

The Fall

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Text: Genesis 3

Introduction:

- I. No matter what one's religious background may be, the events of Genesis 3 are certainly not foreign to most.
 - A. Flippant, "ate the apple" concepts permeate popular culture
 - B. Serious Bible students look for answers to serious questions
 1. What does the text actually say happened?
 2. Is it a literal historical event or myth / legend / parable?
 3. What, if anything, does this account tell us about ourselves?

Body:

I. The Account of the Fall – Genesis 3

A. Literal History?

1. Reasons why skeptics and unbelievers reject Genesis 3 as historical reality and relegate it to myth or legend
 - a. It's miraculous character and link to a literal creation account
 - 1) Some equate the supernatural with the impossible and therefore automatically reject the account of the Fall
 - 2) Response: The wholly naturalistic approach ultimately fails (is inadequate)
 - a) It is fallible, subjective, and required to be constantly changing
 - b) There are things beyond physical testing, experimentation, definition and understanding
 - b. It is simply an attempt by ancient man to explain the moral downfall of man and the reason for suffering and imperfection by a fictitious episode designed to illustrate it
 - 1) The limitations of ancient man are touted by skeptics because they believe their knowledge and technological limitations made them "religious" (superstitious) and modern man's knowledge of the natural world has (or will) explained the things which seemed supernatural or miraculous
 - 2) Response: Man can, to some degree, learn how our world works physically, but that is the basic limit of science. There are many more questions to be answered than simply, "How does it work within natural law?"
 - c. It is a political statement reflecting Israelite culture, blaming women for sin and evil to justify patriarchy and reject matriarchy
 - 1) The New Testament is viewed by feminists as anti-woman and links are made to woman's participation in the Fall (ex. 1 Ti 2:14)
 - a) The subjugation of women to their fathers, husbands and men in general is attributed to blaming the Fall on a woman

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- 2) Response:
- a) Some of this is reverse reasoning – a social position is taken and then Scripture is rejected that contradicts that social position
 - b) Some of this is knee-jerk reaction to abuses that should not exist
 - c) Equality does not mean sameness
 - 1] Differing roles, even submission, does not imply or require inferiority
 - 2] Compare the Godhead where differing roles do not imply or require inferiority of nature
- d. It is a myth about how it felt to become separate from nature, a myth about loss and the feeling of having been somehow punished or cursed
- 1) Many humanists and naturalists take this “the earth has been spoiled by man” interpretation – salvation is returning to oneness with nature
- 2) Response:
- a) While it is true that man’s relationship with the natural world changed after his sin (Ge 3:17-19), it was God, not man who brought about the degradation of the physical world as a consequence of man’s sin
 - b) Scriptural salvation is never a return to nature, but to God who is a Being separate from this physical world
 - c) Note that man was initially charged with subduing and having dominion over the earth and all its living creatures (Ge 1:28)
 - 1] The “original sin” was not some kind of earth abuse
 - 2] This was basically restated to Noah after the Fall and the flood – man is not abusing the earth simply by using it
- e. Existence of ancient creation and fall (entrance of sin and suffering) myths and legends causes many to say the Biblical account is therefore also myth (Response in point C below)
- f. Modern evolutionary biology rejects the claims about the Biblical Adam and Eve as the direct ancestors of the human race
- 1) With the rejection of a literal Divine creation goes a literal Adam and Eve, literal garden, literal serpent, literal fruit, literal sin...
 - 2) Many modernists say, “Darwin put this myth to rest”
 - 3) Note: Some of the most outspoken evangelical organizations which promote a literal creation do so with their primary agenda being the defense of “the Fall” and thereby inherited sin and the need for redemption in Christ
 - a) “The special creation of Adam (the first man) and Eve (the first woman), and their subsequent fall into sin, is the basis for the necessity of salvation for mankind” (Answers in Genesis statement of faith -- <http://www.answersingenesis.org/about/faith>)
 - b) I am not suggesting a fundamental problem with the creation material which some organizations promoting literal creation provide, however it
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should be kept in mind that they have an “inherited sin” approach and agenda which requires a literal creation

- g. Not all who reject the literal interpretation of creation and fall claim to be unbelievers
- 1) The Catholic Church’s position attempts to straddle the issue, while embracing theistic evolution, the early man and woman to whom God gave souls sinned (whether the events of Genesis 3 are literal or not is debated) and in so doing passed sinfulness on to all mankind
 - 2) Some take the Fall story to be like a parable or allegory and therefore have no problem saying it isn’t literal, yet believe Scripture is inspired (cf. parables of Christ).

h. Response

- 1) A Christian’s faith stands in God, not in ever changing fallible so-called sciences of men
- 2) “Nowhere is it stated that the beginning of the world or of mankind was *like* anything analogous. A parable is never to be explained in terms of itself; it always involves an analogy drawn from something else. Just as it would never have been said, ‘The kingdom of God is like the kingdom of God,’ so it could never have been intended to imply, ‘The beginning of the human race was like the beginning of the human race,’ or ‘The universal flood was like the universal flood.’ Hence the parabolic element is completely missing here...” (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 201-202)
- 3) The Word made flesh taught a literal creation (Mt 19:4-5), that’s good enough for me

2. Reasons to believe the events of the Fall are literal

- a. Originally written as history in historical context (creation, fall, Cain/Abel, births, genealogy, flood, genealogy, Babel, genealogy, Abram...)
- b. Other Scriptural references treat it as history:
 - 1) Job: “If I have covered my transgressions as Adam...” (Jb 31:33)
 - 2) Paul: “...death reigned from Adam to Moses” (Ro 5:14)
 - 3) Paul: “...through one man sin entered the world...” (Ro 5:12)
 - 4) Paul: “...those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam...” (Ro 5:14)
 - a) A specific act of disobedience by Adam is under consideration in contrast to a specific act of Jesus Christ – both are literal historical events or this verse makes no sense
 - b) “From the standpoint of logic, it is virtually impossible to accept the authority of Romans 5 (‘By one man sin entered into the world... By one man’s offense death reigned by one... By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners’) without inferring that the entire human race has descended from a single father. In Romans 5, Adam is contrasted with Christ. If therefore Christ was a historical individual, Adam himself must (or else the inspired apostle was in error). Again, Paul takes the

details of Genesis 2 and of the temptation and fall in Genesis 3 as literal history” (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 200)

- 5) Paul: “The first man Adam became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit” (1 Co 15:45)
 - a) Although death is under consideration, the Fall is not specifically mentioned
 - b) This verse is senseless if Adam and Christ are not historical characters
- 6) Paul: “...Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (1 Ti 2:14)
 - a) Reason given for woman’s submission
 - b) Clearly implying a literal historical fall
- 7) Paul: “...I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Co 11:3)
 - a) Serpent’s crafty deception of Eve is a historical event
 - b) Same literal danger exists today and we are to learn from what happen to Eve
- 8) John: “serpent of old” is identified as Satan/the Devil (Rev 12:9)

