

The Fall of Man

by Jeremy Cagle

In his famous book, *Paradise Lost*, the 17th Century English poet John Milton described the experiences that Adam and Eve underwent when they “lost paradise.” In doing so, he wrote these beautiful lines.

O fairest of Creation, last and best
Of all Gods Works, Creature in whom excell'd
Whatever can to sight or thought be formd,
Holy, divine, amiable, or sweet!

How art thou lost, how on a sudden lost,
Defac't, defloured, and now to Death devote?¹

The greatest change in human history was not when electricity was invented or when the automobile entered the scene. It was not when cave men figured out the wheel or when the ancients learned how to harvest their crops and tame wild animals. It was not when the atomic bomb was designed or when the Internet came on-line.

No, the greatest change in human history occurred when sin entered the earth. When the first man and the first woman disobeyed God's Law, the world

changed forever. When that happened, what was once “holy, divine, amiable, or sweet” became “defac't, defloured and now to death devote.” When mankind sinned, what was once the “fairest of Creation” was “on a sudden lost.”

The Fall of Man can be defined as,

The event in which Adam and Eve, the first humans, disobeyed the explicit command of God, thereby bringing sin and death onto the human race. As a consequence of the Fall humans have become alienated from God, from one another and from the created order.²



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The Fall refers to the time when the human race “fell” from a perfectly righteous state with God. It is that moment in history when a perfect man and a perfect woman lost their perfection and lost the ability to commune with their Creator. After Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden of Eden, men and women could no longer approach God as those who are pleasing in His

sight, they now must approach God as those who are unpleasant. They must approach Him as enemies and not as friends.

How did this change take place and what were the repercussions of it? How did mankind fall and what does that event mean for the rest of us? This article seeks to answer those important questions.

I. THE DESCRIPTION OF THE FALL

1. What the Fall of Man Looked Like Before Adam Sinned.

To understand what took place when the first man, Adam, sinned, it would be helpful to understand what was going on before he sinned. There are several statements in Genesis 2 and 3 which demonstrate that Adam had a very close relationship with God before the Fall. One statement is in Genesis 2:15. Here it says that after the Lord created Adam (v. 7) and created a garden in Eden (v. 8), “Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.”

In other words, the Lord directed Adam. He gave him guidance. God did not create man and leave him alone. God created man and led him in the way that

he should go. He gave him a compass by which he was to live. Genesis says that the Lord guided Adam in caring for the Garden of Eden (v. 15), in not eating from a certain tree in the Garden (vv. 16-17), in giving names to the animals (vv. 19-20), in filling and subduing the earth (1:28), and in the eating of plants (1:29-30). In His wonderful love for Adam, the Lord guided him.

A second statement which shows that Adam had a very close relationship with God is found in Genesis 2:16-17. Here it says,

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.”

Not only did the Lord guide Adam, He also spoke to him. Out loud! He communicated with Him verbally and He talked with Adam as one would talk to a friend.

This is also seen in 1:28-30 where the Lord says tells Adam and Eve to rule over creation and to eat the plants of the field. It is also seen in 3:8-19 when the Lord judges Adam and Eve and the serpent for their sin.

A third statement which shows that Adam and God were close is made in Genesis 3:8-9. Here, just after the first human beings sinned, it says,

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”

Not only did God guide Adam and talk with him, the Lord walked with him. The phrase “sound of the Lord God walking” is an anthropomorphism, which refers to “the attributing of human characteristics to gods, objects, etc.”³ God is Spirit⁴ and, as such, He does not have a physical body like we do.⁵ So when the Scriptures state that the Lord walked with Adam, they mean this in a metaphoric way.⁶ The Lord

fellowshipped with Adam and Eve. He walked with them like we walk through life with our spouse. He maintained a close relationship with them while they were in the Garden of Eden. He spent time with them, speaking with them, guiding them, and loving them. As Matthew Henry writes,

[The Lord] came into the garden, not descending immediately from heaven in their view, as afterwards on Mount Sinai, but he came into the garden, as one that was still willing to be familiar with them. He came walking, not running, not riding upon the wings of the wind, but walking deliberately, as one slow to anger . . .⁷

This closeness is also seen in the Lord’s question in verse 9, “Where are you?” After their sin, the fellowship that Adam and Eve enjoyed with the Lord was broken and now they had to hide from Him. And He had to try and find them.

