

The Fall and Rise of the Human Race
Read Genesis 3.1-24

‘CHRIST IN GENESIS’: MAKING THE CONNECTIONS & SETTING THE CONTEXT

1/ Yes, I know: usually if the two words ‘fall’ and ‘rise’ are used together, they usually ‘rise’ and then they ‘fall’ – ‘*the rise and fall of...The Roman Empire / The Third Reich,*’ etc. But this time, I’m deliberately titling this lesson ‘*The Fall and Rise of the Human Race*’ because that’s precisely how we’re going to see CHRIST presented and portrayed in Genesis 3: we ‘fell’ into sin; but CHRIST ‘raises’ us up again!

- ‘*The Fall of the Human Race*’ will chronicle Adam’s role in the disobedient transgression that brought upon the human race and the whole creation the curse of sin, separation from the life and fellowship of the Creator, and banishment from the beautiful Paradise the LORD God had planted for him and given him to govern for His glory. *Strangely enough, even in his transgression, Adam is a type of Christ, ‘the One who was to come’ [Romans 5.14...also the fuller commentary in vv 12-21].*
- ‘*The Rise of the Human Race*’ will be told in the stories of the promises of CHRIST, ‘**the offspring of the woman**’ [v 15]; and in the sacrificial animal that was slaughtered to cover their nakedness [v 21]; and in the ‘**guarding of the way to the tree of life**’ [v 24] until CHRIST would come to secure our right again to eat of it [Revelation 2.7] ... and also in that Gospel commentary, **Romans 5.12-21**.

2/ There are numerous prominent characters in this narrative: the serpent, the woman, her husband, the man – but no character is more prominent than CHRIST! We will see ‘CHRIST-markers’ [refer to our chart/graphic] in every scene of this story.

I / vv 1-7 / “You shall surely die...” [the Fall of the human race]

1/ These verses will describe the verbal exchanges between ‘the serpent’ and the woman as he deceives her into believing that the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would be good for her. Adam follows her in the act of disobedience and rebellion against the LORD God. God’s forewarned punishment came true and was fulfilled: “...**for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die**” [see ch 2.17].

2/ We are introduced to ‘the serpent’ who will become the arch-enemy of God and everything God has created for His own Glory ... until he is destroyed by God in the end. *So where is CHRIST in the introduction of ‘the serpent’? We will discover as the metanarrative of the Scripture is revealed, it is really CHRIST HIMSELF whom ‘the serpent’ opposes and seeks to supplant and ultimately destroy.*

3/ ‘The serpent’ is also called by a number of other descriptors throughout the Story of CHRIST: Murderer, liar, father of lies [John 8.44]; Thief [John 10.10]; Enemy [Matthew 13.39]; God of this world [age] [2 Corinthians 4.4]; Tempter [Matthew 4.3; 1 Thessalonians 3.5]; Dragon, ‘that ancient serpent,’ ‘the devil and Satan,’ ‘the deceiver of the whole world’ [Revelation 12.9].

4/ As such, from his first appearance here in the Garden of Eden, the Paradise of God, the serpent’s all-consuming mission has been to wage his bitter vendetta of rage and hatred against CHRIST. John sums up the purpose of the serpent from the beginning in his historic summation in **Revelation 12.17**: “**Then the dragon [serpent] became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus.**”

5/ And then, there is this more personal juxtaposition in 2 Corinthians 11.2-3: “**For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.**” Even Eve’s betrayal was against CHRIST.

6/ We must also keep in mind that the serpent was not created evil. The serpent was among the beasts of the field that God created on Day 6 in ch 1.24, and **it was good**. But at some point previous to this account, Satan had fallen from his own angelic estate [Jude, v 6; 2 Peter 2.4; Revelation 12.4, 9]; and now Satan enters and takes control of this serpent beast God had created **good** and corrupts it. He doesn’t approach

the woman under his own identity – but through the guise of a wise and shrewd creature [Trojan horse?]. He invades God's perfect creation to destroy it also and attempt to usurp it as his own kingdom.

