

Lesson 3: Consequences of the Fall

Previously...

We began by learning about creation and the three divine institutions that God created for man to succeed as the under-lord of the earth. We learnt that God created the institutions of: (i) responsible dominion, (ii) marriage and (iii) family.

We learnt that there was a Creator-creature distinction between God and man and nature; that God is a personal, sovereign God who relates personally to His creation and that He is the ultimate authority on right and wrong.

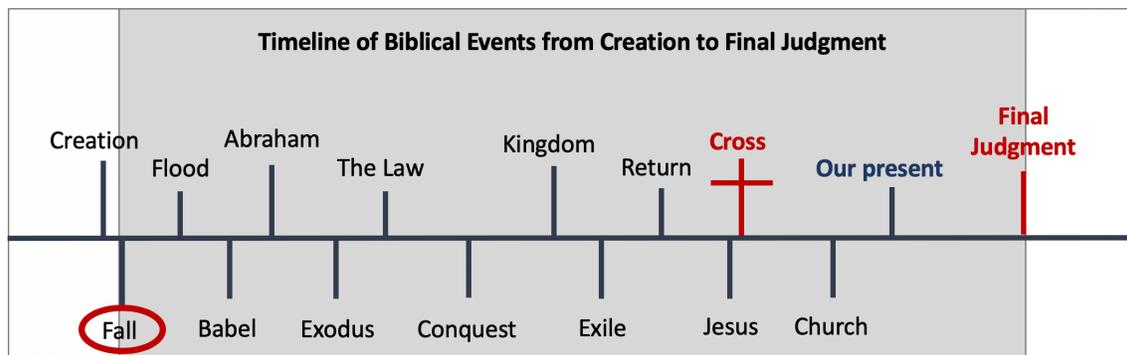
Biblical Creation: Creator-Creature Distinction	
1 st level	INFINITE PERSONAL CREATOR
2 nd level	Creature: what God created

In contrast, the non-biblical worldview was born out of Satan’s interaction with Adam and Eve in the garden. The devil pushed three ideas:

1. the continuity of being (all beings including man and God are on a continuum and there is not much difference between them)
2. impersonal fate and chance (no one is in charge)
3. self as the ultimate authority.

Biblical Worldview	Pagan Worldview
1. Creator-Creature Distinction One God Man Nature	1. Continuity of Being (A scale) gods — man — nature
2. Personal Sovereign God	2. Impersonal Fate and Chance
3. Ultimate Authority: God	3. Ultimate Authority: Self

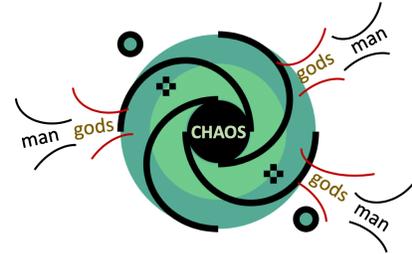
Another idea that contradicts the biblical worldview is the pagan teaching regarding evil.



Pagan View: Evil is Forever

In the pagan worldview, the gods and goddesses are like fallen humans. There is no distinction between the gods and man. All gods and goddesses are a mix of good and evil. And they have been this way from eternity past and will be this way for eternity future. Out of these good-evil gods and goddesses, man was formed.

Since the gods have evil within them, man too, right from the beginning, had been formed with evil in them. This is because man is essentially made from part of the gods. And so man will have this evil forever. There will never come a time when they can be rid of evil. Evil is inescapable.



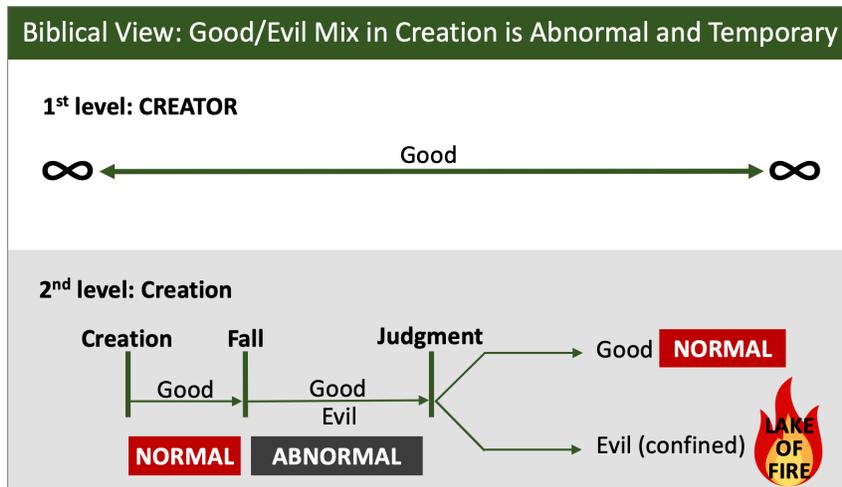
Even in the modern pagan theory of evolution, natural evil has always existed. The very foundation of the theory is that death is normal and necessary. It is the means of natural selection. The fittest survive. All else dies. Death has always existed and will always be in existence. In this pagan view, this good-evil mix will go on forever.