2. What the Fall of Man Looked Like While Adam Sinned.

Genesis 3:1-7 is probably one of the more well-known stories in the Bible. It records what happened when mankind sinned for the first time. In other words, these verses describe the actual event that we now refer to as the “Fall of Man.”

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 woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 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, or you will die.'" The serpent said to the woman, "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."

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

There are three principle characters in these verses. First, there is the serpent. From Eve's reaction to this creature in Genesis 3, there is no reason to think that she conversed with anything other than a normal snake. While it does raise some questions as to how animals could talk, this is not the only time in the Bible where a human being had a casual conversation with an animal.⁸ So, while there was more going on behind the scenes, to Eve this creature appeared to be a normal animal that

she saw every day in the Garden of Eden.

Verse 1 calls the serpent "more crafty than any beast of the field." Since the Lord made everything good (1:31), it would appear that the craftiness of the serpent was not a sinful quality, but a functional one. This is the same kind of quality that Jesus refers to in Matthew 10:16, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be as shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves." Serpents are sneaky, mischievous creatures and it appears that they have always been that way, although in the Garden of Eden they were sinless in their mischievousness.

But, while this creature is never explicitly called "Satan" in this passage, it is clear that Genesis 3 is giving us a reference to the Devil. There was nothing bad or evil in creation at this point, so in order for sin to occur, the option to disobey must have been brought in from the outside. Everything that God created was good, so whatever it was that was talking to Eve must have been bad from before creation and the only thing that could refer to is Satan.⁹ The Devil himself inhabited a creature in the Garden of Eden to trick the first man and the first woman into disobeying God.¹⁰ There are only

two times in Scripture when the Devil talks face-to-face with a human being (the other time being with Jesus Christ in the wilderness)¹¹ and this was one of them.

And this brings us to the second principle character in these verses and that is Eve, the first woman. Eve was created from the rib of Adam to be a helper to him (Gen 2:20-22). Her name means "life" or "living," symbolizing that she would one day give birth or life to the human race.¹² But, with her entrance into the scene in this chapter, we see the first recorded sin in human history. It begins with a question from Satan in verse 1: "'Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" And the first sin actually occurs with Eve's answer in verse 2:

From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 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, or you will die."

This is nothing less than a lie. Many think that Eve first sinned when she ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but that is not true. Eve's first sin occurred when she misrepresented what God said. In Genesis 2:16-17, the Lord commanded Adam:

From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowl-

edge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.

Adam and Eve were allowed to *touch* the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but not to *eat* of it. But Eve distorts that command in her answer to the serpent and says that, not only were they not allowed to *eat* of the tree, they were not allowed to *touch* it or they would die. This was the first sin committed by any member of the human race. A lie. A distortion and a twisting of what God said.

And things quickly spiraled downward from here. In Genesis 3:6, Eve "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."

And this introduces us to the third principle character in these verses: Adam. The word *adam* in Hebrew is used 560 times in the Old Testament and always means "man" or "mankind" when it is not referring to a person named "Adam."¹³ *Adam* is a derivative of the Hebrew word *adamah*, which means "ground."¹⁴ Genesis 2:7 says, "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed

into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Adam was formed from the ground and, therefore, his name sounds like the Hebrew word for “ground.”

What is interesting about Adam’s appearance in Genesis 3 is where it occurs. According to verse 6, Adam was located right next to Eve when she ate the forbidden fruit.¹⁵ He stood right next to his wife while she sinned and never even tried to stop her! This also implies that Adam was with Eve when she twisted what God had said. He heard her change God’s command and could have easily corrected her by reminding her of what the Lord actually said but he did not.

