

Lesson Four

One of the most often asked religious questions is “Why do bad things happen to good people?” The realities of evil, pain, and suffering are obvious to everyone. But how did they come into God's once perfect creation? In this lesson we will examine how God's creation went from perfection to corruption.

In the last lesson we saw that when God created the world it was perfect. It isn't anymore. What happened?

God says:	From this we know:
<p><i>Revelation 12:7-9</i> “And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.”</p> <p><i>Jude 1:6</i> “And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.”</p> <p><i>2 Peter 2:4</i> “For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment...”</p>	<p>Some of the angels God had created rebelled against him. Their leader was Satan, the devil.</p>
<p><i>Genesis 2:16, 17</i> “And the LORD God commanded [Adam], “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”</p> <p><i>Genesis 3:1-7</i> “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the</p>	<p>God gave Adam and Eve the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as an opportunity for them to show their love for him. They could show their love for God by obeying the command.</p> <p>Satan appeared as a serpent to Adam and Eve and tempted them to disobey God. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and so sin entered the world. This is referred to as the Fall of Mankind, the Fall Into Sin, or simply as the Fall.</p>

God says:**From this we know:**

middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.” “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.”

What did God do when Adam and Eve sinned?

God says:**From this we know:**

Genesis 3:8-10 “Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

In love God went after Adam and Eve, who were hiding from him out of fear and shame.

Genesis 3:14-15 “So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 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.”

Because of the undeserved love God had for Adam and Eve, he promised to send a Savior to defeat the work of the devil.

In his great love, God had promised to send a savior from sin; however, since God is just, he could not let their sin go unpunished.

God says:

Genesis 3:16-24 "To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return." Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life."

From this we know:

The life of peace and contentment that Adam and Eve had enjoyed with God was now replaced by one that included pain and hardship. This was a result of their disobedience to God.

The Fall caused a broken relationship between God and Adam and Eve. They were created in God's image—created knowing God's will perfectly. They had walked in God's presence without fear. Now they were hiding from their Creator out of shame and fear. But their sin did not only affect them. It affected all of creation.

What are the results of sin coming into the world?

God says:**From this we know:**

Genesis 5:3 "When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth."

Psalms 51:5 "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."

John 3:5-6 "Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander."

Every person conceived of human father and mother has a sinful nature (also know as the Old Adam, Original Sin, Birth Sin, and Inherited Sin). The effects of Adam and Eve's sin are passed down to everyone who is born.

The sinful nature shows itself in thoughts and in actions.

1 Corinthians 2:14 "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

While Adam and Eve were created with a perfect understanding of God's will, the Fall has made it impossible for people to understand who God is and what he demands. The only way we can understand God is if he gives us that knowledge.

Genesis 2:16, 17 "And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Death entered creation as a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience.

Genesis 3:19 "...for dust you are and to dust you will return."

Because of our sinful nature, we also deserve to die and to suffer eternal punishment and separation from God (Hell).

1 Corinthians 15:56 "Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

Romans 5:12 "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned..."

Ezekiel 18:20 "The soul who sins is the one who will die."

God says:**From this we know:**

Genesis 3:17, 18 "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you...."

Romans 8:19-22 "The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."

The pain and hardship brought into the world because of Adam and Eve's sin still plagues us, their descendants. All of creation is corrupted. It is no longer perfect.

This brings us to the main question of the lesson, "Who does God say that I am?"

I am a sinner. I can't fulfill God's will perfectly, no matter how hard I try. In fact, I can't even know what his will is for me unless he reveals it to me. But, I am also loved by God. Through his revealed word, he comes after me and promises me a Savior, just as he did for Adam and Eve. The love he shows me, which I have done nothing (and can do nothing) to deserve, should motivate me to thank him by living in a way that pleases him.

All Bible passages are from the New International Version.