

# THE GOSPEL PROJECT

## THE STORY BEGINS

### GOD THE CREATOR

#### *Human Rebellion*

Many in our day are much like the Israelites frequently were in Old Testament times. **Judges 17:6 (ESV)** <sup>6</sup> *In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.* Things that may appear right in our own eyes or the eyes of others, can still be blatant sin in the eyes of God. Evangelist Billy Graham says, “Sin, first of all is doing things that are wrong, not just in the eyes of others, but in the eyes of God.” As we think of our sin, I want you to keep two verses in your heart. **1 John 1:9 (ESV)** <sup>9</sup> *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* AND **Romans 8:1 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

Today’s study is on human rebellion specifically sin against God. However, before we look into human rebellion, let’s go back a bit further in time. Just like humans who rebelled against God, there were angels who rebelled against God too.

The word angel means messenger and is a reference to their function rather than their nature. If we consider the function of angels, we might conclude that God possibly created the angels just prior to the creation of mankind because one of their duties is to minister to humans. The writer of Hebrews said of angels in **Hebrews 1:14 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> *Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?*

We know from such passages as **Ezekiel 28** and **Isaiah 14** that some of these created beings rebelled against God. God did not create sin. God created the conditions where creatures with freewill would be able to make a choice between obedience and disobedience to God.

Just like we don’t know exactly how long Adam and Eve dwelled in the Garden before committing that first sin, we do not know how long the angels existed before part of them rebelled. But, we do know that rebellion did occur. Jesus said in **Luke 10:18 (ESV)** <sup>18</sup> ... *“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.*

At the top of the ‘pecking order’ of the rebellious angels is the great adversary of God known as Satan among other names and He was the one who introduced sin to the human race. A vital part of being made in the image of God involves possessing the freedom to choose between right and wrong. Last week in **Genesis 2**, we read how God placed a certain tree in the center of the Garden and commanded Adam not to eat from that particular tree; yet, giving Adam the freedom to be obedient or disobedient.

Scripture does not say that the angels will get a chance to repent and be forgiven for their angelic rebellion. In fact, the picture is quite the opposite. Lucifer, as Satan is sometimes called, and all the other fallen angels were continually in God’s presence and had knowledge of the glory of God. Therefore, they had no excuse

for rebelling against God and turning away from Him. Satan and the other angels rebelling against God despite what they knew was the utmost evil. We should thank the LORD God that He chose to provide a way for our forgiveness. Human rebellion leads us to distrust the goodness of God's Word.

**Read Genesis 3:1-3 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"* <sup>2</sup> *And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,"* <sup>3</sup> *but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'*"

I believe that Eve was talking to the fallen angel, Satan, in the form of a literal snake because of the curse the serpent received. **Genesis 3:14 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> *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."*

However, there are those who prefer to believe that the picture of Satan in the Garden with Eve is symbolic like we see the symbolism of this same fallen angel in **Revelation 20:2 (ESV)** <sup>2</sup> *And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.* From the dawn of creation, Satan has been striving to usurp and mimic God's power.

There is one incident in the Bible where the LORD allowed an animal to speak. **Numbers 22:28 (ESV)** <sup>28</sup> *Then the LORD opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"* As I said in a previous lesson, we can believe everything in the Bible when we believe IN THE BEGINNING GOD!

Satan has had thousands of years to refine his approach in seducing us to listen to him and disobey God. However, the same old tried and true methods that worked in the Garden still are effective today. For example, Satan may sometimes whisper his lies in the form of interested advisor or confidant, maybe even a college professor. Can you distinguish between the whispers of Satan in your life and the calling of Jesus? Jesus said in **John 10:27 (ESV)** *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

However, we need not blame Satan for all of our sins because we are born with a 'sin nature' meaning we have an inborn natural inclination to sin; given the choice to do God's will or our own, we will naturally choose to do our own thing. Proof of the sin nature abounds. No one has to teach a child to lie or be selfish; rather, we go to great lengths to teach children to tell the truth and put others first. Charles Spurgeon said, "As the salt flavors every drop in the Atlantic, so does sin affect every atom of our nature. It is so sadly there, so abundantly there, that if you cannot detect it, you are deceived." We inherit our sin nature from Adam and Eve. **Romans 5:12 (ESV)** <sup>12</sup> *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—*

