

The Fall of Man

By
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Which of these antonyms apply to the fall of man described in the Scriptures: fact or fiction, genuine or invention, reality or myth, truth or allegory, serious or silly? This author asserts that the fall of man is fact; it is serious; it is reality; it is truth; it is genuine. It is so authentic and eternally significant that the fall required the death of the eternal Son of God on the Cross of Calvary to reconcile man to God following the fall and its consequences (2Cor. 5:17-21). Our omniscient God was not surprised by the fall, and in His mercy and grace planned His intervention (1 Pe. 1:19-20). Unregenerate man is blinded and he has no concept of the preciseness, the inerrancy, the inspiration, the preservation, and the truth of God's words; and so, he foolishly asserts his philosophy and carelessly corrupts God's words by adding to, subtracting from, or changing the account. The fall of man may be appraised by the following categories: (1) The Record of the Fall, (2) The Reason for the Fall, (3) The Repercussions of the Fall, and (4) The False Reflections on the Fall.

The Record of the Fall

The description of the fall of man and of the succeeding judgment, found in chapter 3 of Genesis, is called a "seed plot of the Bible."¹ The account begins in chapter 2 when God educated the man, Adam, concerning His precise instructions (Gen. 2:15-17). The commandments that were given to Adam were taught to Eve, his "help meet," and she was subsequently confronted by Satan (Gen. 3:1-5). Clearly, the subtlety of Satan who changed God's words by carefully adding and subtracting from them can be clearly seen (cf. Gen. 2:17, 3:4, 5) and, also, the failure of the woman is evident, who omitted words (such as 'surely') and added to the simplicity of His words (such as *touch*) (cf. Gen. 2:17, 3:3)². The approach to

Scripture instigated by Satan when he said, “Yea hath God said,” (Gen. 3:1) casting doubt on God’s words, has plagued mankind since the fall. This uncertainty about Scripture has contributed greatly to the folly of man and the foolishness of our enemy, both of whom continuously attempt to destroy the accurate record of revelation by disregarding God’s instructions (Deut. 4:2, Pro. 30:5-6, Jer. 36:23, 2Cor 2:17). The clear implications in the account of this folly are the ‘seeds’ of *revolt* against God, the *ruin* of our race, the *revelation* of the subtlety of Satan, and the need for the *rescue* of man because of his depravity (Jer. 17:9). The theological considerations raised by the fall related to sin, death, and judgment are concentrated in Romans, and the central passage is 5:12-21.³

The Reason for the Fall

Eve was deceived by the master of deception, Satan. That is what the Scripture says, and that is what it means (Gen. 3:13, 2Cor. 11:3, 1Pe. 3:7). It appears Adam presumptuously participated in the sin because he willingly ate of the fruit with his wife (Gen. 3:17, cf. 2Pe. 2:10). This is the great sin of iniquity, selfwill,⁴ or “turning to [our] own way” (Mat. 7:21-23, Isa. 53:6). Eve “yielded to the temptations of sense and the *deceits of Satan*; he, to *conjugal love*.”⁵ Adam chose of his own free will to be disobedient, and Eve was a duped participant. Adam and Eve failed the test allowed by God to confirm their holiness. “They were able to not sin,”⁶ but they did. In addition, since man was in the “loin” of Adam, the progenitor of mankind, all mankind inherited a sin nature;⁷ and so, the sin nature is mediately conveyed and the death sentence is immediately imputed to all mankind. This is a double dose of trouble for which no man had or could have had an answer, but God did. The answer for eternity is the seed of woman, who is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the work He did on the Cross. Praise His Holy Name! (Gen. 3:15)

The Repercussions of the Fall

The repercussions of the fall are significant and multifactorial. First, the shame, guilt, and fear reflected in Adam and Eve's exclamation of a lost innocence and a found conscience is revealing (Gen. 3:7-8, 10-14). Adam and Eve demonstrated another "seed plot" originating in the book of origins to avoid guilt and shame. Typically since the Garden, man casts the blame for his failure elsewhere, rather than repenting for his sin against a Holy God (Gen. 3:12-13). Secondly, the *self-constructed* "fig leaves" Adam and Eve used in an attempt "to cover" sin was artificial, and is a 'type' of what man has used such as religion, pride, and works throughout history to cover up sin.⁸ Thirdly, the curses levied against Satan, mankind, and the earth are repercussions of great significance (Gen. 3:14-19),⁹ which have extend into the current dispensation of grace, the church age.

