

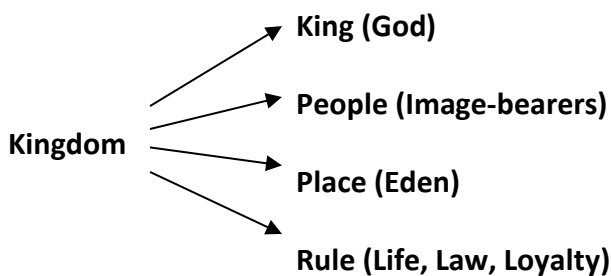
THE STORY OF THE BIBLE

ACT 2: THE FALL

REVIEW

- What are some things we learned about God last week in Act 1?
- What are some things we learned about Man last week in Act 1?
- What are some things we learned about the Place and Rule in Act 1?
- If things continued as Genesis 2 ends—no sin and Adam and Eve live out their given purpose and mission—what do you think life might have looked like for humanity?

The Story of God's Kingdom with Man



The Bible is about God and his kingdom, which is his people in his place under his good and gracious rule.

Genesis 1-2 is about the King making a place to dwell among His people, where they enjoy Him and reflect Him.

Genesis 3 tells the tragedy of the King exiling His rebellious people, but the beauty of His mercy that outmatches their sin.

Act 2: The Fall (Genesis 3)

Genesis 3:1-7—Revolt in the Kingdom

Genesis 3:8-19—Ruin in the Kingdom

Genesis 3:20-24—The Response of the King

1. THE NATURE OF TEMPTATION, IDOLATRY, AND SIN

"I still think, If I only had _____, I'd finally be happy. What fills in the blank is a little different depending on my season of life or even the circumstances of my day, but I repeat the same error over and over. I think something temporary will solve something eternal. This is perhaps Satan's greatest hit." Jared Wilson

"Idols aren't just stone statues. No, idols are the thoughts, desires, longings, and expectations that we worship in the place of the true God. Idols cause us to ignore the true God in search of what we think we need." Elyse Fitzpatrick

The words/thoughts	The Lie	The Temptation	Denial of God
"God said you can't eat from any tree" (1)	God is not good & doesn't want the best for you.	To think wrongly about God & reject him based on a false view.	Denial of God's character and care.
"You won't die" (4)	What God said is not really true.	To determine for myself what is true.	Denial of God's word and truthfulness.
"You will be like God" (5)	You can become like God.	Individual autonomy and self-rule.	Denial of God's sovereignty and rule.
The tree was a delight to her eyes and she desired it.	There's something better out there apart from God.	To want something other than what God has given.	Denial of God's provision.

- 1) Doubt and confusion about God's Word as Satan questions God ("did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'" ; 3:1)
 - Creates confusion about what God has said or what His words mean.
 - Suggests God would not say such a thing or He would be unkind and unloving if He did.
 - Subtle twisting of God's Word leads to misunderstanding (you shall not eat of *any* tree).
 - Plants the seed of doubt and unbelief in God's Word and character, and chips away at trust in God.
- 2) Overstating God's demands and missing His kind heart ("Neither shall you touch it," ; 3:3)
 - God blessed them with countless trees and he only forbids one, but idolatry pushes us away from gratitude for all God has done and pushes us toward ingratitude for what we feel like He's not done.
 - The Enemy exaggerates God's commands to make Him seem restrictive or demanding.
 - The lie is that God doesn't have our best in mind and is holding something back from us that would make us happier or satisfy us.
 - Satan puts us in the position of God as we put Him on trial and question Him.
- 3) The seed of doubt grows into denial of God's Word ("you will not surely die" ; 3:4)
 - God's Word is contradicted, usually with what we want to hear and are susceptible to believe.
 - Denying God's Word (authority) paves the way for our own truth, morality, and plan.
- 4) The shiny offer (your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God; 3:5) catches our attention and hooks us (she saw, she took, she ate; 6-7)
 - They're tempted to exchange dependence on God and trust in God for independence and autonomy. We shift from trusting God's sovereignty and provision as we seek to provide for ourselves, take the rule of our life, and do what we want.
 - A shiny, alluring offer for something we want and think will make us happy (in their case, being godlike, open eyes, the knowledge of good and evil) lures us in and hooks us. It can be a good or bad thing.
 - Our actions (seeing & taking) are rooted in the heart's desires (wanting to become wise and elevated to being godlike). See 1 John 2:16 for an example of how our eyes and heart's desire work together.
 - Desire gives way to demand as we begin to feel and believe that we must have this thing or can't live without it, so we will sin to get it or sin when we don't get it.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What voices do you give weight that you shouldn't—good or bad—that can potentially drown out God's objective, authoritative voice? Is it your own thoughts or feelings, another person, culture, tradition, a media outlet, social media, etc.?
- When are you most tempted to be influenced by lies, lies about God's goodness, provision, and care for you, or lies about what some created thing can be, provide, or give to you?
- What are good things that you can easily elevate into a demand you must have or can't live without, or an idol offering to give you something only God can provide?
- If you had to pick one "rival" to God (idol) in your life today, seeking to take His rightful place on the throne of your heart, what might it be? Why?
- What are ways we can protect ourselves from being deceived by lies, tricked by appearance, and led astray by idols?
- How can we so fill our hearts with joy and contentment in God and our minds with the truth of who God is and what His Word says that it helps us always be on guard against temptation?