There is only one Person in the history of the world who did not have a sin nature: Jesus Christ. His virgin birth allowed Him to enter our world while bypassing the curse passed down from Adam. Jesus then lived a

sinless life of absolute perfection. **2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)** <sup>21</sup> *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

**Read Genesis 3:4-7 (ESV)** <sup>4</sup> *But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die.”* <sup>5</sup> *For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”* <sup>6</sup> *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.* <sup>7</sup> *Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.*

What did the woman do? She longed for more knowledge, more experiences. The sin came when she violated God’s command. The Serpent used three temptations on Eve - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These same sins are described in **1 John 2:16 (ESV)** <sup>16</sup> *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.* We have previously studied how Satan used the same types of temptation when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness. Adam and Eve were not able to resist temptation. Thank God, Jesus did.

Ellicott’s Commentary describes the woman as more quick and observant than the man, more open to impressions and curious and full of longings. The man was more passive. It didn’t take the subtlety of the Serpent with his beguiling ways to cause the man to sin. All it took was the prodding of a woman! Sometimes, we are like Adam, we find that it is easy to give into sin. Other times, we are like Eve, deceived by desires and emotions and the greener grass on the opposite side of the fence.

The sin is not in the act of being tempted. The sin comes from yielding to the temptation and being disobedient to God. We can do sinful things that no one will ever know – the sins we commit in private may not harm someone else – but they harm our relationship with God. **Luke 8:17 (ESV)** <sup>17</sup> *For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.* Adam and Eve hid themselves from God, hoping that they could hide their sin from Him. Human rebellion ruptures our relationships with God and others.

**Read Genesis 3:8-10 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> *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.* <sup>9</sup> *But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?”* <sup>10</sup> *And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”*

The cool of the day – a precious time when Adam and Eve had always communicated with their Creator before. “Where are you?” is God’s first recorded question in the Bible. When sin came into the world, it separated humans from God. We so often ask God where He is when like Adam and Eve, it is us who have moved away from God.

Adam and Eve were placed in a beautiful Garden that was good. They had personal knowledge of its delightfulness. Until they were disobedient, Adam and Eve had not experienced the guilt feelings and repercussions that would come from evil. They could have taken God at His Word and resisted experiencing

the knowledge of evil. They instead chose to believe the adversary's lie, *You will not surely die*. Oh, they didn't return to the dust that very instant but they did eventually die and they immediately died to the good things that the Creator had so freely provided, including severing the most precious gift they had been given – their personal relationship with the Most High Holy God.

After Adam and Eve sinned, they saw their own nakedness. Possibly, before they sinned, the first couple were just like young children still today who do not recognize their own nakedness. Or, possibly it was something more that had covered them before since they had been steadily communing God. We know that when Moses came down from Mount Sinai after communing with the Most High that his countenance reflected that glory. So, maybe, we could say that after they were disobedient and separated from the presence of God that they lost their 'glow' and saw their own nakedness. Centuries later, God the Father through His Son Jesus made a way so that when we go to heaven, we will be clothed in a righteousness that is not our own.

**Read Genesis 3:15-16 (ESV)** <sup>15</sup> *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.* <sup>16</sup> *To the woman he said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."*

These verses have been called the 'first gospel' because this is the first announcement of the coming Redeemer that is found in the Bible. To Satan it was God's declaration of war and to Eve it was the assurance that she was forgiven because God would use a woman to bring His Righteous Redeemer into the world. At the cross, Satan bruised Christ's heel; however that bruise was not a life-taking blow. Christ through His death and resurrection destroyed Satan's power fulfilling the promise in the Garden to crush the Serpent's head.

Human rebellion results in the shattering of God's good world.

**Read Genesis 3:22-24 (ESV)** <sup>22</sup> *Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" <sup>23</sup> therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. <sup>24</sup> He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.*

Here again we find another mention of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the words *one of us*. Warren Wiersbe explains the need for the first couple's removal from the Garden by saying, "If Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Life, they would live forever on earth as sinners, and their future would be bleak... The way to "the Tree of Life" would one day be opened by Jesus Christ through His death on the cross." **John 14:6 (ESV)** <sup>6</sup> *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. You can believe the words of Jesus or you can rebel against them – the choice is yours!*