The point is that Adam, like Eve, did not first sin when he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam first sinned when he failed to confront his wife with her sin. He sinned when he ignored his role as her leader and let her follow the words of the Devil. While the passage does not come right out and say it, it is very possible that Adam was watching Eve eat the fruit in order to find out what the Lord actually meant when He said “for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” Adam had never seen death before and he could have been

watching Eve disobey in order to find out what death looked like.

Either way, Adam’s sin, like Eve’s sin, occurred internally long before it occurred externally. He sinned with his mind before he ever sinned with his mouth.

3. What the Fall of Man Looked Like After Adam Sinned.

So, at this point, Adam and Eve have sinned for the first time in human history. They have eaten of the tree of which God said “you shall not eat.” Needless to say, there were tremendous consequences to their decision. Some were seen later on in the Bible and some were seen right here in Genesis 1-3. Let us look at the consequences that are mentioned in Genesis 1-3 first.

The first consequence to Adam and Eve’s disobedience that is mentioned in this passage has already been mentioned. Genesis 3:8-9 says,

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?”

The first consequence to Adam and

Eve’s sin was that their fellowship with God was broken. Whereas they once enjoyed intimacy and closeness with their Creator, now they hid from Him and forced Him to call out to them, “Where are you?” Whereas they were once God’s friends, now they are God’s enemies and will eventually be banished from the Garden of Eden (v. 23). The relationship that the first man and woman enjoyed in paradise was lost when they disobeyed the Lord. Man cannot be a friend of God and remain disobedient to Him. As Jesus says in John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

The second consequence to Adam and Eve’s sin is found in Genesis 3:14-15,

The LORD God said to the serpent,
“Because you have done this,
Cursed are you more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you will go,
And dust you will eat
All the days of your life;

And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel.”

While there is not time to explain every detail of this passage, it is worth mentioning that the serpent and the Devil were both punished as a result

of their part in the Fall of Man. This punishment had a double-edge to it. It applied to both the natural and the supernatural creature. On the natural side, the serpent was punished by being forced to crawl around on its belly for the remainder of its days. This implies that snakes at one time were upright creatures but were changed to slither around on the ground.

Another punishment was that, from this point forward, snakes would be an enemy of mankind. Men would have a natural revulsion towards snakes and snakes would return the favor. As H. C. Leupold writes,

The fact that this beast still stands under a curse is apparent from the peculiar revulsion that it still rouses in most men. Its peculiarly sinuous movements, its silent glide as a form of locomotion, its sinister, dread and fascinating look, its vibrant tongue, its peculiar rearing of the head: all contribute to remind men of the peculiar history in which the serpent once shared.¹⁶

Verse 15 shows some of the curse for the supernatural creature, for Satan, when it says that enmity will exist between the seed of Satan and the seed of the woman. For “He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.” Scholars have referred to this as the *protoevangelium* or “the

first good news”¹⁷ because it is the first mention of the Good News that God will ultimately defeat Satan. Verse 15 uses the singular “he,” showing that this is referring to a specific descendant of Eve whom Satan will bruise on the heel and who will bruise Satan on the head. The seed of Eve, Jesus Christ, will be wounded by Satan when He is put to death on the cross but Jesus will give Satan a final wound to the head when He rises from the grave to defeat death.¹⁸

The third punishment for Adam and Eve’s sin in this passage is mentioned in 3:16,

To the woman He said,

“I will greatly multiply
Your pain in childbirth,
In pain you will bring forth children;
Yet your desire will be for your husband,
And he will rule over you.”

Death was pleasantly absent from the Garden of Eden but pain was not. There was no death because that consequence did not come until *after* Adam and Eve sinned but apparently there was some level of pain. After all, this verse does not say that “I will give you pain in childbirth” but “I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth.” Pain is not a punishment but simply a part of life even in a perfect world. Excessive

pain, on the other hand, is a curse for sin. And that is what is mentioned here.

Genesis 1:28 says,

God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that [moves on the earth].”