How would you fill in the blanks under "The Fall (Gen. 3)" describing how the kingdom, humanity, and our life changes during and after sin in the Garden?

THE GARDEN (GEN. 1-2)	THE FALL (GEN. 3)
(King) God dwells among his people and his good and gracious rule governs the kingdom.	(King)
(People) God's image-bearers follow and submit to their King and enjoy his presence, provision, and care.	(People)
(Place) Eden is a temple-garden-home where God's people work and steward a good creation while resting in God's provision and enjoying his presence.	(Place)
(Rule) The way of life in God's kingdom where he offers his love, protection, presence, and provision and his people follow him and are faithful to him.	(Rule)
(Identity) Created image-bearers of God who know and mirror God to the world.	(Identity)
(Purpose) To reign on God's behalf as his representatives and reflection in the world.	(Purpose)
(Mission) To go, multiply, and spread God's name and glory throughout the earth as we fulfill our purpose.	(Mission)
(Community) Enjoying, serving, and loving one another in right relationship as we live out our mission together.	(Community)

2. The Devastation and Disorder Sin Brings

Here's Pennington Park's statement on "sin" from our [What We Believe](#) document.

Sin: We believe that though Adam and Eve were created as innocent people, through Adam's sin humanity fell, becoming alienated from God, inherited a sinful nature, and experienced corruption that touches every aspect of our humanity (mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, relational). We believe all have sinned against God, stand condemned before him and under the judgment of physical and spiritual death, that in ourselves we are incapable of turning to God and saving ourselves, and so stand in desperate need of reconciliation and restoration to God by God. The fall of man also fractured God's good world, bringing brokenness, pain, sickness, death, strained relationships, tragedy, and suffering into every area of creation and humanity. However, we do not believe sin has the final word but that Jesus came to restore all that was lost, including both humanity and all of creation.

(Genesis 1:26-28; 3:1-19; Romans 3:23; 5:12-21; 6:23; 8:18-21; Ephesians 2:1-12; Colossians 1:19-20)

Here are a few of the immediate effects sin brings in Genesis 3.

- 1) We are **corrupt** and **depraved** in our nature.

The first Adam stood as humanity's head, bringing corruption, sin, and condemnation upon all mankind. Every aspect of our humanity is affected and corrupted by sin.

See Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 3:10-12; 7:18; Matt. 7:15-19; 15:19; James 1; 2 Tim. 2:3-4; Gen. 9:9-11; 17:4-6.

- 2) We are still God's image-bearers, but his image is **marred** in us.

Though humans retain God's image in part (retaining the value, dignity, and worth of a life—which is why murder is forbidden—as well as other aspects of being God's image), that image is so blurred, faded, and marred that we struggle to live out our God-given calling of representing and reflecting Him. We reflect what we revere, but because we so often choose sin, idols, and false gods, we "image" these things rather than God.

See Gen. 5:1; Ps. 115:8; Is. 44:9.

- 3) We are **alienated** from God and his presence is removed.

Though we were created to be in fellowship and friendship with God in His temple-garden, we are now estranged from Him. Sin separates us from God, both objectively through condemnation and guilt, and subjectively as we often hide in shame and dishonor.

See Gen. 3:7; Is. 59:2; Col. 1:21; Eph. 2:1-2, 12.

- 4) We are **exiled** from our place of fellowship, rest, and belonging.

In judgement, God evicts Adam and Eve from their home in Eden and exiles them so they cannot return. The Garden is locked and guarded (3:24). Man becomes a sojourner, pilgrim, refugee, and exile, always on the road but never arriving to the Home we lost and are looking for.

See Gen. 3:23-24; 4:12; 12:1; 46; Lev. 25:23; Ps. 137; 2 Kings 25; Is. 43:5-6; 1 Peter 2:11.

See "[Exile](#)" theme video at bibleproject.com.

- 5) We are **estranged** from one another.

Not only are humans alienated from God, but we are now estranged from one another. Conflict, division, strife, rivalry, jealousy, abuse, pain, fear, hiding, hostility, and confusion over roles and relationships corrupts human relationships. Loneliness and estrangement East of Eden replace the intimacy of friendship and fellowship in the Garden.

See Gen. 3:16; 4; Eph. 2:11-4.

6) We live in **a world that's broken** where suffering, pain, and trials are normal.

The Bible explains why evil is not eternal or coequal with goodness, but that sin brings evil into our world as everything becomes broken and is breaking. The Bible doesn't deny, hide, or dismiss the ongoing presence of suffering, brokenness, or pain, but it makes sense of why they are normative in this life and yet not the way things are supposed to be. Creation groans around us. Our bodies fail us. And death is the ultimate reminder of the world's brokenness.

See Gen. 3:14-19; Rom. 8:19-21; Ps. 90:10; Job 14:1.