7/ All throughout the Scriptures, we are told that Eve, 'the woman,' was deceived by the manipulative arguments of the serpent [see v 13; 2 Corinthians 11.3; 1 Timothy 2.11-15]. Here are some of the deceptive perversions and corruptions of God's words and Eve's ways of thinking toward God:

- v 3b / *The serpent questioned and cast doubt in Eve's mind on God's goodness: "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"* In other words, "Did God actually create all these good trees and fruits and then tell you you couldn't eat and enjoy them?" Actually, what God had said was: **"You may surely eat of every tree of the garden..."** [ch 2.16]
- vv 2-3 / *Eve replied correctly concerning God's liberties and prohibition – except that she seemed to expand on the prohibition to include 'neither shall you touch it...'.* Whether God had actually said that, we don't know. What Eve does suggest is that she understood the 'untouchable' parameters of the prohibition.
- v 4 / *The serpent now sees a chink and opening in Eve's questioning of God's goodness, so now he unleashes an all-out assault on God's truthfulness: "You will not surely die..."* This is now a full frontal denial of God's honesty and truthfulness as their God.
- v 5 / *The serpent proceeds with the knock-out blow to Eve's faith in God and her devotion to Him as her Lord and Sovereign. The serpent deceives and convinces Eve that she can become her own 'god,' judging and deciding for herself what is good and wise – deciding for herself what she can have and do. She can be an equal with God over the choices and governance of her own life ... and God is being selfish and stingy to deprive and withhold this 'wisdom' from her: "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*
 - Except that: no, you won't be like God. God can know about evil without being personally corrupted by it. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil for the man and woman meant that when they ate of its forbidden fruit, they would 'know' sin by personal experience. They would have the 'knowledge of good and evil' in their moral constitution and relationship before God. Before eating of the forbidden fruit, they had only knowledge of good. If they had continued obeying God, they would never have known anything but good – like God. But by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they have now entered the realm of participation and experience in evil [sin], and made themselves **'alienated from the life of God'** [Ephesians 4.18] and **'dead in trespasses and sins'** [Ephesians 2.1].

8/ v 6 / Now the woman has been totally duped and deceived. We have a term for what has just happened to her thinking: 'gaslighting.' Gaslighting is when someone feeds you a line or narrative that is totally false and contrary to the truth and reality – but they get you to believe it and accept it as the truth. So here's what Eve's perception of God's character and word turned out to be: **"So 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 to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate."**

- NOTE: the root of all sin is in our desires [James 1.12-18]. All of our sin is conceived in our heart of desires – what we love and want more than anything else. AND, the expression of all our sin is in giving way to our human sensual desires that are contrary to the character, will, and desires of God. Yes, sin is anything that we think, say, and do that displeases God. But, before the action of disobedience, there is first the desire for something to please our human senses with the pleasure of enjoyment. Eve first **saw that the tree was good for food** [pleasure of the sense of taste], **and that it was a delight to the eyes** [pleasure of the sense of sight], **and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise** [pleasure to the sense of pride, self-will, self-exaltation] – all of it yielding to the desire to enjoy sensual human pleasures that God had forbidden.

9/ Adam voluntarily joined his wife in her transgression. She was deceived; Adam was not deceived. Adam is the one who had spoken personally with the LORD God and received the covenant mandates,

conditions, stipulations, and prohibitions. Adam was the ‘federal head’ of the human race. All of the succeeding humans who would be born would come from his ‘seed.’ *And so, with Adam’s sin, transgression, disobedience, sin came into the world, and death by sin.* [See Paul’s commentary in **Romans 5.12-21.**]

10/ v 7 / Here is ‘the FALL of the human race...’ **Then the eyes of both were opened [knowledge of good and evil], and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.** Immediately, we are made to realize that their self-efforts to ‘save, rescue, rectify’ themselves won’t suffice... We need a Savior!

II / vv 8-13 / “Where are you? ... What is this that you have done?”

1/ But God would not allow His human creation to be lost from Him without loving them, pursuing them, saving them, and bringing them back to Himself. Even in these actions, we can see a brilliant ‘CHRIST-marker’ in God’s proactive purposes: **For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life [John 3.16].**

- God pursued Adam: **And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...** And Jesus would say: “**For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost**” [Luke 19.10].
- God called Adam: **...and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”** NOT that God didn’t know where Adam was, but God would require Adam to admit where he was.
- God confronted and convicted Adam: **And he [Adam] said, ‘I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.’ He [LORD God] said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?’** Here we have the first introductions of fear and shame – the roots and streams of sin from which flow many of our human ‘brokennesses’ – expressions of our sinfulness and fallenness.

2/ Immediately upon being confronted with the convicting truth of their sin, both Adam and Eve try to deflect blame and accountability away from themselves toward someone else: *Adam blamed Eve, and by extension, blamed God for giving her to him; Eve blamed the serpent for deceiving her.* This is what sin has done to us: not only does our sin turn us all into liars by denying our own personal guilt, accountability, and culpability ... but sin turns us against each other. Sin turns us all into ‘me-first self-justifiers’ and makes us all willing to throw everybody else under the bus if it will save ourselves.

III / vv 14-19 / “I will put enmity ... between your offspring and her offspring...”