B. Archeology

1. Obviously no actual evidence of the event was preserved
2. Ancient depictions are often vague, of doubtful meaning, and subject to varying interpretations
 - a. The Temptation Seal:
 - 1) “...found among ancient Babylonian tablets, now in the British Museum, seems definitely to refer to the Garden of Eden story. In the center is a Tree; on the right; a Man; on the left a Woman, plucking Fruit; behind the Woman, a Serpent, standing erect, as if whispering to her” (*Halley’s Bible Handbook*, 68)
 - a) (See Appendix 1 for picture)
 - 2) “This cylinder seal was related to the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-13) by George Smith of the British Museum (1840-76). Of it, he wrote: *One striking and important specimen of early type in the British Museum has two figures sitting one on each side of a tree, holding out their hands to the fruit, while at the back of one is stretched a serpent. We know well that in these early sculptures none of these figures were chance devices, but all represented events or supposed events, and figures in their legends; thus it is evident that a form of the story of the Fall, similar to that of Genesis, was known in early times in Babylonia.*

“Such an interpretation has been given many times since. In fact the seal belongs to a well-known genre of the Akkadian and post-Akkadian periods in Mesopotamia (twenty-third and twenty-second centuries BC), and shows a seated male figure, identified by his headdress as a deity, facing a female

worshipper. Both figures are fully clothed. The date-palm between them and the snake may have had fertility significance and there is no reason to connect the scene with the Adam and Eve story” (*Biblical Archaeology: Documents From the British Museum*, 24)

- 3) **Note:** Whether this is external evidence for the temptation and fall (or a Babylonian concept of one) or not is not of great consequence. Perhaps it is more telling that things like couples, fruit, snakes, etc. figure so prominently in ancient art and story telling
- b. The Adam and Eve Seal: “...found, 1932, by Dr. E.A. Speiser, of the University Museum of Pennsylvania, near the bottom of the Tepe Gawra Mound, 12 miles north of Nineveh. He dated the Seal at about 3500 B.C., and called it ‘strongly suggestive of the Adam and Eve story’: a naked man and a naked woman, walking as if utterly down-cast and broken-hearted, followed by a serpent. The seal is about an inch in diameter, engraved on stone. It is now in the University Museum at Philadelphia” (*Halley’s Bible Handbook*, 68)
 - 1) (See Appendix 2 for picture)
 - 2) I was unable to find additional information
 - 3) The inscription seems unclear both in form and meaning and I am skeptical about it being a strong “proof”

C. Alternate ancient accounts

1. “Early Babylonian inscriptions abound in references to a ‘tree of life,’ from which man was driven, by the influence of an evil spirit personified in a serpent...” (*Halley’s Bible Handbook*, 68)
 - a. “Adapa” is called the “Babylonian Adam” -- there are several similarities (including sinning against his god), but there are many more differences (not the first man, god is vulnerable, very different setting and context, etc.)
 - 1) Good information on Adapa at:
http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted_hildebrandt/otesources/01-genesis/text/articles-books/andreasen_adamadapa_auss.pdf
 - b. Epic of Gilgamesh, famous for its flood story, also tells of a plant associated with immortality and a snake associated with its loss
 - 1) A couple begins in harmony with nature, but achieve wisdom “like god” and clothe themselves and change their diet
 - 2) They eventually become civilized and journey to a great city
2. *Halley’s Bible Handbook* lists several other fall of man traditions among the Persians, Hindu, Greek, Chinese, Mongolians, etc. (*The Pulpit Commentary* also devotes a full page to “Traditions of the Fall,” 59b-60).
3. Understanding ancient alternate fall accounts in light of Old Testament Scripture
 - a. Skeptics insist that the existence of alternate fall accounts that are myths means that the Genesis account is also a myth
 - 1) Although ancient alternate accounts of events such as the flood and fall are generally grossly perverted and embellished, this could be expected if a historical event occurred and was handed down (generally verbally) by early man

- 2) Perverted accounts do not imply that an event never happened and/or that an accurate account cannot exist, in fact general acceptance of an event implies something must have happened
 - 3) Skeptics would complain if no other (even perversions) existed, saying there should be traditions of it, versions in religions that arose later, or at least a consciousness of it in the culture
 - 4) “Possibly the mention of a talking serpent (Gen 3:1, 4-5) might suggest a myth. But both the context itself and other references in Scripture (cf. Rev 20:2, “that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan”) make it clear that the serpent was a mere guise through which the tempter spoke to them.” (*A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, 201 footnote)
- b. The existence of fiction does not eliminate or negate the existence of accurate history
- 1) Stories of Paul Bunyan do not negate true histories of lumberjacks
 - 2) If historical fiction about Abraham Lincoln were found 1000 years from now it would not cast doubt on true historical accounts of Lincoln

II. The Events of Genesis 3

A. The events of the Fall

1. The prohibition:

- a. “...The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (Ge 2:10)
- b. Man placed in the garden of Eden, “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’” (Ge 2:15-17)
 - 1) Very common word for “command” used here and repeated in 3:11 and 3:17
 - 2) Clearly implied is
 - a) Ability to understand the directive
 - b) Ability to keep the directive
 - c) Some have objected saying that Adam could not have understood death since it evidently had not been experienced in the garden
 - 1] It was not necessary to fully comprehend or see death for him to understand the command and keep it (they knew not to do it)
 - 2] If a full knowledge or understanding of the negative consequences of sin is lacking it doesn’t change the sinfulness of the violation

2. The temptation:

- a. Serpent cunning (Ge 3:1a)
 - 1) “Crafty” (NIV, NASB, ESV); “subtle” (KJV; ASV)
 - 2) Said to the woman, “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?” (Ge 3:1b)

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- b. The woman replied, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’” (Ge 3:2-3)
 - c. Serpent: “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Ge 3:4-5)
3. The violation:
- a. Woman saw tree good for food, pleasant to the eyes, desirable to make one wise
 - b. Ate of its fruit
 - c. Gave to her husband and he ate (Ge 3:6)
4. The consequences:
- a. Immediate personal effect
 - 1) Eyes of both were opened and knew they were naked (Ge 3:7a)
 - 2) Sewed fig leaves to make themselves coverings (Ge 3:7b)
 - 3) Hid themselves when heard God walking in the garden (Ge 3:8)
 - b. Explanations
 - 1) Adam explained he hid in fear because he was naked (Ge 3:10)
 - 2) God asked who told him he was naked and asked if he had eaten of the tree which he had been commanded not to eat of (Ge 3:11)
 - 3) Adam explained that the woman God gave to be with him gave it and he ate (Ge 3:12)
 - 4) In response to God’s question, “What is this you have done?”, Eve said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate” (Ge 3:13)
 - c. Curses
 - 1) The serpent cursed more than all cattle or beast (Ge 3:14-15)
 - a) Go on belly
 - b) Eat dust
 - c) “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel”
 - 2) The woman (Ge 3:16)
 - a) Greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; bring forth children in pain
 - b) “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you”
 - 3) Adam (Ge 3:17-19)
 - a) Ground cursed, eat of it in toil
 - b) Thorns and thistles
 - c) Eat bread in the sweat of your face until return to the ground
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d) “For out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return”

d. The end

- 1) The Lord made tunics of skin and clothed them (Ge 3:20)
- 2) Sent out of garden so as not to “take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” (Ge 3:22-23)
- 3) Drove man out; cherubim guard the way to the tree of life with flaming sword which turned every way (Ge 3:24)