Biblical View: Evil is Bounded

The Bible's view of evil is totally different from the pagan view. Scripture teaches that the Creator-God is totally separate from His creation. He is infinite and had no beginning. But what He created had a beginning. It was a good beginning where His creation had a relationship with Him and was dependent on Him. The physical world of nature and man that God created was perfect.

Then came the Fall. Evil had a beginning. We now live in an abnormal time with a mix of good and evil.



However, God intends for evil to have a definite end. He tells us how the end will look. In the last book of the Bible, God describes a permanent separation of good and evil forever, where evil will be confined for eternity.

Revelation 21:1–8, 22–27

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

³ I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.

⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever.”

⁵ And the one sitting on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new!” And then he said to me, “Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true.” ⁶ And he also said, “It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life. ⁷ All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children.

⁸ “But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

²² I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

²³ And the city has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light. ²⁴ The nations will walk in its light, and the kings of the world will enter the city in all their glory. ²⁵ Its gates will never be closed at the end of day because there is no night there. ²⁶ And all the nations will bring their glory and honor into the city. ²⁷ Nothing evil will be allowed to enter, nor anyone who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty—but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.

The Promised Saviour

How does God intend to get rid of evil? Immediately after the Fall, God promised a Saviour. This Saviour would one day destroy sin and evil and rescue mankind from Satan. God was not going to allow His perfect world to be ruined by sin and evil forever.



Genesis 3:14–15

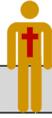
¹⁴ Then the LORD God said to the serpent,
“Because you have done this, you are cursed
more than all animals, domestic and wild.

You will crawl on your belly,
groveling in the dust as long as you live.

¹⁵ And I will cause hostility between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring.

He will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.”

These promises from God are very interesting. We'll take a closer look.

 Satan	Promised Saviour 
Satan uses the serpent as his disguise. God curses the serpent for allowing Satan to use it in this manner.	The woman's offspring is a special man born only of the woman. No mention of a father!
God says Satan and his followers (offspring) will be at war with the Promised Saviour.	The woman's offspring will be at war with Satan. He will destroy Satan.
Satan will receive a head wound, a fatal wound that would destroy him.	The Promised Saviour will receive a wound on the heel, but will recover.

What we are seeing here is the very first promise that God is making about the Saviour. God provided very minimal information at this stage. As time progressed, God revealed more details about the Saviour. This is what Bible scholars call progressive revelation.

From our vantage point, we know of course, that this promised Saviour is Jesus Christ. Here in Genesis 3, some of the details that God revealed were very tantalising, like for example, the fact that the Saviour would be born only of a human mother. God provided some very exact details about the Saviour even at this point.

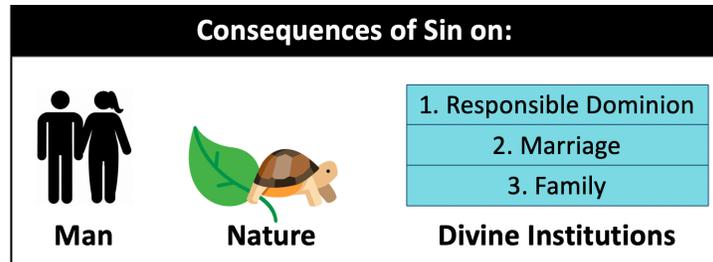
Other details include the fact that the Saviour would battle with Satan and deliver a death blow to the devil. And one more interesting detail is that Satan would harm the Saviour (the bite on the heel) but the Saviour would overcome it. This foretold of course, Jesus' death and resurrection. (We will cover this in more depth in later lessons.)

Though the details must have been vague to Adam and Eve at the time, God was simply asking them to trust Him to deal with the sin problem they had introduced. What we also find in this promise from God is that God, by destroying Satan, intended to put a definite and crushing end to evil. God was saying that evil, sin and suffering are temporary.