7) We are **enslaved** to sin and death.

We cannot get ourselves free from the guilt of sin over us, the corruption of sin inside of us, or the power of sin in the world we live in. We are born into the kingdom of darkness, enslaved to evil, sin, and death (Col. 1:13). We are powerless to free ourselves from this condition. Because we are enslaved to sin, we cannot even choose what is good, righteous, and beautiful unless God frees us and makes us new. When Adam and Eve sin, they exchange a world of freedom for a prison. The Satan becomes our relentless Enemy as the seed of the serpent continually harasses the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:14-15).

See John 8:34; Rom. 1:18; 3:9-19; 6:17; 7; Eph. 2:1-4.

- In Eden, God dwelt in fellowship among His people but after the fall they're exiled out of God's presence and into the wilderness.
- In Eden, God was the King who ruled and cared for His people, but because of sin there is a constant battle for who will be King in our lives.
- In Eden, there is unity and community among the people of God but East of Eden there is a constant friction and distrust in human relationships.
- In Eden, God's people joyfully obeyed God and worshipped Him as the giver of all good things but after the exile they will continually rebel and turn to false God's.
- In Eden, we reflected the glory of God as image bearers who looked and acted like Him. Now the image of God is greatly marred in us so sin makes it hard to see God in our lives.

3. The Justice and Mercy of God

Gen 3:8-24

- God is a **righteous and just** King who will not overlook evil.
- God is a **sovereign** King who will eventually crush all rebellion.
- God is a **gracious** and **kind** King who bestows mercy and favor on His people.
- God is a **loving, pursuing** King who seeks out His people in their sin and then provides a fitting covering only He could provide.

"For God came into the garden to tell them that in spite of everything they had done, though he had to punish them for their rebellion, he was also providing a way of salvation and of deliverance. That was exactly why he came. Not merely to denounce them and to pass judgment upon them, but to bring the promise of the seed of the woman and the conquest over the enemy who had misled and defeated them...

For God who calls you to come out of your hiding place calls you out not only to condemn you but to tell you that he has made a way to bring you back to paradise, if you believe and acknowledge the condemnation.” Martyn Lloyd-Jones

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What stands out to you about Act 2: The Fall?
2. What are ways we continue to act like Adam and Eve in how we hide from God or seek to cover our shame on our own?
3. Bruce Waltke writes, “We take a third step toward sin when we focus on the forbidden thing rather than on God’s true blessings.”
Read Rom. 1:21 and 2 Tim. 3:2 on and then compare that with Col. 3:15; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:18. Why was ingratitude at the heart of man’s sin and why does Paul see it as so essential for the Christian? How do you cultivate gratitude, contentment, and trust?
4. What is most striking, helpful, or encouraging about how God responds to their sin?
5. Why is it important if we want to understand humanity rightly to factor in both what it means that God created us in his image and as good but also that Man is fallen, corrupted, and broken? What happens if we don’t think of Man as created good and in the image of God but mainly think of Man as fallen and sinful? What happens if we don’t think of Man as fallen and sinful but mainly think of Man as good and in God’s image?
6. Why is it important to remember the reality of sin’s presence and the effects of the Fall in ourselves, in others, and in living in this world?
7. Part of what Adam and Eve sought was autonomy and “freedom” from God. While autonomy and independence from God are sold to us as “freedom,” how do they actually lead to prison, bondage, and disappointment?
8. How does rightly understanding The Fall and sin help us think about today’s cultural narratives about looking within to find purpose, meaning, morality, strength, or identity?

HOMEWORK

- Be intentional this week in thinking about your thinking. As you experience temptation and trials, consider what lies you’re being told, what voices are influencing you, and what you’re thinking about God. As you fill your mind with Scripture, replace lies with truth. Replace wrong theology about God with truths and promises of God. Replace the allure and illusions of idolatry with worshipping and enjoying God.
- Make a list of the top 5-10 events, occurrences, or episodes in the Old Testament that you can think of. Why did you put these things in the list? How do they connect to or build upon some of the themes we’ve already talked about?
- Read Matthew 4:1-11 and compare and contrast Adam and Eve’s temptation in Genesis 3 with Jesus’ temptation in Matthew 4. What’s similar? What’s different? How does Jesus respond to temptation? What do you learn from seeing these two different accounts?

Hannah Anderson, *Made for More*

“Every time we look for knowledge about ourselves from something other than God, we perpetuate the cycle of self-destruction. As we continue to live divorced from our true identity in God, we lose a sense of who we are; and as we lose a sense of who we are, we continue to live divorced from our true identity. And we end up struggling, grasping, flailing to find something—anything—that will give us a stable sense of self.” (48-49)
“When we turn to other things for knowledge, when we define ourselves by things like our work, our relationships, our giftedness—we create an alternative source of identity. And as we image this false god, our

very personhood crystallizes around it. Instead of being fully formed, multidimensional people who radiate the complexity of God's nature, we become one-dimensional caricatures, as limited and superficial as the thing that we have devoted ourselves to. And we actually begin to resemble it." (50)