The False Reflections on the Fall

The fall of man has brought about many false considerations, speculations, and theories concerning sin, the transmission of sin to the human race, and the resolution of sin. They all try to avoid personal responsibility *and* the clear assertions of the Bible. Some claim Adam's sin "affected directly only himself,"¹⁰ which is called *Pelagianism*.¹¹ They claim "that every human soul is created by God, and created innocent, free from depraved tendencies, and able to obey God as Adam was."¹² This is not scriptural (Job 15:14, Psa. 51:5, Rom. 5:12, Eph. 2:3). *Semi-Pelagianism*, sometimes lumped with Arminianism, claims man is born with natural 'inability' to avoid sin and should not be held accountable or guilty. The Semi-Pelagianist claims that man is only weakened, is not depraved, and can choose God; if he is obedient, then God adds grace.¹³ *Arminianism* teaches that a man receptive to God is able to not sin because of the influence of the Holy Spirit at the time of accountability even though man has an evil tendency. They claim the evil tendency does not involve guilt or punishment, and sin is not imputed, but death results because all men do sin (Rom. 3:23, 5:12). This view is countered with Scripture in Rom. 5:12-

19.¹⁴ Another theory held in esteem is associated with the *federal headship* of Adam. Adam's sin is imputed because of his federal headship of the human race as representative of the human race; but other tenets of this theory are incomplete and inadequate for several reasons. It fails primarily because it is based on a theoretical participation in a non-scriptural covenant of works that Adam entered into with God. The *realistic* or Augustinian theory is the assertion that man was in Adam; and therefore, there was a 'real' *participation* in his sin and the original sin is passed to us *mediately*. However, we did not participate (we were not really there), but original sin caused a depraved nature because we were in Adams "loins" and, in addition, it is imputed to us directly or *immediately* by judicial decree causing death. This imputation is countered by the Lord Jesus Christ's work on the Cross. By grace through faith, Christ's work on the Cross allows God to grant the immeasurable gift of imputing all our sin[s] to Him, and His righteousness to us (Eph. 2:8-9) even though we were not in Christ's 'loins.'

In conclusion, imputation of Adams original sin involves *reckoning* sin, which is not "really" ours, but it is reckoned to us immediately resulting in the divine judicial sentence of death to all men.¹⁵ This act of judgment on the human race by God brings death to all men through *all* dispensations (Rom. 5:13). In addition, man acquired the fallen *nature* by the fall *mediately*, or by transmission from parent to child, which "results in individual transgression."¹⁶ However, the bottom line of sin is the *universality* of sin. We are ALL sinners. We are responsible. We have a choice. We cannot blame anyone but ourselves (Rom. 3:23, Gal. 3:22) even though the sentence of death is immediately imputed to us because of Adam's original sin. We are guilty by imputation of the original sin resulting in death and by personal sin from inheritance of the sin nature. There is no possibility that we would not sin or be sinners (Rom. 3:23).

Endnotes:

¹ Author Pink, Gleanings in Genesis (http://biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_05.htm) Chapter 4, Genesis 3, “The Fall”

² The word “lest” substituted for the word “surely” in these verses implies a fear that they *might* die from eating the fruit, but God said, “surely die.” Lest is defined by most dictionaries as “in case” or “for fear that,” which equals *might*.

³ Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. 2 (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapid, MI) 299-301. Most significant is the aorist tense of “all have sinned,” v. 12, indicating one event (Adam’s sin) in the past and that ‘all’ participated in the sin. Calvin missed this important point. p. 302

⁴ Robert Dabney, Systematic Theology, Chapter 29, “Answer”

(http://www.pbministries.org/R.%20L.%20Dabney/Systematic%20Theology/systematic_theology.htm) Personal sin is defined as *anything* against the moral law of God. It includes selfishness, unbelief, lawlessness, rebellion, unfaithfulness, etc.

⁵ Jamieson-Faussett-Brown Commentary, (SwordSearcher, Version 4.7, Broken Arrow, OK) comments of 1Tim. 2:14

⁶ Dr. Roy Wallace, Studies in Systematic Theology (Printers, LinWell, Shreveport, LA) 2001, 202

⁷ This refers to DNA, which transmits genetic links, and therefore, goes all the way back to the first couple, Adam and Eve. Similarly, Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek because he was in the “loin” (groin) of Abraham (Heb. 7:9-10).

⁸ Author Pink, op. cit., “The Fall and Man”

⁹ Dr. Roy Wallace, op. cit., 203-208

¹⁰ Ibid. 208

¹¹ This theory is also called The Theory of Man’s Natural Innocence.

¹² Henry C. Thiessen, Lectures in Systematic Theology, (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI) Reprinted, July 1990, 186. This theory stems from Pelagius, a British monk, born A.D. 370.

¹³ Dr. Roy Wallace, op. cit. 210. John Cassianus, a disciple of Chrysostom and others, taught a theory part-way between Augustinian predestination and inability versus Pelagianism’s complete ability. 209

¹⁴ Lewis Sperry Chafer, Systematic Theology, vol. 2 (Kregel Publications, Grand Rapid, MI) 301, The aorist tense used in Rom. 5:12 for “all have sinned” indicates “a single, historical act completed in the past is indicated” and, therefore, that all sinned in that one event by imputation through God’s divine judicial decree.

¹⁵ Ibid. 296. Dr. Chafer quotes Charles Hodges concerning this same issue on page 302. The entire subject of imputation is one of great theological concern. Dr. Chafer’s chapter on imputation is excellent. pp. 296-315 in vol. 2.

¹⁶ Ibid. 311 The critical point is the misunderstanding of Rom. 5:12 in two aspects: (1) the aorist tense of “all have sinned” and (2) changing [note the change in God’s words] “for that” to “in whom.”