While God gave Adam and Eve hope that He would rescue them from sin and evil at this early stage in history, the consequences of the Fall were massive. The perfect, normal world that God created was thrown into abnormality. It had become corrupted. Today, we still suffer the consequences of this fallen world.

What Happened to the Perfect World After the Fall?

Adam and Eve's rebellion changed everything. There were consequences to man, nature and the divine institutions.



We will go through them in turn.



Sin Damage to Man

Man is made up of a physical side and an immaterial side. A complete person has a human body, a human soul and a human spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12). All parts suffered because of the Fall.



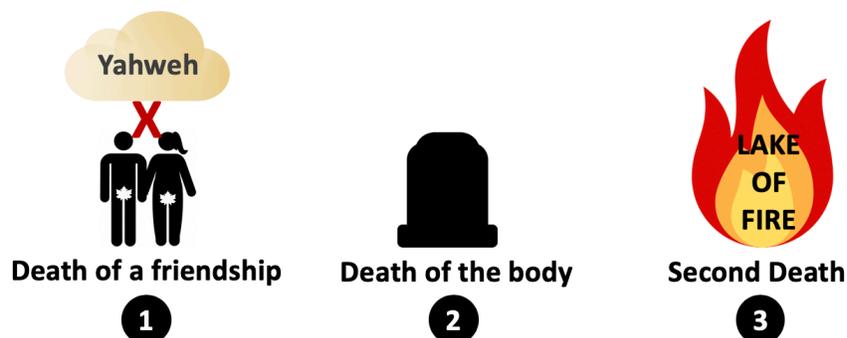
Sin Damage to Man's Body

In God's original creation, the body would not have faced death. Adam and Eve and their offspring were meant to live forever. But because of sin, God imposed a death sentence, or capital punishment, on man. It was not part of the perfect world that God created. Death is abnormal.

Genesis 3:19

By the sweat of your brow
will you have food to eat
until you return to the ground
from which you were made.
For you were made from dust,
and to dust you will return.

The Bible talks about death in a few different ways.





1. Death of a friendship (Separation of man from God)

Genesis 3:8

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees.

Friends don't hide from each other. But Adam and Eve hid because they had a broken trust with God. They had chosen to trust Satan (a created being) over Yahweh (the Creator). They gave equal weight to God's and Satan's words and so denied the Creator-creature distinction. They chose to treat God as the liar.

Biblical Creation: Creator-Creature Distinction		
1 st level	CREATOR	Yahweh's Words
2 nd level	Creature	Satan's words

NOT THE SAME!
But Adam and Eve gave equal weight to both

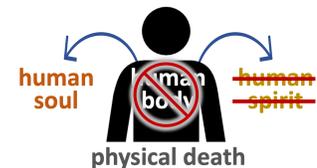
Their friendship with Yahweh was broken. They became spiritually dead, meaning their human spirits died (Romans 5:12, 6:13).



2. Death of the body (Separation of man's soul from his body)

God had designed Adam and Eve to live forever, but now, their bodies would die.

Why didn't they die immediately? A plucked flower doesn't look dead immediately, but it is dead because it has no access to the life-giving root of the plant. Similarly, Adam and Eve were no longer connected to God, the one who gives life. Soon, their bodies would die, just as the flower would truly look dead after a time. When they died, their bodies would be gone but their human souls would continue to live on.



3. The Second Death (Separation of man's soul from God FOREVER)

After physical death, man would face what the Bible calls the Second Death or eternal death. Rebellious man would be sent to the lake of fire, a terrible place that God originally created especially for punishing Satan (the devil) and his demons.

Matthew 25:41

"Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.'

Revelation 20:10

Then the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

But now, all enemies of God, whether human or spirit being, would be sent there too.

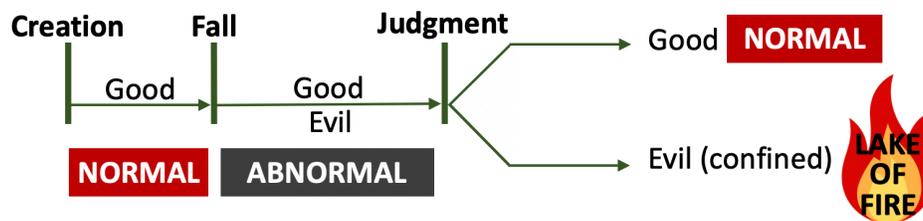
Revelation 20:14–15

¹⁴ Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

What is the lake of fire like? The Bible doesn't give us many details but we do know the following:

- It is eternal. No one leaves the lake of fire (Matthew 25:41).
- People will be separated from God's presence forever (2 Thessalonians 1:6–9).
- It is a lake of burning sulfur where there is endless torment (Revelation 20:10).