Adam and Eve were going to have children in the Garden of Eden. After all, Genesis 1:28 comes before Genesis 3:16. So it is safe to conclude that children were not a result of the Fall but a blessing from God that mankind could enjoy before sin ever entered the picture. It is also safe to conclude that some level of pain in childbirth was not a result of the Fall but increased pain in childbirth was. Now Eve’s childbirth would be painful and what was once bearable and possibly even pleasurable for her would be miserable.¹⁹

Not only did Eve begin to experience pain in childbirth as a result of her sin but verse 16 goes on to say, “Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” This is a reference to the fact that there will now be strife in marriage as a result of Eve’s disobedience to God’s command. From this point forward, women would be tempted to usurp their husband’s role of leadership in the home and refuse

to submit to his loving guidance.²⁰ As one author put it,

What actually happened is full of meaning. Eve usurped Adam’s headship and led the way into sin. And Adam, who (it seems) had stood by passively, allowing the deception to progress without decisive intervention – Adam, for his part, abandoned his post as head. Eve was deceived; Adam forsook his responsibility. Both were wrong and together they pulled the human race down into sin and death.²¹

As a fitting punishment for their role reversals in the Garden of Eden – Adam in refusing to lead his wife and Eve in refusing to submit to her husband – the Lord punished Eve by giving her a continual desire to replace her husband’s headship over her. Now the harmonious relationship between husband and wife would be embittered by friction. The wife will be tempted to lead and the husband will be tempted to submit and, as a result, there will be conflict in marriage.

The fourth consequence for Adam and Eve’s disobedience in this passage is seen in Genesis 3:17-19,

Then to Adam He said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it;’

“Cursed is the ground because of you;
In toil you will eat of it
All the days of your life.

Both thorns and thistles it shall grow
for you;
And you will eat the plants of the field;
By the sweat of your face
You will eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
Because from it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return.”

There are two things that are punished as a result of Adam’s sin. The first is the ground. The ground will be cursed as what was once fruitful will now be, to some degree, fruitless. The Hebrew word for “toil” in verse 17 means “hardship, pain, distress.”²² Whereas Adam worked before the Fall (Gen 2:15), now he would work without much to show for it. Now he would work in “hardship, pain, distress.” Now he would plant but the plants would not always grow. Now he would put forth the effort but little would come of it. Now thorns and thistles would grow where only trees and flowers grew. Now he would eat his bread by the sweat of his face as opposed to the joy of his heart.

Every human being knows what it is like to work hard with nothing to show for it. We have all studied and

forgotten what we studied. We have all built things that fell apart. We have all sowed seeds that never came to fruition. This is not how the world was originally intended to be. This was not the design of God's perfect creation. The frustration we have when working is all because our father, Adam, sinned. He broke God's Law and God cursed the earth as a result.

The second thing that was punished as a result of Adam's sin was Adam himself. Genesis 3:19 says that Adam will return to the ground and to dust. This is a reference to his upcoming death. Genesis 2:16-17 says,

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."

II. THE EFFECTS OF THE FALL

1. What the Fall of Man Led to with Adam's Descendants.

Genesis 1-3 is not the only text that deals with the Fall of Man. The Fall is mentioned in other Bible passages as well. Genesis 4:1-8 tells us how the Fall affected Adam and Eve's children.

Before Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, all they knew was life. There was no death. The plants lived. The animals lived. But nothing died.

Now, as a consequence for their disobedience, death entered the human race. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death." The sins of the first man and the first woman earned them death. While Adam did not die immediately after eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would die eventually. Genesis 5:5 says, "So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died." It would take him 930 years but, eventually, Adam would die as a result of his disobedience to God's commands.

Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord." Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground. Abel, on

his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

There is much that can be said about this story but it is important to mention, first of all, that these were the direct descendants of Adam and Eve. In other words, Cain was the firstborn child of what used to be a perfect, sinless man and a perfect, sinless woman. While Adam and Eve had broken God's Law and were no longer righteous, they were born into a righteous state. They were part of the creation that God pronounced "good" in Genesis 1:31. They had not been born into wickedness.