III. The Meaning of the Events of Genesis 3

A. The prohibition:

1. What was the prohibition?
 - a. No reason to believe it was not the eating of some (now unknown) actual fruit
 - 1) Fruit variety is NOT known
 - a) It is not known if it still exists on earth or not
 - b) Interesting that the cherubim guarded the way to the tree of life not the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
 - 1] Could be that once the violation occurred the damage was done and now the danger / temptation of eating was no longer of consequence
 - 2] Could be a common tree / fruit and it was the command of God not to eat that made it special (although its central position in the garden seems to have made it a single variety and tree)
 - 3] The fate of the tree (and the tree of life) is unknown, except for mention of the tree of life in Revelation (2:7; 22:2, 14)
 - 2) Fanciful speculations abound that the prohibition and sin was some form of sex act (with the serpent and/or Adam) which put mankind out of harmony with nature
 - a) “A connection between sexual shame and sin is not suggested by this passage, and is, besides, not true to experience.” (*Coffman’s Commentary*, <http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=003>)
 - b. Incorrect to reason/assume that it must not have been a piece of fruit because the punishment would then be too severe (more on this under the “curse” below)
2. Why the existence of a prohibition, law, opportunity to sin?
 - a. One person complained it was like giving razorblades to a baby (I believe this severely underestimates the maturity, mental capacity, and abilities of Adam and Eve)
 - b. I believe that sharing true love requires the possibility of not loving. Adam and Eve were given the possibility to choose not to love or cherish His fellowship by not respecting His will (or more highly respecting the will of another or themselves)

B. The temptation:

1. I find no Biblical indication as to how long Adam and Eve lived in the garden before the temptation and sin. We know Adam was 130 years old when Seth was begotten outside the garden (Ge 5:3)
2. The tree of knowledge of good and evil
 - a. Introduced in Ge 2:16-17 and present in Ge 3
 - b. How it gives the knowledge of good and evil – possibilities:
 - 1) It describes the consequence of what lay beyond disobedience – “you will know what it is to be good and evil”
 - 2) Ability to discern the difference between good and evil (seems they had this ability before eating)
 - 3) Wisdom in the sense of God’s wisdom, which man cannot attain on his own (Pr 30:1-4; 1:7)
 - a) God’s law makes wise the simple and enlightens the eyes (Ps 19:7-10)
 - b) The tree affords an attempt at autonomy in knowing, achieving wisdom without God
3. The serpent
 - a. What and/or who is it?
 - 1) The origin of the Hebrew word serpent (*nachash*) is somewhat doubtful, thought to allude to hissing, whispering (as in sorcery or divination), to shine (perhaps glistening eye or glossy appearance), or to move or creep (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 1:56).
 - a) It is not known what type or form of serpent is meant
 - 1] Much speculation abounds, particularly concerning whether it had legs before the curse (see comments below on the curse)
 - 2] Adam Clarke spends about three pages discussing possibilities and concludes it to have been an ape or orangutan, however he says others are at liberty to differ in opinion since he does not make it an “article of faith, nor of Christian communion” and hopes he won’t be labeled a heretic (*Clarke’s Commentary*, 1:47-50)
 - b) It is suggested that if “shiny,” “glossy” or “glistening” is meant it would add to the serpent’s appeal, craftiness and fascination for Eve
 - c) The Greek term (*ophis*) [used in 2 Co 11:3 to refer to the serpent who tempted Eve] is also generic in meaning, although it seems more clearly to indicate “a snake, serpent” (*Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*, 470)
 - 2) “more cunning than any beast of the field”
 - a) Word here is “crafty” (*arum*)
 - 1] “does not so much point out a fault as attribute praise to nature” (Calvin as quoted in *The Pulpit Commentary*, 1:57)
 - 2] “cunning (usually in a bad sense): crafty, prudent, subtle” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance, Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*, 91)

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- 3] Of the 11x in Scripture, 9 are translated as a positive attribute in the Proverbs
 - 4] Compare 2 Co 11:3
 - a] The same event is described with “his craftiness” attributed to the serpent
 - b] “PANOURGIA... unscrupulous conduct, craftiness, is always used in a bad sense in the N.T... In the Sept. it is used in a good sense...” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of the New Testament*, 256)
 - b) This form was chosen, taken, assumed or possessed because there was an attractiveness about this creature, it’s nature appearing prudent
 - 1] As we might attribute characteristics to an owl or fox after seeing their appearance or natural behavior
 - 2] This form was not chosen because it had the ability to reason, deceive or even talk
 - 3] There is a sense in which the form and one possessing the form become one in the embodiment of the most crafty beast on earth
 - b. Evidence that the serpent is (or possessed by) Satan, the Devil
 - 1) Revelation 12:9 and 20:2 identify the “serpent of old” as “the Devil and Satan” and the “dragon” of Revelation
 - 2) Same Greek word “serpent” (*ophis*) in Revelation (12:9, 14, 15; 20:2) as in 2 Co 11:3 who tempted Eve
 - 3) Coffman in his commentary on Ge 3 points out that it says the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, but doesn’t say more subtle than any other beast of the field – indicating that in reality he wasn’t a beast at all (<http://www.studydrive.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=003#3>)
 - 4) Note: Some suggest that this was Satan’s first act of rebellion against God (and man)
 - a) This cannot be demonstrated, but it would be consistent with God creating all things good (including spirit beings)
 - b) I believe Ja 3:14-15 indicates that temptation and sin can occur without the Devil, however he certainly perverts, corrupts and fans the desires of man
 4. Elements of the temptation
 - a. The serpent’s first attempt (Ge 3:1)
 - 1) Hebrew will allow two approaches
 - a) “Are there any trees in the garden of which you may not eat?” (Impeaches Divine goodness)
 - b) “Hath God said ye shall not eat of any?” (intensifies the Divine prohibition). This appears to be the sense from Eve’s response. (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 1:58)
 - c) “...there is undoubtedly a double-entendre in his opening remark ‘You will not certainly die.’ This English translation, like the original Hebrew,
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is ambiguous; does it mean ‘Certainly you will not die’ or ‘It is not certain that you will die?’ ...the ambiguity means the hearer must choose between taking it as ‘No: you will certainly die’ or ‘You will certainly not die.’ Yet another possibility that has been suggested is that the snake is simply denying the woman’s incorrect addition to God’s words, namely, that touching the tree will kill. (Note: the snake might say ‘No: you will certainly die’ because he then wants to impugn the Divine motivation).” (*Word Biblical Commentary*, 74)