What we need to understand is that the lake of fire is a real place. When the enemies of God end up there, they will be separated from God's presence for eternity. All evil will be forever confined in that place.

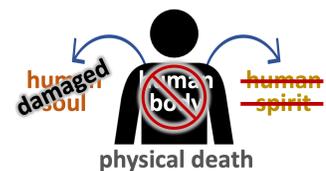


Death is Inescapable

It's important to note that no one can escape death. Vitamins, physical exercise, cosmetic surgery, miraculous cures, future genetic engineering, cloning or cryonic freezing can never thwart death. Besides death, man's body also took on abnormalities: disease, tumours, illness, cancers and all manners of sickness came about because of the Fall.

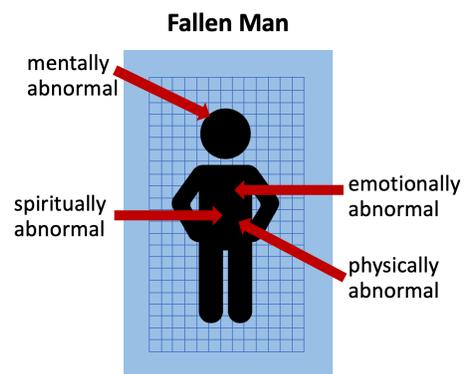
Sin Damage to Man's Soul

Man's human spirit died and the human body was physically damaged by the Fall. But there was also damage to man's soul. Man was made in the image of God. Man has finite copies of God's infinite attributes. Man's attributes like choice and conscience were to be used for good. However, after the Fall, abnormality came in.



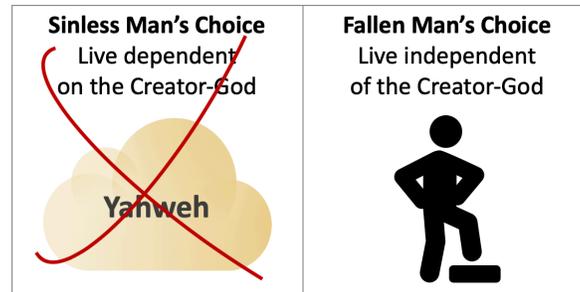
Today, no person is normal, physically, emotionally or spiritually. And no one is normal mentally either. The way we think, how we process information, the flow of our logic and reasoning, all these have also been affected by the Fall. Here are two examples:

- **Choice:** As an under-lord, man was supposed to take care of and enjoy nature, while giving thanks and praise to the God who created all of it. After the Fall, man's heart became rebellious and defiant towards God. No man would naturally seek God.



Romans 3:10–12

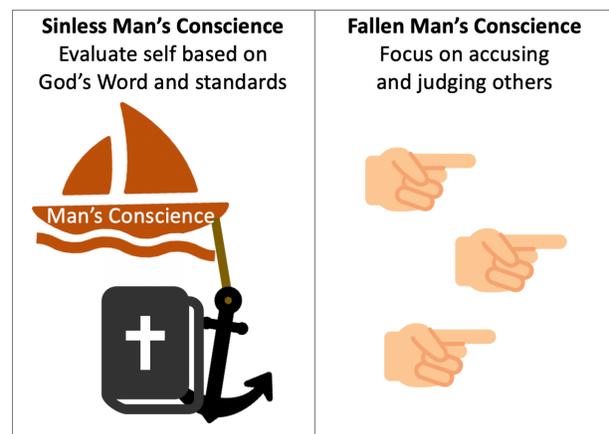
¹⁰ As the Scriptures say, “No one is righteous—not even one. ¹¹ No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God. ¹² All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one.”



- **Conscience:** God gave man a conscience so we can evaluate ourselves based on God's standards. We feel a sense of peace when our thoughts, words and actions are in line with God's values. We feel guilt and tension when we violate God's values. However, after the Fall, man's conscience was damaged by sin. Instead of assessing our own thoughts and actions, we turn outward to focus on accusing and judging others.

Romans 1:32–2:1

³² They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too. ¹ You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things.



Every aspect of man was damaged in the Fall.