Consequently, they did not have years upon years upon years of evil deeds to their account. And, when they had children, they should not have had been the worst of parents. Yet we see here

in Genesis 4 that the first child ever born becomes a murderer! Even worse than that, he murders his own brother! Even worse than that, he murders his own brother because God looked more favorably upon his offering!

This is pretty sick and twisted. This would be similar to a church member murdering another church member because he gave a good presentation of the Gospel or because he preached a good sermon or because he gave a better tithe to the church. Cain killed his brother over religious reasons. He killed him because God was pleased with him. It is hard to think of anything viler than that. And it occurs within one generation of the Fall of Man.

The reason God had regard for Abel but not for Cain is because Abel made an offering to the Lord of his firstborn animals (v. 4). Cain only brought crops that were older and not as important to him (v. 3). Abel offered his best while Cain offered his second-best and, therefore, the Lord was pleased with Abel but not with Cain. And this made Cain jealous. It made him jealous enough to murder his brother.

But this sin pattern did not stop with Cain and Abel. Several generations

later, Genesis 6:5-7 says that:

Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The Lord said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them."

After Adam and Eve's sin, it did not take mankind very long to become so evil that "every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." It did not take human beings very long to become so wicked that they would make God "sorry that He had made man on the earth." Things were so bad that the Lord decided to wipe men and women off the face of the earth and start all over again. When mankind fell from fellowship with God, he fell hard.

2. What the Fall of Man Led to with the Human Race.

As can be seen with Cain and Abel, the Fall had consequences for the entire human race. As was demonstrated with their direct descendants, the sinful tendency that Adam and Eve developed in the Garden of Eden was

passed on to the entire human race.

There are two theological terms that describe the Fall's effect on mankind. The first is what is known as Federal Headship. According to the *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, Federal Headship means that

God entered into a covenantal relationship with Adam that promised blessing for obedience and a curse for disobedience. According to federal theology, if Adam had been obedient to God, his obedience would have meant blessing for all humans. But because Adam was disobedient, the curse extends to humankind, of which Adam is the covenantal representative.²³

Gordon H. Clark adds to the concept this way:

If Adam had fulfilled the terms of the covenant, not only he himself, but all his posterity also would have benefitted. As it turned out, we must be more interested in the result of his disobedience.²⁴

As mentioned earlier, Adam and Eve were commanded by God to fill the earth with their descendants (see Gen 1:31). In doing so, if they never sinned, they would have raised sinless children on a sinless earth. However, they did sin, and the children that they raised afterwards grew up with a sin nature on a sinful earth.

Several passages in the Bible teach Federal Headship in some detail. Romans 5:12 says,

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned . . .

Sin entered the world through one man but it spread from there to all men. Adam served as a representative for us and brought sin to the entire human race. His act brought sin and death to us all.

In Romans 5:17-19, the Apostle Paul develops this thought in even more detail.

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

The phrase "made sinners" in verse 19 explains what happened to the human race when Adam sinned. Not

only did Adam's *standing* before God change when he disobeyed, but his very *nature* changed. Not only did Adam *sin* but he became *a sinner* in the Garden of Eden, which is why God threw him out.²⁵ And this passage teaches that the descendants of Adam were made what he became: sinners. Adam served as our head and brought death and condemnation to us all.²⁶ The second theological term that describes the Fall's effect on the human race is Imputation. Imputation is

A transfer of benefit or harm from one individual to another. In theology, imputation may be used negatively to refer to the transfer of the sin and guilt of Adam to the rest of humankind. Positively, imputation refers to the righteousness of Christ being transferred to those who believe on him for salvation.²⁷

It is our concern here to look at the doctrine of Imputation from the negative side. Adam not only acted as our Federal Head when he sinned in the Garden of Eden, he also acted as one whose sin would be imputed to us all. To quote from A. W. Pink,

Having proved from Scripture that God constituted Adam the covenant head and federal representative of his race, we are now to show that the guilt of his original sin was imputed unto all his posterity.²⁸

What Adam became in the Garden of Eden is what we have all become since. Man is not born with a *tabula rasa* or a “blank slate.”²⁹ He is born with tendencies and propensities and desires that cause him to sin.