- 2) He questions whether it is a sin (or known to be a sin) by misquotation of God and casts doubt on God’s original generous permission
- b. The woman’s response (Ge 3:2-3)
- 1) Corrects that may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden
 - a) Gives exception: May not eat fruit of tree in middle of garden
 - b) Gives reason: “God has said...”
 - 1] Do not eat it
 - 2] She omits “every” (God said, “every tree of the garden you may freely eat” – Ge 2:16) and adds what is not recorded elsewhere: “nor shall you touch it”
 - a] Possibilities:
 - 1} “Touch it” was prohibited orally by God but not recorded in our record
 - 2} Eve added or assumed this
 - 3} “Touch it” was part of the picking / eating process
 - 4} It was a general “don’t mess with it at all” statement or you’ll end up dead (probably because you’ll eat of it)
 - b] Note: There are Hebrew legends that the serpent in response pushed Eve against the tree or took a piece of its fruit and touched her with it, pointing out that there were no negative consequences – supposedly enhancing his next statement that death would not come if they ate of it (certainly no Biblical evidence or even hint of this)
 - c] Be careful drawing too many conclusions or lessons from this since we can’t know for certain
 - c) Gives Divine consequence: “lest you die”
 - 1] Coffman, Clarke, and others see this as Eve altering God’s word by saying “lest ye die” (meaning “ye might die”) rather than “thou shalt surely die (meaning “certainly” – Ge 2:17)
(<http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=003#3>)
 - 2] I found 124 occurrences of the Hebrew word “lest” (*pen*) in the O.T. and, although used in the sense of “might,” it is also translated simply as “that” in several places and in many places “lest” points to an event which will certainly occur IF conditions

are met (therefore it is in the sense of “might” but not an expression of doubt if/when the conditions are met)

- 3] Some see a progression in Eve’s response:
 - a] Her not saying “*every* fruit,” adding “touch it,” and saying “lest you die” rather than “surely”
 - b] I tend to agree with Bush, “Where there are so many *real* grounds for condemning Eve’s conduct, it is our duty to be cautious in giving those which are problematical” (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 1:58)
- 2) Important to note that God’s command is clearly known and understood – even in the face of questioning she corrects a misstatement by the serpent
- c. The serpent’s second attempt (Ge 3:4-5)
 - 1) Flat denial of the certainty of the death consequence of eating the fruit
 - a) Possible meanings:
 - 1] The woman doesn’t correctly know or understand the command
 - 2] God has not told the truth about the death consequence
 - 3] God will not impose the death consequence
 - b) He denies there is any danger and attempts to remove fear of God’s warning(s)
 - c) Hence Christ’s description of devil as “...a liar, and the father of it” (Jn 4:44).
 - 2) Impugned the motives of God
 - a) Accuses God of not wanting
 - 1] Their eyes opened
 - 2] Them to be “as gods knowing good and evil”
 - a] May be an attempt to pervert the meaning of “God” – since the Hebrew is “Elohiym” (translated in the singular when in reference to Jehovah God), but also used by the serpent perhaps with the implication that the plural form means they too can be “gods”
 - b] “knowing good and evil”
 - 1] Attacking God as withholding something useful, something He possesses which they may not have from Him
 - 2] Serpent implies that what God will not give, she has within her power to take (and to give)
 - 3] An autonomy is proposed – God determines what is good and evil, by eating of this tree YOU can know / determine good and evil for yourself