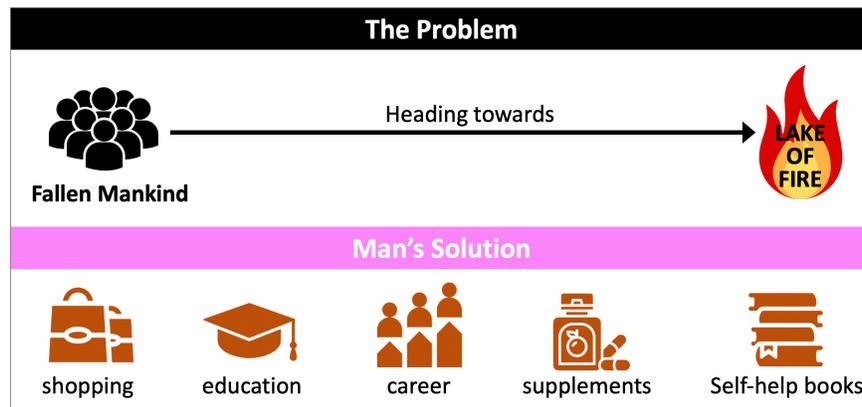
Some people believe they can make themselves whole again.

Just looking at advertisements and commercials for all kinds of products and services, you will see that people are attempting to make themselves whole again, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually, but all without God.

If you buy the right products, if you study the right subjects, if you get the right grades, if you choose the right profession, if you enter the right schools, if you read the right books, if you get the right friends, if you wear the right clothes, if you use the right phone, if you get

the right doctor, if you practise the right meditation, if you get the right life coach, you will be happy. You will be complete. In fact, if you buy this and buy that, and buy more and more, you can buy completeness!

This “solution” to man’s fallen state is superficial and useless.



The actual situation is very grave and the problem is very serious. Man is sinful and guilty before the righteous God. Man is bound for eternal damnation in the lake of fire. Cosmetics or the latest power tools will not change that.

However, Satan is trying to distract man into thinking we can make everything right with our own effort. Satan will do anything to keep man from coming to God. Buying into this idea, many people will continue to try all kinds of solutions, moving from one to the next, hoping that something in this sea of solutions will fix them.

What Satan is trying to do is diminish the sin problem and deceive man into thinking it is not serious. Satan wants people to think that the problems of evil and sin are “normal”.



This is because if we think that evil and sin are no big deal, we will end up trivialising evil and we will believe that these superficial solutions are sufficient. We will fall for Satan’s deception.

Only when we understand the gravity of the sin problem will we realise that there is no way we can make ourselves whole. Man desperately needs a Saviour.



Sin Damage to Nature

The earth also became cursed at the Fall. That means the good planet that God created had turned bad because of sin. The work of planting and growing food, which was originally easy, now became hard. Production would cost far more. It was no longer efficient and instead of easy harvests of sweet fruits and vegetables, there would be thorns and thistles after hours of sweat. Responsible dominion would be impossible without great struggle.



Genesis 3:17–19

¹⁷ And to the man he said,
 “Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree
 whose fruit I commanded you not to eat,
the ground is cursed because of you.
 All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.
¹⁸ It will grow thorns and thistles for you,
 though you will eat of its grains.
¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow
 will you have food to eat
 until you return to the ground
 from which you were made.
 For you were made from dust,
 and to dust you will return.”

Nature itself had also become abnormal. The perfect conditions before the Fall were gone. There would now be natural evil: storms, earthquakes, plagues, famine and more. Nature would even pollute itself.

Here’s an example of “natural evil”: In 1883, the explosion of the volcanic island of Krakatoa in Indonesia killed more than 36,000 people. It was so loud that it was heard 4,800 km (3,000 miles) away. People in northern India, New South Wales in Australia and the southern tip of Japan would have heard the explosion. The ash thrown into the atmosphere made global temperatures drop by as much as 1.2°C in the following year. And global weather patterns remained chaotic for many years. When God finished creation, He did not intend for events such as Krakatoa to happen. They were a consequence of man’s rebellion.





What Happened to the Perfect Institutions that God Created?

Sin did not just cause damage to man and nature. The divine institutions that God put in place were also corrupted by the introduction of evil. Let's take a look at what happened to each one of them.

A. First Institution: Responsible Dominion

After the Fall, man's job of responsible dominion was not taken away. Man was still the under-lord, as God had originally planned. However, instead of an innocent under-lord, mankind was now evil. Man began to pervert responsible dominion.

