

The Fall

Dr. Steve Schell | Genesis 1-3 | Week 1 Essential Doctrines

The events that occurred in the Garden of Eden lay a foundation of understanding for the entire Bible. God's plans for the human race are first revealed there, and though those plans were damaged by the sin of Adam and Eve, the rest of the Bible shows us the process of God restoring what was lost. So no one can properly understand the great doctrines taught in the Bible unless they understand what happened in the Garden of Eden. There we find an explanation of our fallen human nature, our purpose, the origin of sin, sorrow and sickness, and some very important insights into the heart of God. One of the most important truths we'll learn is how to repent, because until we understand how we humans lost our relationship with God, we won't understand how to get it back.

Here are several of the foundational truths taught in the first three chapters of Genesis:

1. The condition of Adam and Eve before the fall.

- Ge 1:26-30; Ps 8:1-9
- Notice: a spiritual battle was already underway when humans were created.
- In Psalm 8 David reflects on the authority and purpose God gives humans in the Garden of Eden and concludes that God desensitized humans to drive back those who were set to attack God and His people, to cause the enemy and the avenger to cease.
- It was to be a progressive war in which we were to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth with godly children who would grow up to use their authority to drive back the devil and his demonic host.

2. Creating humans

- Ge 2:7 body = dust, clay
 soul = breath, biological life
 spirit = image of God
- By creating us in His image, God created us as essentially spiritual beings who have intellect, will and emotions as He does. This means that once conceived, we never cease to exist.
- We are created spirits, not divine spirits. Jesus is the begotten Son of God. We are created and adopted through Jesus to be children of God.
- See: Jn 10:34 in *Study Verse by Verse: John*, "I said you are gods"
- The "image of God" rational, volitional, emotional, spiritual

- The “likeness of God” holy, pure, good, sinless, like God in character

3. Two trees

- Ge 2:9 “tree of life” (eat and live forever, 3:22)
“tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (eat and decide for yourself what is right and wrong)

4. Temptation

- Ge 3:5 “Eat the forbidden fruit, and you will become like God, knowing good and evil.”
- You will decide for yourself what is right and wrong. You’ll become your own moral authority. You won’t need God to tell you what to do.

5. Naked

- Ge 3:7 “...and they knew that they were naked”
- Why? They were no longer clothed with the glory of God (enveloped in the brilliant light of the Holy Spirit).
- God was still present in the garden, but the intimacy, the life-giving, wisdom-giving environment of the Holy Spirit, was gone.
- They were now on their own, making decisions of what is right and wrong for themselves.
- God would help them if they sought Him, but that intimate link was severed.
- So their bodies began to die, and they began to make foolish decisions.

6. Curse

- Ge 3:14-19
- God didn’t curse Adam and Eve. He cursed the serpent and the ground (Ro 8:19-22). He announced to Adam and Eve the consequences of their rebellion.
- See: “The War Within” Ro 5:12-6:6, in *Preaching Through Romans*, p. 75
Note: What Adam did

7. Questions and answers

- Q: What was the forbidden fruit?
- A: We don’t know. It has traditionally been assumed to be an apple.
- Q: Why was the tree placed in the garden?

- A: It was there to give Adam and Eve a choice. It represented the question: Who decided what is good and what is evil? Does God, or do I?

- Q: If God knew Adam and Eve would sin, why did He put the tree in the garden? Why did He give us a free will?

- A: He put the tree in the garden because freedom of will is essential for love to exist and for goodness to be formed in our character. Love cannot be forced; it is a freely-given gift. So unless we were free to not love God, we would never be able to love Him. And goodness is not doing the right thing (or refraining from doing the wrong thing). It is choosing to do what is right, particularly in the face of hardship (Phil 2:9).

- Q: Why did God create humans?

- A: God's goal is to produce children who are in His image and likeness, holy people who love Him and become like Him in character.

From the fall onward God has been forming a family, a great "olive tree" (Ro 11:17) of people who are willing to repent and believe.

As we will see, the cross and the resurrection are the reason this is possible, both before and after Jesus came.

"...there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him (1 Co 8:6).