Several passages in Scripture teach this. Romans 5:19 states it very clearly as was already shown but First Corinthians 15:22 does as well: “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” The human race dies “in Adam.” We are in him in the sense that we have received his evil disposition. As our representative, what he did and what he became in the Garden has been passed down to us all. When he lost paradise, he lost it for every one of us.

David states this very plainly in Psalm 51:5.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.

Isaiah 64:6 also says,

For all of us have become like one who
is unclean,
And all our righteous deeds are like a
filthy garment;
And all of us wither like a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind, take
us away.

Notice that David says that we have

been brought forth in iniquity. We were born into it. We did not choose it on our own free will, we inherited it! Also notice that Isaiah states that “all have become like one who is unclean.” All means all. Every one of us has received a sinful nature. Adam gave it to every member of the human race. It did not skip over anyone. This is the doctrine of Imputation.

3. What the Fall of Man Led to with Jesus Christ.

While the doctrine of Federal Headship and Imputation seem unfair to some, the good news is that Adam is not the only head of the human race and sin is not the only thing that can be imputed to us. It may seem unfair for God to impute unrighteousness to everyone, but, using the same standard, it is just as unfair for Him to impute the righteousness of Jesus Christ to those who believe. However, that is exactly what the Lord has chosen to do. He has given us a sin nature through Adam but He offers us a new nature through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The same passage that compare the results of Adam’s rebellion also compare the results of Jesus’ compliance to God’s Law. Romans 5:12-15 says,

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

“The one” in verse 15 is a reference to Adam. Adam was the one who was born sinless and, therefore, served as our head. But he sinned and brought death to us all. However, there is another who was born sinless and that is “the one Man, Jesus Christ.”³⁰ “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.”³¹ Whereas Adam’s disobedience brought death to many, Jesus’ obedience brought life. To say this another way, our sins can be forgiven because Jesus Christ never sinned. He maintained a perfect life and offers us His perfect reward in return. To quote from A. W. Pink again,

If a remedy be provided for sinners, it must be one that restores them unto the same state and dignity wherein they were placed before the Fall. To recover them unto any lesser honour and blessedness than that which was their originally would not be consistent with either the Divine wisdom or bounty . . . From the foregoing it will be seen that the only sufficient deliverer of fallen men must be one possessed of infinite dignity and worthiness, in order that he might be capable of meriting infinite blessings.³²

In order to take humanity back to what it was in the Garden of Eden, before the Fall of Man and before paradise was lost, someone must possess “infinite dignity and worthiness.” It would take the life of God Himself to redeem fallen man. And God gave us no less. Acts 20:28 says,

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

The Lord purchased our salvation with His own blood. And, in doing so, the Son of God served as our Federal Head and imputed His righteousness to our account.³³ He corrected Adam’s mistake. He made right what the first man made wrong.

CONCLUSION

First Corinthians 15:22, which was quoted earlier, sums up the solution to the Fall of Man. It says, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” There is hope for the human race. While it is fallen, it can be lifted up again. While it is headed towards death, it can have life. While it has lost paradise, it can find it once again.

But there is only One Who can make that happen and His name is Jesus Christ. In John 14:6, Jesus said, “I am

the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” The only way for us to regain perfect fellowship with the Father is through the life and death and resurrection of the Son. He and He alone can take that which is now “defac’t, defloured, and now to death devote” and make it “holy, divine, amiable, or sweet.” He can take what was “on a sudden lost” and make it the “fairest of Creation” once again.