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- 3] In addition to an attack on the goodness of God, this also supplies the serpent's own consequence of eating (who is right or to be believed?)
- a] God said you will die
 - b] Serpent said your eyes will be opened and will be as gods
 - c] It was a challenge as to who will be believed and revered, but the serpent made sure the consequence he promised was more appealing than the consequence God promised
- b) Note: When the serpent says, "in the day you eat", "you" is plural – he knows this is an opportunity to get both to eat. The prohibition used the singular because God addressed Adam, but the serpent employs the plural (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 1:58)
- d. What the woman "saw" (Ge 3:6a)
- 1) It was good for food
 - 2) It was pleasant to the eyes
 - a) "Pleasant" is a Hebrew word (*taavah*) which includes "desire" and "lusting" (*Strong's Dictionary*)
 - b) It was stimulating desire through the eyes
 - 3) It was "desirable to make one wise"
 - a) Wise: "circumspect," "intelligent," "wise," "understanding" (*Strong's Dictionary*)
 - b) I believe the idea is more than her simply wanting to know or experience something she had not – she wanted to "...be or become understanding" (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 1:59)
 - 4) I do not think it a coincidence that these are comparable to "lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" of 1 Jn 2:16
- e. Note: Some stumble over Eve's failure to be put off by a talking serpent and thereby reject the account as literal or the serpent as literal
- 1) What was "normal" and to be expected in the new garden in which they lived? Also, fear of man not yet among the creatures (Ge 9:2)
 - 2) The event of Balaam and his talking donkey (Nu 22:28-30) demonstrates that there can be circumstances where abnormal things can occur without the participant stopping to be shocked by their abnormality
- C. The violation (Ge 3:6b):
- 1. The woman took of the fruit and ate
 - a. I see no reason to believe she did anything other than actually / literally take and eat fruit
 - b. It is "when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin" (Jas 1:15)
 - 2. "The clauses suggesting rapidity of action – 'she saw,' 'she took,' 'she gave'" (*Word Biblical Commentary*, 75)
 - 3. The woman gave to her husband
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- a. “with her”
 - 1) Some think this means Adam was present for the whole event
 - 2) I believe it is preferable to understand “with her” as signifying their relationship or with her in the garden
 - b. He ate the fruit
4. 1 Ti 2:14 says that although Eve was deceived, Adam was not
 - a. “Wuest observes, ‘The first word ‘deceived,’ is the translation of *apatao*, ‘to cheat, deceive, beguile.’ The second instance of the use of the word is *exapatao*, ‘to completely or thoroughly deceive.’” (*Truth Commentaries*, 1-2 Timothy, 54)
 - b. “Lenski adds, ‘Paul uses the simples ‘was not deceived’ when speaking of Adam and the compound with *ek* when speaking of the woman, she was ‘completely deceived’” (*Truth Commentaries*, 1-2 Timothy, 54)
 - c. Adam knowingly did what was wrong
 - 1) There are fanciful speculations as to why Adam willingly sinned (he didn’t care, he didn’t want to be alone, loved Eve more than God, etc.)
 - 2) In contrast with Eve, we simply don’t know the thought process, if any, that went into Adam’s choice to eat what he knew (because he was not deceived) he was commanded to not eat
- D. The consequence (Ge 3:7-19):
1. Immediate personal consequence
 - a. Eyes opened and they know they are naked
 - 1) Until this time being naked was not a problem, not simply because others were not around (or, as some suggest, they had no sensual desires), but they were as innocent children (but not children in understanding and mental maturity) and their nakedness simply did not cross their minds and made no difference or impact on their lives or thoughts
 - 2) It is the knowing of their nakedness that makes them ashamed and fearful
 - 3) From this point on, Scripture uses nakedness as a word for being exposed, vulnerable, humiliation, etc.
 - b. It is perhaps difficult for us to appreciate the perfection of fellowship with God they had in the garden and the terrible fear that they felt when their knowledge of their nakedness attested to that fellowship’s violation
 2. The revelation of the sin
 - a. Anthropomorphism is used to portray God walking in the garden
 - b. Hiding from the Omnipresent God is impossible, but men of all ages look for temporary relief by trying
 - 1) First attempt to hide was the fig leaf coverings they made
 - a) “‘Loincloths’ [Hebrew]: elsewhere used of a belt (1 Kgs 2:5; 2 Kgs 3:21; Isa 3:24).” After giving usual different term for loincloths says, “Perhaps again the skimpiness of their clothing is being emphasized.” (*Word Biblical Commentary*, 76)
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- b) I do not see reason to attach meaning to an attempt to cover their genitals since we cannot be sure they even covered that!
 - c) Evidently, acting like they didn't know they were naked wasn't an option – God would know they knew – so they sought comfort in not feeling or appearing completely naked
- 2) Note the questions of God (“Where are you?” “Who told you that you were naked?” “Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” “What is this that you have done?”)
- a) These do not cast doubt on God's omniscience, but give Adam and Eve the opportunity to confess
 - b) Compare with Cain (Gen 4:9). God knew, “The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground” (Ge 4:10)
- c. The man admits eating but implicates
- 1) “The woman... she gave me of the tree”
 - 2) God, “The woman whom You gave me”
- d. The woman admits eating but implicates
- 1) “The serpent”
 - 2) Deception: “deceived me”
 - a) Note how the involvement of others does not remove guilt
 - b) Note how being deceived (“lead astray... delude... seduce” [*Strong's Dictionary*], “Literally, caused me to forget” [*The Pulpit Commentary*, 1:65]) does not remove guilt
 - 3) Note on “What is this you have done?” – “The meaning of this is: How could you have done such a thing! It is the same expression used by the pagan sailors who reproached Jonah with the words, What is this that thou hast done? (Jonah 1:10)” (*Coffman's Commentary*, <http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=003>)
 - a) “Or, ‘Why hast thou done this?’ (LXX, Vulgate, Luther, De Wette). ‘But the Hebrew phrase has more vehemence... ‘How hast thou done this?’ (Calvin)” (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 1:65)
3. Curses
- a. “‘To curse’ is the antonym of ‘to bless’ (cf. Gen 12:3). In the Bible, to curse means to invoke God's judgment on someone, usually for some particular offense” (*Word Biblical Commentary*, 78)
 - b. The serpent
 - 1) On the instrument
 - a) “On your belly you shall go” may or may not mean that the serpent originally had legs
 - 1] It does not literally “eat dust,” but this is an expression of lowering and humiliation, the same meaning may be attributed to “on your belly you shall go”
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- 2] Perhaps the locomotion of snakes will now be attached to what happened in the garden (and sin) in the minds of men
 - b) "...curse fell upon Satan's instrument as an instruction both for Satan and for mankind of the inherent disaster inevitably associated with Satan's use of anything whatsoever. If the latter is true, it is no greater a theological problem than Jesus' cursing of the fig tree, or of God's cursing the ground 'for Adam's sake' a few moments later. Henceforth and forever, the lowly serpent, hated and ruthlessly exterminated by the people of all nations, would serve as a suitable and 'visible symbol of God's displeasure with sin.'" (*Coffman's Commentary*, <http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=003>)
 - c) Ultimately, the devil should be seen as the cause of the curse, not God
- 2) The stages
- a) The enmity
 - 1] The curse is turning from the physical instrument (serpent) to the tempting possessor (Satan)
 - 2] Between "you" and the "woman"
 - a] Satan (not snakes) will be viewed as the enemy of mankind (of all who, like Eve, will be tempted / deceived by him)
 - b] Eve is the "mother of all living" (Ge 3:21) therefore "woman" may stand for all living
 - b) The conflict
 - 1] Between "your seed" and "her Seed"
 - a] "your seed"
 - 1} Those who become children of the devil by being deceived and following his ways
 - 2} Jesus: "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?" (Mt 22:33)
 - 3} "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning..." (1 Jn 3:8)
 - b] "her Seed"
 - 1} May include all who follow the way that is right (Ro 16:20, "And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly...")
 - 2} Specifically / perfectly alludes to Jesus Christ (Ga 4:4)
 - 3} "Seed of woman" is an odd reference since the "seed" literally is of the man and the common usage of "seed" for "offspring" or "descendent" is also usually of the man. Therefore, this may be an allusion to the virgin birth of Christ.
 - 4} Note singular pronouns, "He shall" and "His heel"
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5} NT Christ and seed references: Ga 3:16, 19; He 2:4; 1 Jn 3:8

c) The victory

- 1] He will ... you will... “The imperfect verb is iterative. It implies repeated attacks by both sides to injure the other. It declares lifelong mutual hostility between mankind and the serpent race.”
(*Word Biblical Commentary*, 80)
- 2] Head bruised of serpent
 - a] Death blow of Christ’s victory over Satan and death through the cross and resurrection
- 3] Heel bruised of her Seed
 - a] “The biting of the heel may denote the mean, insidious character of the devils warfare (T. Lewis)” (*The Pulpit Commentary*, 1:66)
 - b] Painful, but not permanent wound of the devil to Jesus Christ (the cross)

c. The woman

- 1) “greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception, in pain you shall bring forth children”
 - a) Probably entails the entire generally unpleasant female cyclical reproductive system and processes of gestation and birth
 - b) Some suggest that “in pain / sorrow you shall bring forth children” may include the bringing up processes as well since the word is used this way as in Ge 50:23
 - c) Some believe “multiply... your conception” means conception (and therefore its childbirth pains) became easier, making it potentially more frequent
- 2) “Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you”
 - a) Woman had been given man as a helpmeet (Ge 2:18), but the events of the Fall were a reversal of Divine order
 - 1] 1 Co 11:8-9; 1 Ti 2:14 ascribe meaning to man being created first and headship / submission
 - 2] Possible meanings
 - a] Women will desire to submit to their husbands
 - b] Women’s desires will be in conflict with their husbands (they will desire to be independent, lead, or freely choose)
 - b) In the end, husbands will rule over wives
 - 1] It is generally, although not universally, seen in history and societies
 - 2] It is by Divine will / mandate