Self: Man was to enjoy taking care of the earth and be creative, just as God was creative in making the world. But today, many try to escape work. They believe they should do as little as possible so that they can use their time to enjoy themselves. Work is a necessary evil in their eyes. But God made man to enjoy work. Work provides a source of income, purpose and satisfaction. As the under-lord in charge of the earth, man was to work the ground and enjoy the process.

Also, instead of taking instructions from the Creator-God of the universe, people made themselves the ultimate authority. Mankind would decide for themselves what is right and good and wrong and bad, independent of Yahweh.

But there were even more consequences. As under-lord, mankind was supposed to subdue what God had given. Man was supposed to be master over technology, food, work, exercise, leisure, etc. But with the Fall, these things started to master man. All these things started to have power over sinful man, who lost the ability of self-control and also authority over these things. For example:



God gave man:	How sinful man abuses it:
 Food	Gluttony ----- Repulsed by food
 Work	Overworking or ----- Laziness and Being a workaholic ----- irresponsibility
 Exercise	Obsession ----- Not taking care of over physique ----- health
 Leisure and entertainment	Becomes main ----- All work and not purpose in life ----- knowing how to rest

Other people: In addition, man also started abusing their power of dominion by lording over others. God meant for the authority He gave man to be exercised under His guidance, delegating work effectively and responsibly. But sin changed that. Evil man started exploiting, using, mistreating, assaulting, harming and damaging other people.

Nature and animals: Instead of caring for nature responsibly, mankind abuses their power and authority by poaching, polluting, burning down jungles and forests, over-farming, over-hunting... All to make money. All these lead to a ruined environment, starvation and poverty. Other people pervert nature by worshipping it. Nature becomes a god. Animals are revered and wrongly treated as being equal to mankind who is made in the image of God.

Some people think that taking care of nature is about making sure we don't litter and making sure we reduce, reuse and recycle. However, we need to recognise that man, as the under-lord of the world, is totally and absolutely responsible for the awful state of the environment today. Man has perverted their original role as the under-lord. Man perverted their job of responsible dominion.

We are victims! (Victim mentality vs Taking responsibility)

In the garden of Eden, we saw how Adam and Eve tried to play the victim. Instead of owning up to the fact that they deliberately sinned against God, Adam blamed God and Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent.

Genesis 3:12–13

¹² The man replied, "It was the woman you gave me who gave me the fruit, and I ate it."

¹³ Then the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?"

"The serpent deceived me," she replied. "That's why I ate it."

Neither Adam nor Eve claimed responsibility. They immediately claimed to be victims. They ignored the fact that they had made a bad decision. From their response to God, they seemed to imply a belief that they are essentially "good". They are not bad or wrong. This idea that man is basically good is rampant today. The pagan worldview has made denying personal responsibility virtually an art form. Go into any bookstore and scan the psychology and self-help books, and you will see elaborate explanations on why people sin. The blame is put on bad genes, awful parents, abusive childhood, past hurts and unresolved issues.

Why do people sin?



bad genes?



awful parents?



abusive childhood?



past hurts?

And this poor background is the reason why this person is a murderer, or why that person became a thief, a pathological liar, or a cheat. They have a good excuse for their bad temper, their disrespect for others, or their bad attitude. They are not sinful. They are just misunderstood. They are actually victims.

For many, feeling like a victim of life causes them to lose hope and meaning, because there is never an escape from sin, evil, suffering, pain and injustice. People do not like to be in such a position. People want to be in control. In an attempt to gain some form of control over their life and circumstances, people decide how they would react. Here are three common ways:



1. Because there is no one in control and there is no purpose to life, some people come to the logical conclusion that life is meaningless. So they decide to **take their own life**. They feel this is a good choice because of what they believe about death:



- Some believe that when they are dead, they cease to exist. So killing themselves will just end things for them.
- Others believe that when they die, they will be absorbed into nature.
- Still others believe in reincarnation, that their spirits will return to earth in another form.

The Bible does not teach any of these ideas at all. This is what it says about death.

Hebrews 9:27

And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment...

And Scripture also talks about only two destinies: eternal life or eternal death.

Matthew 25:46

“And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.”

These verses indicate that our souls live on forever as thinking and feeling beings. We will not cease to exist. So a person who dies as an enemy of God will end up separated from God forever in the lake of fire. The Bible does not teach reincarnation in any form nor does it teach that people cease to exist after death (annihilation).

What people believe about death affects how they live or don't live their lives. What people believe matters greatly.

