

ReGroups 7/16/23

Origin Stories: The Fall - Genesis 3

This week's study is focused on an event that's perhaps even more pivotal than the Creation Story: *The Fall*. We often refer to this as the Fall of Man, but its impact would be felt by all of creation. While man was fully responsible, every particle and creature in the universe felt the Fall's effects. **Read Genesis 3:1-7 and share your basic understanding about how this story would go on to change everything.** For some general, broad commentary on the Fall see the following passages and consider the corresponding points:

- **Romans 8:19-23)** Mankind was placed at the center of Creation and given dominion over all the earth (Genesis 1:28). When man fell, all that was under his jurisdiction fell with him. Thus, *everything* fell under the curse of Adam's sin and suffered some sort of setback.
- **Ecclesiastes 1:1-8)** While we retained a faint connection with God and have aspirations to make the most of this life, the Fall frustrates our purpose to no end.
- **Jeremiah 4:23-26)** In a call back to Genesis 1:2, this depiction of our Fallen World shows that which was formed and filled by God being emptied and broken because of sin.

Glorious Flaws

Even without reading these verses' thorough description, we have all know and have felt the impact of the Fall. We have only ever known a fallen world as our home. While it's helpful that the Bible details to every extent that the world was effected, we would gladly hear its truth on the story behind the Fall.

That is, why did God allow the story to transpire this way? Certainly He could have prevented it, *right?* Surely He knew things would play out the way that they did. We've all wondered in different ways the following questions:

- *Why did God let the Fall happen? Could He have prevented it? Why didn't He just hit reset as soon as things went awry?*

Spend a few moments sharing your thoughts on these questions before we seek out what the Bible's definitive word is on them

Sorting through this mystery isn't that hard when we start from the top. The Bible makes it clear that God created our universe and everything in it, with a full awareness of all that would come to be in it. Consider the following verses:

- **Isaiah 41:21-22)** God tells Israel to ask its idols and false gods to predict the future, because if they were on His level they would be able to.
- **Isaiah 45:21; 46:9-10)** God affirms that He is sovereign over everything that has happened or will ever happen.
- **Exodus 3:14-15)** God declares that His name is "I AM". We don't serve a God who is stuck in the past nor a God who is only in an ideal future - He is active, present, and engaged with every moment.

So, we know that the Fall didn't catch God by surprise. These verses seem to suggest that God knew it was going to happen. But that leads us more questions: *Did He intend on it from the beginning? Was it always His Plan A, not merely part of some backup plan?* Let's dig deeper...

Isaiah 43:7 is one of the most important verses of the Bible.

What does it tell us? Why is this such a crucial point to keep in mind?

If God created everything for His glory and He knew everything that was going to happen from the onset then we can trust that God saw a path for His glory even in a Fallen World. Using that logic, let's connect some dots:

- God created a physical realm that was already **less-than** His Spiritual home. Even before the Fall, our world had **built-in limitations** such as timed days, the need for food.
- God created a world that was not unlimited and infinite - like His Spiritual realm was - to be **a point of contrast** and **maximize His own glory**. He made a world that would rely on His provisions for it.
- It's not farfetched to take that a step further: God created a world that **He knew would rebel and fall** and become even more limited, fragile and finite, to **underscore** the contrast and even **amplify** His glory all the more.
- This ultimately set the stage for Him to **enter into this Fallen World** as one of its fragile creatures, where He would die on a Cross and **welcome all of its brokenness on Himself**.

- This would all culminate in a **glorious resurrection** and God's spectacular reclamation and restoration of what was fallen.
- The **lowest point** of human history became the **highest point** of God's glory. God created a world that **He didn't need** to bring about a creation that **needed Him** more than anything.

Regardless if God intended or simply allowed the Fall to happen, this thought process provides a scriptural and logical understanding. Herein we've gotten a glimpse at why God was *unfazed* by the Fall and had a Redemption Plan ready to go.

What are **your thoughts** about this proposal for why the Fall happened and how God was sovereign, unsurprised, and fully prepared to respond? **Review** the full breakdown from "*Creation -> Fall -> Redemption*" and **share** responses and questions.

Now let's get into the details of Genesis 3 and how the Fall previewed our own ever-present struggle against sin...

The Written and Spoken Word

Infamously Satan's exchange with Eve preceded the Fall with those sly, deceptive words, "*Did God really say that?*" (Genesis 3:1-2) Satan targeted God's Word because his goal is always to shake our confidence in God. If He can poke holes in God's Word and His Will as being good and ideal for us, then He can cause us to question God's trustworthiness.

Compare Satan's words of temptation to how Jesus responded to His temptation in the wilderness in **Matthew 4:1-4**. What stands out to you?

- Satan asked the question: "***Is it written?***"
- Jesus made the confession: "***It is written!***"

Do you see the difference?

Jesus showed us how to combat against temptation by standing on and leaning on God's Word. Any notion of doubt when it comes to God's Word being credible and dependable always stems from the enemy. When tempted we should do what Jesus did: ***Speak God's Word aloud and apply it to our lives.***

Three-Sided Temptation

Genesis 3:6 describes how sin comes to life in the heart of us all. **1 John 2:16** explains this three-fold nature of temptation.

In your own words, what do these mean?

- The Lust of the Eyes?
- The Lust of the Flesh?
- The Pride of Life?

James 1:12-15 provides a thorough breakdown of how sin is born and brings about death in our hearts. How does this play out in **Genesis 3:6-13**?

The greatest result of the Fall was Adam and Eve's separation from God. Of course, this also rolled over to all of us. Every time we are tempted to sin, this is Satan's ultimate goal to separate us from God and His perfect will for our lives. **Isaiah 59:1-2** describes how sin always drives a wedge between us and Him. No matter what we may feel like we can gain from sin, there is always much more to lose.

Keep in mind, sin is not simply *doing* bad things, but it's any thought, word, or deed that detaches us from God's perfect will. How does **James 4:17** define sin? How does this reframe how we understand sin?

Therefore, this is why worrying rather than trusting *is sin*. This is why lusting/ being jealous for someone else's life rather than being content and satisfied with God's provisions for you *is sin*. This is why remaining angry and refusing to forgive someone *is sin*. This is why being greedy rather than generous *is sin*. Ultimately all of the actions we know to be wrong stem from sinful *thoughts*.

Before you dismiss, read how the rest of **Genesis 3** plays out from **verses 14-24**. Discuss how Genesis describes the widespread ramifications of the Fall and how God promises Redemption. These verses all preview some of the conflicts we read about throughout the rest of Genesis, such as the drama within every family and the persistent famines that plagued the land.

Remember back to last week's picture of the Garden of Eden being like the Temple's Holy Place. Humanity's exile from the Garden separated us from pure fellowship with God and would mark the beginning of our long journey back to Him. Next week we'll take about **the coverings made for Adam and Eve** and how they believed in and **spread that promise** to their children.