

The Corruption of Sin—Part 2: The Plot is Established

So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin. (James 4:17)

What Happened When Man First Sinned?

Before Adam & Eve ate the fruit they lived in complete innocence and freedom as the Holy Spirit noted:

And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:25)

We are told this beforehand so that we can contrast it with what happened after they ate the fruit:

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. (Genesis 3:7)

After they disobeyed God by eating the fruit, the corrupting spiritual and physical effects of sin entered the human race and destroyed their innocence and freedom.

Their “eyes ... were opened” which means sin was now at work in their bodies. Their spirits were now separated from God and they had a new carnal, sensual nature which produced desires that they had never experienced before. The Bible calls this “the flesh.” The best description of this comes from Galatians:

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things [make a practice of doing] will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:16–24)

When Adam & Eve sinned by disobeying God’s command, the scientific fabric of our world was torn and spiritual deception and physical corruption were introduced into it. Paul revealed this:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subject to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:19–23)

We learn here that God subjected the creation to futility when Adam & Eve sinned. “The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God” because nature’s fate is inextricably tied to the spiritual condition of man. There is a connection between the spiritual and the physical environments.

Animals were originally created to eat only vegetation (Genesis 1:30), however, when God subjected the creation to futility some animals began to eat each other as we currently see today. This is most likely confirmed by what God told Noah before the flood:

“Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and his mate, and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and his mate, ...” (Genesis 7:2)

The reference to animals that were *not* clean most likely meant those that ate dead animals (carnivores). Because the Law had not yet been given (to the Hebrews), Noah would not have equated “unclean” with the Levitical specifications that came later for animals, some of which were in that category even though they were not carnivorous.

“Behold, I am making all things new.”

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the second person of God’s **Triunity** will return and reign over the earth for 1,000 years in what is commonly referred to as the Millennial Kingdom. He was the same Who walked in Eden and communed with Adam & Eve before they fell to sin. Isaiah prophesied of His coming kingdom:

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:6–9)

The return of the Lord Jesus will bring restoration to creation—a reversal of the corruption that was thrust upon it when Adam & Eve sinned. Notice, Isaiah wrote, “They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” “Mountain” is symbolically used in the Bible for kingdom. *As the waters cover the sea* is a metaphorical way of saying that the earth will be completely immersed in an environment—both the spiritual and the natural—that is freed from the effects of sin. Moreover, this reversal to God’s original creative intent is seen through the carnivorous animals returning to only eating vegetation and no longer being afraid of man (Genesis 9:2).

After the Millennial Kingdom, God will launch a new heaven and a new earth where the effects of sin are no more. John saw this and described it in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Here it is with my emphasis on areas that reveal a new, uncorrupted environment:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and **death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.**”

And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” (Revelation 21:1–5a)

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor and the nations. **But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false**, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds fruit, yielding its fruit each month. **The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 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. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. (Revelation 21:22 - 22:5)

Other Bible translations make it clear that the tree of life is in the midst of the street of the city and on both sides of the river (the ESV offers this as an alternative translation in a footnote), such as the New King James Version:

In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:2; NKJV)

It seems to me that the tree of life is in the middle of the street and its fruit-bearing branches extend to both sides of the river. It is interesting that despite the fact that the Lord will make all things new, the tree of life will again be in the midst of it and its leaves will be for “the healing of the nations.” This implies that the tree of life has redeeming properties to heal the world of its (then) sinful past. Nothing unclean will *ever* enter this new heaven and new earth. All environments will be without sin forevermore. This puts our present reality in the right context. If God allowed man to fall to sin, knowing that He would eventually create a new heaven and a new earth, what does that say about this time of travail that we are now in? It says that God is using this time to reveal Himself for eternal purposes.

The Prophetic Plot is Revealed

Let us pick back up with the narrative of what happened to Adam & Eve next:

And 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. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” (Genesis 3:8–13)

Adam & Eve recognized the sound of the Lord walking in the garden. The Hebrew word *qowl*, translated here in English as “sound,” means “to call aloud; a voice or sound.” They were used to having unfettered communion with the Lord in the garden. Sin introduced shame, guilt, fear, and deception. They were ashamed that they were naked. They became afraid of God and were deceived into thinking that they could hide from Him. Sin did not stop man from being able to have a relationship with God,

however, it did introduce deceitful barriers to the communication that such a relationship entails.

After Adam & Eve explained what happened, God dealt with the serpent first:

The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3:14–15)

After relegating the snake kind to an existence of slithering on the ground, God then addressed Satan, the power behind the deceitful serpent, with a prophetic declaration.^[1] God made known that there will be hostility between Satan and the woman—hostility between Satan’s offspring and her offspring—and that a male child of the woman will crush the head of Satan. This prophecy foreshadowed the epic struggle that unfolds throughout the Bible—much of it still yet to come—using types which are anticipative figures or prophetic symbols. The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ amplifies this prophecy with much more detail:

And a great sign appeared in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. **And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron,** but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, in which she is to be nourished for 1,260 days.

Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, but he was defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. And the great dragon was thrown down, **that ancient serpent**, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, “Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!”

And when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, **he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child.** But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle so that she might fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to the place where she is to be nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. The serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. But the earth came to the help of the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from its mouth. **Then the dragon 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.** And he stood on the sand of the sea. (Revelation 12)

This chapter makes the meaning of the Genesis 3 prophecy clear. The woman is Israel, her offspring is the male child, Jesus Christ, the ancient serpent is Satan, and his offspring are the “children of the devil” who do not know Jesus Christ.^[2] Some Bible teachers wrongly interpret the woman to be the church (not to mention the fact that the church does not give birth to Jesus Christ). The entire church era—the time we are currently living in—is skipped by this prophecy; however, the statement, “her child was *caught up* to God and to his throne,” could refer to the rapture of the church and not the resurrection of Jesus Christ since the real church is *in Jesus Christ*.