2. Not being able to escape sin, evil and suffering, others decide to **live wildly**. They dull the meaninglessness of life by drowning their pain in drink, drugs or other vices. Or if they shun vices, they may choose to overindulge in leisure and entertainment or any other form of distraction to numb their senses.



3. Others do not lose hope. They hate being a victim of life, so they decide to take matters into their own hands and give meaning to their own lives. They dig in their heels and **decide they can and will make a difference**. They give their lives to social and community work. They do a lot of good for their neighbours, the community, for nature and animals. They are determined to make a difference and they do.



Whichever path people with a victim mentality choose, be it to commit suicide, live wildly or give meaning to their own lives, it will not bring peace and resolution. Regardless of what they believe, rightly or wrongly, ultimately, everyone will still have to face God as the one whom they will have to be accountable to. No amount of good deeds can repair the broken relationship they have with God. No amount of wild living will fix their sin-problem. Taking their own lives does not end things. It only ushers in their eternal destiny.

In contrast to this victim mentality, what does the Bible teach? The Bible teaches that God demands **personal responsibility** from each person.

Ezekiel 18:20

The person who sins is the one who will die. The child will not be punished for the parent's sins, and the parent will not be punished for the child's sins. Righteous people will be rewarded for their own righteous behavior, and wicked people will be punished for their own wickedness.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

While there are circumstances that we all face that are beyond our control, God still holds us accountable for the choices and decisions we make even within those circumstances.

Satan approached Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. They had no control over that.

However, they had full control over their personal response to Satan. And God held them personally responsible and accountable for their decisions. God does not excuse our thoughts, words and actions and allow us to get away with a victim mentality. No amount of psychology or excuses can remove our accountability to Him.

Adam and Eve had full control over their personal response to being tempted by Satan

Choice #1	Choice #2
Ask God	Find out for themselves independent of God
	
Yahweh	
All-knowing Creator-God	Tree of the knowledge of good and evil

I am entitled and I have rights. I am my own ultimate authority.

There is a flip side to the victim mentality. Some people believe that they are “in control”, that they are the masters of their own fate and they need not answer to a higher authority (if one even exists).

They also believe that the universe owes them. They expect the world to behave in a way that benefits them. And they demand it. Anything short of this and they will be very unhappy. They will create a fuss until they get what they want. Because they are always right. They are their own ultimate authority.

But then they face many situations imposed upon them that they can't control. For example, they can't control the weather, natural disasters, illnesses or an economic crash. They are victims of injustice and they go through pain and suffering.

When such evil hurts them, they realise that they are not really in control. But the problem is, if they are not in control of their own lives, then who is? They feel no one else is in control because they refuse to believe that God is running the world. Instead, they choose to believe that the world is run by an impersonal force, and not someone they can turn to.

Ironically, this often leads people to the same sense of hopelessness and meaninglessness that people with the victim mentality display. And it often leads to the same responses: suicide, wild living and trying to create their own meaning in life by making a difference.



B. Second Institution: Marriage

Marriage really suffered after the Fall. Instead of the harmonious teamwork that should have been the hallmark of marriage, we find rivalry between husband and wife.

Genesis 3:16

Then he said to the woman,
 “I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy,
 and in pain you will give birth.
 And you will desire to control your husband,
 but he will rule over you.”

When God created Adam and Eve, their relationship was to be mutually interdependent. Both of them were to submit to each other. But with the Fall, God said that Eve would desire to rule over her husband. Instead, her husband would rule over her. The battle of the sexes began after their rebellion against God.



Both man and woman would now seek the upper hand in marriage. The man who was to lovingly care for and nurture his wife would now seek to rule her, and the wife would desire to wrestle control from her husband through nagging and resentment.

That was not all. With the Fall, if a man were unhappy with his wife, he would start looking elsewhere for other women. Likewise for the woman. Divorce is characteristic of the Fall. However, this wasn't at all what God meant marriages to be like. This is how Jesus explained it.

Matthew 19:4–8

⁴ “Haven’t you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’” ⁵ And he said, “This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’” ⁶ Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.”

⁷ “Then why did Moses say in the law that a man could give his wife a written notice of divorce and send her away?” they asked. ⁸ Jesus replied, “Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to your hard hearts, but it was not what God had originally intended.”

In addition, after the Fall, the institution of marriage itself was reinterpreted. The belief grew that marriage can be between anyone and anything. When God gave Eve to Adam, He did so for two reasons. She was to (i) help him rule the earth and (ii) she was to procreate with him. That is the biblical definition of marriage. For procreation to happen, it is clear that we need a male and female. However, the divine institution of marriage became seen as just a human institution or more accurately, just a suggestion. Marriage itself was no longer important.