d. The man

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- 1) Ground cursed “for your sake”
 - a) “In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life”
 - b) Thorns and thistles will grow
 - c) Eat the herb of the field
 - 1] In contrast to the garden which produced fruit from trees man tended, now work must be done to a field to cause it to produce food
 - 2] Feeding man will require his own “sweat” (hard work)
 - 3] Note that eating is mentioned five times in three verses. Man sinned in eating the fruit and therefore he is punished in what he eats
 - 4] Some have suggested a parallel with the woman – man suffers pain in his role of providing something to eat, woman suffers pain in her role of bearing children
 - d) Until man returns to the ground: “For out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return”
 - 1] First mention of the physical death consequence that will occur
 - 2) Death
 - a) In Ge 2:17, “day” is the usual Hebrew word “*yom*” and I see no reason to assume it means anything other than an ordinary day
 - b) In Ge 2:17 it literally reads, “shall die die” (same Hebrew word is repeated). Strong’s Dictionary indicates that it “denotes a rendering in the A.V. that results from an idiom peculiar to the Heb.” (*Strong’s Dictionary, Signs Employed*, 6)
 - c) The New Testament connects the sin of Adam to both physical (1 Co 15:22) and spiritual death (Ro 5:12)
 - 1] Physically: The day Adam ate he was a dead man (in the sense there is no stopping death) or the unalterable death process began
 - 2] Spiritually: The day Adam ate he fell out of fellowship with God, the source of spiritual life (separated by sin – Is 59:2)
 - e. The earth
 - 1) Important to recognize that the state of physical perfection in the garden of Eden was cursed and therefore many of the difficulties and imperfections we see today have been caused
 - 2) With the curse and death has come physical degradation and continued deterioration (much suffering and physical problems in the world today can be attributed to this)
 4. The curse and the justice of God
 - a. Skeptics ask: If a child in our care were to disobey our instruction for the first time would we lash out with a severe punishment at the first offence of disobedience?
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- 1) This causes some to assert that Adam & Eve did something worse than eat a piece of forbidden fruit
 - 2) This causes some to reject the Fall account as inconsistent with the gracious God they believe in and it causes others to blaspheme and reject God
 - 3) Response: Some are critical of God for judging “simples” for disobeying a command they couldn’t understand, while others condemn God for judging Adam and Eve for breaking such a simple command!
 - 4) Response: There is a difference between innocence and mental immaturity
 - a) Adam and Eve understood the command
 - b) They did not need to experience death (see something die) to know that they shouldn’t disobey God
 - c) Eve conversed with the serpent about the death consequence, knew it was a bad thing (this is why the serpent had to deny it would happen if they ate)
- b. Author Paul Alan Laughlin, (Professor and former Chair of the Department of Religion and Philosophy, Otterbein College, Westerville, Ohio, where he teaches Comparative Religions and American Religious History), drew an analogy between the story of Genesis 3 and “*a more modern scenario.*” He wrote the following parable in his book, *Remedial Christianity: What Every Believer Should Know about the Faith, but Probably Doesn’t*:
- 1) “A woman bakes a batch of cookies for a party. She warns her twins, aged 3, to not eat any. She explained to them, deceitfully, that if they did, then she would kill them. Not thinking things through carefully, she placed the cookies on a table, easily accessible to the twins. A brother who was older, wiser and more mature than the twins asked whether their mother had forbidden them to eat anything in the house. The girl twin, Edna, said that mother had only forbidden them to eat the cookies -- on pain of death. The older brother chuckled and told his sister that parents did that a lot. He said: “*Of course she wouldn’t kill you. She simply wants to deny you the pleasure of munching on the cookies. She doesn’t want to share the cookies. She wants to keep them all to herself.*” Edna does exactly what any adult could predict: she eats one. Then, she persuades her twin brother Albert to eat another.”
- “The mother returns, not aware of the twin’s disobedience. She notices crumbs on the table and on the twins’ lips. She correctly concludes that the twins have eaten cookies. She flies into a rage, beats them, and throws them out of the house to fend for themselves. She cuts them out of her will. She does all she can to make the lives of any future descendants of the twins miserable.”
- “An outside observer might wonder why the mother did not have the sense to prevent the theft by putting the cookies out of reach of the twins. The observer would probably consider her an abusive parent for treating her children so harshly for simply doing what kids will naturally do. The observer might well consider the mother’s actions indefensible, because the children are barely out of the toddler stage. They have no moral sense --
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they cannot really differentiate between right and wrong.”

Laughlin concludes that in Genesis 3: “We call this God ‘just’ and ‘righteous’ for putting temptation close at hand and punishing people who, in their naïve and childlike innocence, couldn’t have known any better than to do a deed that any deity (or human) with common sense could have foreseen and prevented.” (*Remedial Christianity: What every believer should know about the faith, and probably doesn’t*, 153)

a) Response:

- 1] Incorrect to make Adam and Eve comparable to age 3 in mental ability and maturity
 - 2] Blasphemous to compare God to someone who is deceitful and unthinking
 - 3] Blasphemous to say any adult could predict what would happen, implying that God didn’t or couldn’t
 - 4] Blasphemous to imply that God didn’t know about the disobedience
 - 5] The cookie eating is an over-simplification of what happens with Adam and Eve and the consequence therefore seems harsh and even abusive. Note: Banishment from the garden of two adults is not the same as kicking 3 year olds out of the house to fend for themselves!
 - 6] This story is not parallel to the events of the Fall and is blasphemous in its equating God to an unthinking parent who abuses naïve children
- 2) A serious rebellion -- an inversion of roles has occurred
- a) God “saw... that it is good” (Ge 1:25, etc.), the woman “saw that the tree was *good*”
 - b) God *takes* the man and the rib (2:15, 21, 22, 23), the woman *takes* the fruit
 - c) God *brought* the woman to the man (2:22), the woman *gave* the fruit to the man
 - d) The man listens to his wife instead of God, the woman to the creature
 - e) God *made* all man requires, the man and wife *made* loin coverings
- 3) We must not underestimate the rebellion, disobedience, and unloving rejection that occurred when Adam and Eve -- who were physically, mentally, and morally mature -- ate what had been forbidden by God
- 4) Remember, death is not an arbitrary consequence, but the effect of loss of fellowship with God, the life source -- and this was willingly chosen

E. The end:

1. “the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them”

- a. Interesting to note that they were still naked with loin coverings, but clothed when wearing tunics
- b. There is no direct evidence that the animal(s) of these skins was sacrificed or intended to be seen as some kind of blood offering (we are simply not told where the skin came from or that it was intended to impart significance)
 - 1) “The garments supplied by God necessitated the slaying of animals, and some have concluded from this that the institution of animal sacrifices began here, but there is nothing in the text to support this” (*Coffman’s Commentary*, <http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=003>)
2. “Behold the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil”
 - a. God speaks of Himself in the plural (“Us”) correctly indicating the presence of the Father, Word, and Spirit (cf. “Us” also in Ge 3:26 and 11:7)
 - b. They are not “as gods” as Satan promised (not even in knowing all good and all evil), but they have proclaimed their autonomy in knowing “good and evil”
3. “take of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”
 - a. Either, one time eating would impart eternal life, or continual eating of it (it had not been forbidden) would assure life (separation would mean eventual death) (Note: the tree of life pictured in Re 22:2 appears to be something eaten on an on-going basis)
 - b. Man / woman (and all their descendants) were forced and barred from the tree of life and its ability to allow man to live forever (hence mankind began dying physically with the inability to stop it)
4. Cherubim and a flaming sword guard the way to the tree of life
 - a. “These strange creatures figured prominently in the writings of the O.T. In the tabernacle they are identified with the throne of God (Exodus 37:7); depictions of them adorned the veil separating between the Holy of Holies and the Sanctuary (Exodus 36:35); they are described as having six wings in Isa. 6; and they appear again in Rev. 4. Note that the Cherubim do not wield the sword; it turns of its own accord.” (*Coffin’s Commentary*, <http://www.studylight.org/com/bcc/view.cgi?book=ge&chapter=003>)