The Genesis 3 prophecy sets the scene for the main plot that runs throughout the Bible. We will revisit this later in this teaching.

Consequences

God then turned to Adam & Eve to explain to them the consequences of their sin:

To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Genesis 3:16–19)

This original sin had two consequences for all women: (1) painful childbearing and (2) a longing desire for mutual relationships with their husbands that is instead one where the husbands exercise insensitive dominion. The first consequence is obvious today everywhere. The second consequence is obvious outside of the nations that have a Judeo-Christian foundation. On this second one, Paul explained how marriage should work based on God’s model:

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. [Genesis 2:24]” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. (Ephesians 5:25–33)

After creating Eve from Adam’s rib, God married them. Paul quoted the verse here from Genesis that references their marriage (Genesis 2:24)—the key point being that “the two shall become one flesh.” The “two shall become one flesh” marriage model is not only symbolic for Christ and the church but it is how God intended marriage to function through the loving, self-sacrificial leadership of the husband. This basis of marriage was lost to man through the corruption of sin and, as I previously referenced, is only seen being changed in those cultures that have had the word of God as a truly formative element in shaping them.

God originally put Adam in a garden that was designed to produce for him. He just had to “work it and keep it” or cultivate it and watch over it (Genesis 2:15). This all changed when God cursed the ground. There was a switch from mild maintenance to arduous labor.

There were *painful* consequences to sin for both Adam and Eve; economic and marital consequences that have reverberated throughout human history leaving paths of conflict and frustration.

More broadly, the original sin of Adam & Eve—their disobedience to God’s command—caused (1) spiritual corruption in man, (2) physical corruption in man, and (3) corruption of the natural environment (Earth). Man died spiritually. Man eventually dies physically. Creation lies “subjected to futility.”

God did not leave Adam & Eve stranded in their sin. He pointed them to the ultimate solution.

The Solution

Recall that after Adam & Eve sinned their shame drove them to sew fig leaves together to make themselves clothing. After God explained to Adam & Eve the consequences of their sin, we are told:

And **the LORD God made** for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.
(Genesis 3:21)

God had to kill at least one animal to make these clothes which set a precedent: the shedding of blood is required for the remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22). We can surmise from the 4th chapter of Genesis that this animal was most likely a sheep.

Man's initial response to the shame of his sin was to try to cover it up himself. *God's* response foreshadowed a lesson: *God will sacrifice a lamb to atone for the sin of man.*

The Plot is Established

Having now completed our study on the corruption of sin we are left with the framework for the situation man faces. Here are the highlights:

- God created man in His image to reflect the Son of God. Man is the focus of God's creation.
- Satan was the perfect celestial being but his pride—seemingly from envy over man being made the pinnacle of creation—caused him to sin.
- Satan rebelled and took one-third of the angels with him. They serve his goal which centers upon making man reveal sin nature.
- God's [angels](#) serve His will in Jesus Christ which centers upon the nature and person of God being revealed in man.
- God is perfect love. There is absolutely nothing false in His nature. He gives man commands to protect him from the destruction of sin. His instruction is always the optimal route for man.
- Satan is perfect evil. There is absolutely no truth in him. His guidance always leads man to destruction.
- Satan works to get man to disobey God's commands which is sin, for "whoever knows the right

thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin” (James 4:17). Sin—the pathway contrary to the truth—leads to deception and, if not stopped, destruction.

- Man is unable to atone for his sin. God Himself will provide the solution.
- There is no battle between good and evil. God allowed this to happen for a greater purpose of revealing His love.

Here we have the core plot of the Bible (and our lives) established before we reach the fourth chapter of the book of Genesis. Considering this, I find it interesting that the interplay of the all-knowing God, Satan as the destroyer, and man having to trust the Creator, was the essential plot of Job, *the oldest book in the Bible*. In other words, it makes sense that the book of Job would be the next inspired literary block to build upon the first few chapters of Genesis.

The World

The corruption of man to sin gave Satan a measure of rule over the earth. This brings us to the concept of what that the Bible calls “the world.” The world is a descriptive term for Satan’s (temporary) realm of spiritual authority over the earth and those who are apart from Jesus Christ. Paul wrote:

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case **the god of this world** has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (2 Corinthians 4:3–4)

Satan’s measure of rule over the earth is confirmed and aptly described by Paul’s description of him as “the god of this world.”

We all have to decide whether we are going to serve the one true God or the false god of this world. *Indecision is a choice for the latter*. Serving God requires going against the grain of this world. James wrote:

Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. (James 4:1–4)

Serving God means rejecting a sinful life. Peter wrote that “corruption ... is in the world because of sinful desire” (2 Peter 1:4b). John admonished the following:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2: 15–17)

John also summarized the solution:

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. **Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?** (1 John 5:1–5)

I will conclude this Essentials teaching reaffirming the solution: God Himself was going to provide the ultimate sacrifice for our sin. He alone would be the one to completely restore us to Himself. He set the plot to climax with Himself revealing His great love to His own. Everyone who believes in Him will be saved and overcome this corrupt world.

Endnotes

[1] The book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ twice refers to Satan as "that ancient serpent" (12:9; 20:2).

[2] The following Scriptures make it clear that unbelievers who make a practice of sinning are the offspring of the ancient serpent: They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing the works Abraham did, but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are doing the works your father did." They said to him, "We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." (John 8:39-44) Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:8-10)