End Notes

- Paradise Lost* in Great Books of the Western World, Volume 32, ed. by Robert Maynard Hutchins (Chicago, Ill.: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952) 267.
- Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, & Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999) 50.
- Webster’s New World Dictionary*, ed. by Michael Agnes (New York: Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2003) 27.
- Jn 4:24.
- It could be argued that this is not an anthropomorphism but an episode of the pre-incarnate Christ such as we see in Old Testament passages that mention the Angel of the Lord (Gen 16:7-15; Ex 3:1-4; Jud 13). I would not disagree with someone who takes that interpretation but simply argue that it is difficult to say one way or the other in this passage.
- For examples of similar anthropomorphisms, see Job 1:7; 2:2.
- Matthew Henry’s Commentary* on the Whole Bible, Vol. I (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, n. d.) 26.
- See Num 22:21-33.
- In other words, the Fall of Satan which occurred in Isaiah 14:12-15 (also see 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6) must have taken place before the Fall of Man.
- John Calvin, *Commentaries on The First Book of Moses Called Genesis* in Calvin’s Commentaries, Volume First (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005ed.) 140. As John Calvin writes,

I think, however, Moses does not so much point out a fault as attribute praise to nature, because God had endued [the serpent] with such singular skill, as rendered it acute and quick-sighted beyond all others. But Satan perverted to his own deceitful purposes the gift which had been divinely imparted to the serpent.

11 See Matt 4:1-11.
- The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Volume Two, ed. by Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975) 419.
- The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Volume One, ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979) 47.
- A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. by William L. Holladay (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988) 4.
- Although the word “fruit” never occurs in this passage, anything that comes from a plant is “fruit” in the loosest sense of the word. While the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not necessarily a fruit tree, whatever it produced was its fruit. It is in that sense that I use the word here.
- Exposition of Genesis, Volume I* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992ed.) 161-162.
- Alan Cairns, *Dictionary of Theological Terms*, Expanded Third Edition (Greenville, S. C.: Ambassador Emerald International, 2002) 350.
- Rom 16:20; 1 Cor 15:25-27, 54-58.
- Leupold, 171. H. C. Leupold writes that this curse was even more significant than that.

The first part of the penalty is found in the words: “I will increase very greatly thy pain and thy conception.” This does not imply that pain would have been the normal thing for womankind. Nor is this the pain connected primarily with childbearing; although that is included. What is done is that woman from this time onward has numerous forms of pain laid to her lot. Physical infirmities of a painful kind are in a great measure her portion. Because of her more delicate makeup many things besides cause her a greater measure of mental and spiritual pain. The just retaliation lies in this that she who sought sweet delights in the eating of the forbidden fruit, finds not delights but pain – not joy but sorrow.
- For an example of the Biblical roles of a husband and wife, see Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-20.
- Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., “Male-Female Equality and Male Headship: Genesis 1-3” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. by John Piper & Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2006) 107.
- New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, Volume 3, ed. by Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997) 482. The word is itstsabon.

23 *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 51.

24 *The Biblical Doctrine of Man* (Jefferson, Md.: The Trinity Foundation, 1984) 62.

25 For more information about this, see “The Depravity of Man” in this edition of JTST.

26 Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000ed.) 495. Some would question the fairness of Federal Headship and even the doctrine of Imputation, which is mentioned below. They ask, “How is it fair for God to punish me for what someone else did?” “Why am I born into sin when Adam sinned and not me?” That is a great question and, in response to it, Wayne Grudem writes:

The most persuasive answer to the objection is to point out that if we think it is unfair for us to be represented by Adam, then we should also think it is unfair for us to be represented by Christ and to have his righteousness imputed to us by God. For the procedure that God used was just the same, and that is exactly Paul’s point in Romans 5:12-21 . . . Adam, our first representative sinned – and God counted us guilty. But Christ, the representative of all who believe in him, obeyed God perfectly – and God counted us righteous. That is simply the way in which God set up the human race to work.

27 *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 65.

28 *The Doctrine of Human Depravity* (Pensacola, Flo.: Chapel Library, n. d.) 43-44.

29 Anthony Flew, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, Revised Second Edition (New York: Gramercy Books, 1979) 349.

30 For more information about this, see “The Perfect Man” in this edition of JTST.

31 Heb 4:15.

32 *The Doctrine of Human Depravity*, 220-221.

33 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 3:18.