IV. The Fall as Related to the Subsequent Sinfulness of Mankind

A. Why the perceived theological need for inherited sin / sinful nature?

1. It is almost universally agreed that the doctrine of original sin is not stated in its traditional form in the Bible
 - a. Although Genesis 3 records an “original sin” (first sin) it does not speak of its transmission to future generations
 - 1) Although the struggle with sin is found throughout the pages of both the Old and New Testaments, there are only a few references to the sin of Adam and Eve – however most of these are not discussing or explaining sinfulness
 - a) Job 31:33 (hide his sin “like Adam”)
 - b) Romans 5 (death reigned from Adam to Moses)
 - c) I Cor. 15:45 (“The first man Adam became a living being...”)

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- d) I Tim. 2:14 (Adam not deceived, the woman, therefore not authority over man)
 - e) II Cor. 11:3 – (Eve deceived, Paul fears they will be deceived)
 - f) Rev. 20:2 – (The “serpent of old,” identified as Satan/the Devil)
 - 2) As prevalent as the doctrine of inherited sin is in almost all denominational theology, teaching and common thought, it seems it should be clearly found throughout Scripture, but it’s not and the event is hardly even mentioned!
 - b. It is generally agreed that Augustine of Hippo (354-430) was the first to formulate the doctrine as a formal theology
 - 1) He felt pushed to respond to Pelagius, a monk who taught grace was not needed to initially respond to God because we are not born sinners
 - a) Pelagius had a lot of things right, but Augustine’s political strength in the Catholic Church eventually overwhelmed him and he was declared a heretic at the Council of Carthage (418), banished from Rome, and his future and final end are somewhat of a mystery
 - b) Interestingly, Augustine is to have written Pelagius about his denial of inherited sin, asking why they then baptize infants. Pelagius seems to have struggled with this question
 - 2) Reformers such as Luther, Calvin and others tended to expand on or modify Augustinian theology on inherited sin
 - 2. An attempt at understanding God’s nature
 - a. Is He both evil and good?
 - b. Did God create evil?
 - c. Is God just when He judges / punishes evil if He created evil, made man capable of evil, tempted man or allowed him to be tempted, allowed man to subsequently be born sinful, etc.?
 - 3. An attempt at understanding man’s nature
 - a. Was the first man / woman completely innocent?
 - b. Did the first man / woman have the ability to understand good / evil and its consequence(s)?
 - c. Why did the first man / woman choose sin?
 - d. Why is there sin and suffering in the world after Eden?
 - 1) Why do all sin?
 - 2) Why are even young children bad (selfish, cry, etc.)?
 - 3) Why does man die / deserve physical / spiritual death?
 - 4. An attempt at understanding why the physical world is imperfect

