarried. God did not forbid inter-family marriage until much later, when there were enough people to make intermarriage unnecessary.

THERE WAS A BEGINNING TO EVIL AND SIN

The Bible says that when Yahweh created the world and all that was in it, everything was perfect. God is all-good and out of His infinitely good character, all that He created was good. That is God's definition of normal.

Yahweh did not create evil. Evil is abnormal. Evil entered creation because of mankind's sin.

We now live in a world that is abnormal. Good and evil exist together. There is evil, pain, suffering, tragedies, accidents and "natural disasters" all mixed in. But this will not go on forever. Yahweh will one day permanently separate good and evil. He will confine all evil in the lake of fire that He created for the evil spirit beings.



Evil had a beginning and evil will have an end when God ends it completely.

Yahweh promised to bring back the normal perfect world again. As we go on, we will learn what God will do to get rid of evil and restore a perfect world.

What happened next?

In the next lesson, we will see what happened with Adam and Eve's broken family and what God did.



Bible reading for review

Genesis 3:1–4:26.