1/ From this point in this narrative on to the end of this chapter, God’s words will be rich and replete with ‘CHRIST-markers.’ The CHRIST-markers will be seen even in the curses that the LORD God pronounces ... because only CHRIST can save us from the curse of sin that is the consequence of our disobedience. And before we even get into this part of the narrative, I will direct your attention all the way to the end of Scripture and history – to the New Creation. Because there, we are promised in **Revelation 22.3: No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His servants will worship Him.** But, we’re not there yet! Back here in Genesis 3, the curse is just being pronounced. All of the longing we read about in **Romans 8.18-25** begins here in **Genesis 3.14-19.**

2/ When God created all things **very good**, He **blessed** what He had made [**ch 1.22, 28; 2.3**]. Now because of sin, there is a triple curse: **ch 3.14, 17; 4.11.**

- v 14/ The serpent is cursed and consigned to live in the dust and eat everything in the dust.
 - v 15 / HOWEVER ... here is one of the brightest rays of Gospel promise and hope in the Scriptures. In fact, we call this promise the *protoevangelium* or ‘*the first good news / Gospel.*’ The serpent has been the instrument of bringing all this sin, rebellion, curse, corruption, and

death into the world God has created for His pleasure and Glory. The serpent will wreak yet more and more havoc, misery, woe, destruction, and death before he, himself, is destroyed. ***But he will be destroyed in the end! [see Revelation 20.10]. And He will be destroyed by the very One whom he most seeks to destroy – the ‘offspring who shall come from the woman.’*** The serpent surmised that if he could corrupt and destroy the spiritual purity and ‘virginity’ of the woman, then everyone who would be born from her would be corrupted and destroyed spiritually. And we would be without a Savior. ***But God promises to bring a Savior into the world through the woman – and it will be a virgin woman, too [as He will reveal in ages to come].*** There is a warfare that commences between the offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman. But in the fullness of time, ***the offspring of the woman will crush the serpent’s head – effecting his death! Jesus Christ did this on the Cross! [see John 12.27-33; Revelation 12; 1 John 2.8; Romans 16.19-20]***

- **v 16/** Even is not cursed, but she is consigned to enduring painful travail during the process of childbearing. Also, since she usurped the role of following her husband’s leadership in the temptation and transgression, she is also to assume the role of competitor and rival against her husband’s headship. However, according to **1 Timothy 2.11-15**, she shall be ‘saved’ from disgrace by fearing and serving God and instilling faith in God in her children.
- **vv 17-19/** Because Adam failed to exercise godly leadership over Eve during her temptation, the earth and ground is cursed with the futility with which the whole creation now groans [see **Romans 8.18-25** again].

3/ CHRIST has redeemed even the earth from its cursed condition – and by His death, resurrection, and ascension, He is bringing in the New Creation wherein all things will be made new and reconciled back to God [see **1 Corinthians 15.24-28; Ephesians 1.9-10; Colossians 1.15-20**].

IV / vv 20-24 / “...to guard the way to the tree of life”

1/ **vv 20-21** / Not only did the LORD God promise the Savior to come through the offspring of the woman, but He also provided a type through which their sins would be covered—by the skin of a slaughtered animal. We can’t imagine the emotional and psychological trauma that must have shocked Adam and Eve as they witnessed the LORD God slaughtering one of the creatures they had co-existed with before their sin ... and which Adam had named. And now to see that *it was their sin that necessitated the sacrifice of an innocent animal to provide a covering for their shame and nakedness. But God was making the promise here also that it was His purpose, will, and desire to provide an ‘atonement’ for their sin. This type would be repeated again and again throughout the Old Testament – but especially in Genesis 22.9-14.*

2/ **vv 22-24** / Not only had Adam disobeyed the LORD God by eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but he had also disobeyed by NOT eating of the tree of life. It kind of appears that if they had eaten of the tree of life, it would have made them immortal. But as it was, now they had surely died. With an act of mercy, the LORD God drove them out of the Paradise to continue their cultivation of the ground outside the garden among the cursed fields of the earth. Flaming cherubim [fierce angelic guardians were placed at the entrance of Paradise – NOT to keep them away from the tree of life or to keep it from them ... BUT RATHER “...to guard the way to the tree of life.” *In other words, to provide the way for them to enjoy eternal life and immortality in His Presence and company. Jesus Christ is ‘the Way, the Truth, and the Life...no one comes to the Father except through Him!’*

3/ Jesus Christ is both the Tree of Life and the Keeper of the way to the Tree of Life. He promised the church in Ephesus: **To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God [Revelation 2.7].** And when we see that tree, its fruit is sustaining eternal life and its leaves are healing the nations [Revelation 22.1-5]. This is CHRIST! **“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” [1 Peter 2.24-25]**