V. False Doctrinal Consequences of Acceptance of Inherited Sin / Sinful Nature

- A. In the denominations

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1. Adam's sin is transmitted spiritually to all so that man's nature and / or tendencies are sinful / evil
 - a. There are varying degrees among the denominations to which man is seen to be born depraved
 - 1) Some believe man still has a free-will and the ability to choose at least some good (Ex: Catholic, Lutheran, etc.)
 - 2) Some believe man is so totally depraved that he cannot believe, choose, or do any good without an act of Divine help (grace) (Ex: Calvinism)
 - 3) Some teach babies who die are lost in sin, while others find ways for "innocents" to have a place near the presence of God, special acts of grace, second chances (Ex: Premillennialism), or they simply say it is a "mystery"
 - b. Personal responsibility for sin is diminished
 - 1) Many of the "don't make people feel guilt" approaches are rooted in the idea that we can't help it, our nature is corrupted
 - 2) Much of the "I'm only human" excuse for sin has its roots here
 2. Sexual desire was connected to original sin by some
 - a. Sexual desire was seen as proof of or a penalty for original sin
 - b. Sexual union was to be for procreation only, not for joy as part of the oneness of marriage
 - c. Sin was transferred like a virus through the sexual act (conception) to children
 - d. Chastity was equated with sexual abstinence in all areas (including in marriage and encouraged celibacy)
 - e. Celibacy is seen as a higher calling and religious workers are encouraged / forced to embrace
 3. Many other denominational doctrines have their roots in the doctrine of inherited sin
 - a. Various doctrines to explain why Jesus did not have original sin
 - b. Mary the mother of Jesus – Immaculate conception, perpetual virginity, sinless throughout life, assumption into heaven (did not die), mediatrix, veneration of (Catholic)
 - c. Infant baptism (and various doctrines to explain why infants who die will or will not go to hell)
 - d. Limbo (Catholic)
 - e. Mortal / Venial sin doctrines – attempt to make God just by saying some sin eternally condemns while some sin does not (Catholic – however many others view some sin as inconsequential)
 - f. All aspects of Calvinism logically proceed from "total hereditary depravity" that is inseparably linked to the Fall (some struggle with Calvinism because it appears logical, however without the false first premise of inherited depravity, none of the rest of the doctrines are logical or necessary)
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- g. Many non-Calvinist denominations have doctrines on grace, the Holy Spirit's work in the heart of the sinner, and man's inability to respond to God which are linked to the Fall
 - 4. I believe this doctrine makes God appear unjust and gives His enemies cause to blaspheme Him
- B. Responses to doctrines of inherited sin
- 1. Note: New attacks on inherited sin by feminists (blames woman), modernists (early man needed myth to explain what modern man now understands through the sciences), psychology (guilt feelings bad for mental health), atheists (no God, no creation, no Adam & Eve), and liberal theologians (generally affected by all of the above and trying to make religion respectable to the world)
 - a. Some ultra-liberals advocate turning from the negative concepts of "original sin" to the "original blessing" (everything began "good").
 - b. Augustinian interpretation is seen as irrelevant because a literal account of creation has been supposedly disproven by science and the shame and guilt concepts produce a sense of alienation which is not where we want to be in our lives
 - c. So, inherited sin is under attack today, but not for the right reasons!
 - d. Note: Sometimes feminism, modernism, modern psychology, atheism, and liberalism are under attack, but not for the right reasons (to protect and defend the doctrine of original sin)
 - 2. The Bible simply does NOT teach inherited sin, in fact it teaches the opposite
 - a. The New International Version's use of "sinful nature" (23 times in the NT) is at best confusing, especially to those who are already misled by denominational inherited corrupt nature doctrines
 - 1) Note: the corrupt nature of man is not under question, how his nature becomes corrupt is the point
 - 2) Illust.: Ep 2:1-3 – "were by nature children of wrath", but not because born that way – "dead in trespasses and sins, in which you one walked... we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh..."
 - b. Throughout the Scriptures, personal responsibility for sin and sinfulness is consistently taught:
 - 1) Matthew 19:14; 18:3 – kingdom of heaven is like little children
 - 2) Mk 7:20-23 – defiled by actions decided in his heart
 - 3) Jn 8:34 – enslavement to what he commits
 - 4) Ro 1:32 – people worthy of death because of what they practice
 - 5) Ro 2:6-10 – every man rewarded according to his works at judgment
 - 6) Ro 3:9-18, 23 – "under sin" because we turned aside
 - 7) Ro 6:16, 19 – servants of sin because obey sin
 - 8) Ro 7:9 – was a time when Paul was alive without the law
 - 9) Ro 14:12 – each gives account of himself to God
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- 10) 2 Co 5:10 – judgment is based on personal, bodily actions
 - 11) 1 Ti 6:10 – the root of evil is misplaced love
 - 12) Ja 1:14, 15 – spiritual death when each man is tempted
 - 13) Ja 2:10, 11 – person becomes guilty when stumbles
 - 14) 1 Jn 3:4 – sin is transgression
 - 15) 1 Pe 2:22 – Jesus was not a sinner because he DID no sin
 - 16) Other N.T. references and many OT. references (Ex: Dt 24:16; 2 Ch 25:4; Ezekiel 18:4, 20) – however, in reality, any Biblical warning not to sin, command to stop sinning, (repent, obey, etc.), or account of sinners who are held responsible for personal sin shows that the doctrine of inherited sin is not Biblical or of God
- c. Some claim Ps 51:5 teaches original sin
- 1) Doesn't say David inherited Adam's sin or guilt
 - 2) Either describing the guilt of his mother or is an exaggeration to express that everyone and everything in his environment was sinful and a sinful influence (cf. Ps 22:9; 71:6)
 - 3) "Consider parallel language in Acts 2:8. People were born in a native language or tongue. Did they inherit the language? Was it part of their inherent nature? No, but the people around them spoke it, so they soon learned it." (David Pratte, http://www.gospelway.com/salvation/original_sin.php)
- d. Some claim 1 Co 15:22 teaches original sin
- 1) Physical death, not spiritual death, is under discussion
 - 2) All men unconditionally experience physical death as a consequence of Adam's sin, but note that Christ unconditionally will make all alive at the resurrection from physical death at His coming (1 Co 15:23)
 - 3) When Adam left the garden and lost access to the tree of life all his decedents (including us) lost it as well and we therefore die physically
- e. Some claim Ro 5 teaches original sin
- 1) Context *is* discussing spiritual death, but does not say it is unconditionally inherited
 - 2) Note the argument being made:
 - a) "through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin" (Ro 5:12)
 - b) "and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Ro 5:12)
 - 1] Adam was the first to sin and introduced the world to sin and death
 - 2] This death spread to all men, not because they inherited it, but because upon exposure to sin all men choose to sin
 - 3] Note: "death spread to all men" "BECAUSE all sinned"
 - c) Adam is a "type of Him who was to come" (Ro 5:14)
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- 1] One man's offence many died / by one Man, Jesus Christ the grace of God abounded to many (Ro 5:15)
 - 2] What came through Adam resulted in condemnation / the free gift through Christ resulted in justification (Ro 5:16)
 - 3] By the offence of one death reigned / by the abundance of grace those will reign in life (Ro 5:17)
 - 4] By one man's offense came the result of condemnation / by one Man's righteous act came the justification of life (Ro 5:18)
 - 5] By one man's disobedience many were made sinners / by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous (Ro 5:19)
- 3) There is a stark contrast being made between what Adam brought to man and what Christ brought to man
 - a) At the very beginning Adam violated law and died (spiritually)
 - b) Having introduced law-breaking, his descendants also died, breaking God's law as Adam did (even though they sinned in different ways – Ro 5:14)
 - c) Following (choosing) the way of Adam is the way of law-breaking and death / condemnation
 - d) Following (choosing) the way of Christ is the way of faith and life / justification
 - e) To use this verse to teach universal sinfulness in Adam (inherited sin) would require acceptance of universal justification (inherited sinlessness)
 - f) Note: Contextually, the discussion is justification through faith in Christ rather than through law (including the Law of Moses). Adam is the failure of law-keeping leading to death, Christ is overcoming through faith leading to life. As the context continues into chapter 6 man's role in sanctification (choice, repentance, bearing fruit, etc.) is clearly established

Conclusion:

- I. Adam and Eve didn't have original sin and yet they sinned, why do I need it to explain that I am a sinner? Why I sin may be a complicated web of external and internal physical and mental factors. Whether I can always define and explain these or not does not change my personal responsibility for my sin, my accountability before God, and my need for forgiveness through the grace found in coming to and remaining in Jesus Christ. Why do I need the sin of Adam to be labeled dead in sin when I have enough sins of my own to be so justly labeled, and more!

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Appendix 1

“The Temptation” Seal



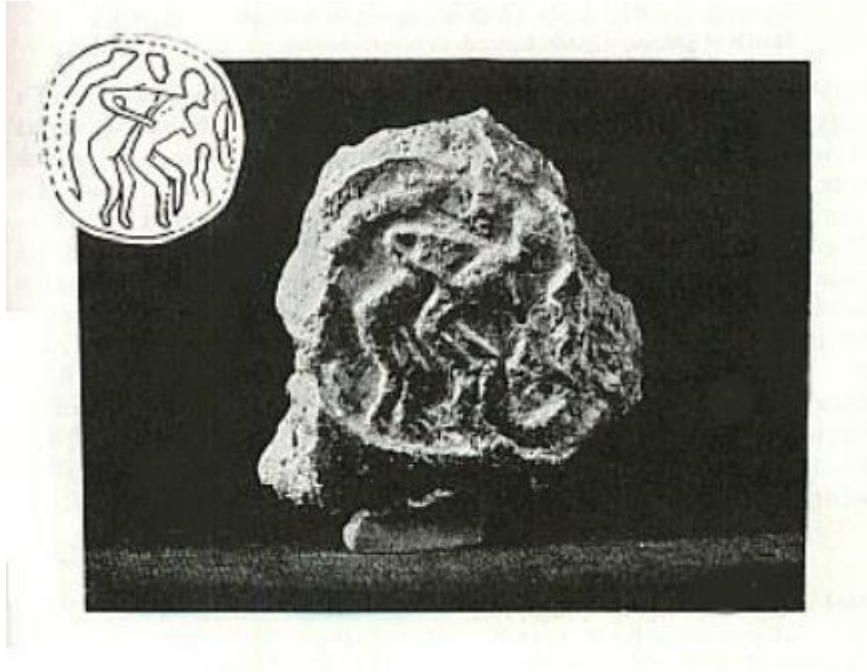
(http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_image.aspx?image=ps343007.jpg&retpage=18540)



(Halley's Bible Handbook [enlarged])

Appendix 2

“Adam and Eve” Seal



<http://www.bible-archaeology.info/adam.htm>