How is marriage reinterpreted today? As their own ultimate authority, people decided that a marriage can be between a man and a man, or between two women, or a man with several women, or a woman with several men, or men with their fathers, or women with their sons, or man with his children, or women with children, or even men and women with all forms of animals. Some people even marry themselves (sologamy). Marriage can be redefined to whatever suits a culture or society.



C. Third Institution: Family

Like marriage, the institution of family suffered greatly after the Fall. The very first family was torn apart by envy and murder.

Genesis 4:8

One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the fields.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

Today, many families do not get along. While they may not murder each other, many families live in brokenness: children are estranged from each other and from their parents.

In addition, we see parents neglecting their responsibility and failing to train their children. Some constantly provoke their children to anger. Others are too lenient, letting the children get away with anything. Children too, rebel by being disrespectful to their parents' authority.



Many families do not fulfil the roles that God had instituted and as a result, families are torn apart. Because the family is the basic unit of society, a breakdown in families results in a breakdown in society. Violating God's institutions has severe consequences.

Because of mankind's rebellion, God gave them over to do whatever their sinful hearts wanted.

There is something else we must not miss. Though man corrupted the divine institutions because of their rebellion, God also says that He pulled back His restraints and let sinful mankind pervert His divine institutions. Let's observe what He did.

First, the all-knowing Creator-God who knows each person's heart says that all people know the truth about Him just by looking at His handiwork in creation. Not **some** people, not **most** people, but **all** people. But they intentionally choose to reject the truth.

Romans 1:18–20

¹⁸ But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. ¹⁹ They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. ²⁰ For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

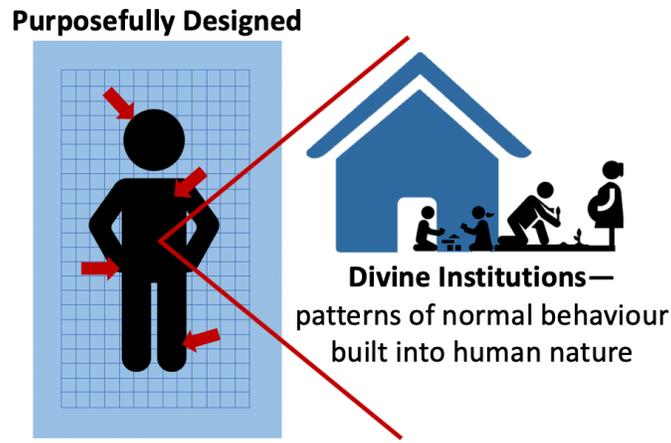
Man's personal response to the Creator-God was to reject Him. People refused to acknowledge Him or thank Him for anything. Instead, because they refused to believe in God, their minds became foolish, dark and confused. Their ability to see reality left them! Ironically, they called themselves wise when they claimed there is no God!



Romans 1:21–23

²¹ Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. ²² Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. ²³ And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

Recall that at creation, God had purposefully designed man. The divine institutions of responsible dominion, marriage and family were patterns of normal behaviour that God had built into man's design.



However, when man rejected God, He stopped restraining them and let them go against the way He had designed them!

How? We will look at each divine institution to see what God did.

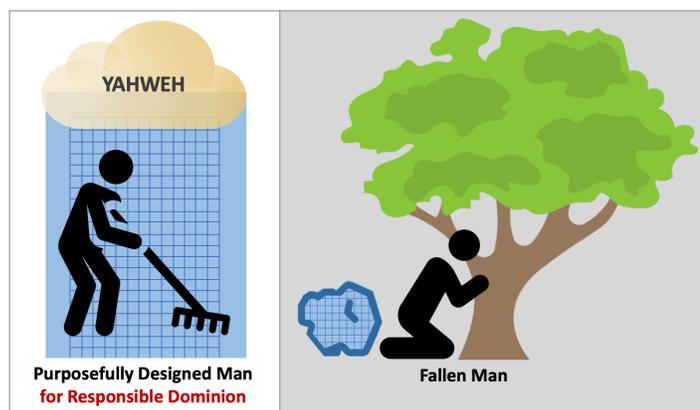


Responsible Dominion

First, man was supposed to be the under-lord, taking responsible care of God's creation by taking instructions from Him and worshipping Him. Man was to be dependant on God. But instead, they turned against the Creator and worshipped what He had created! They even worshipped themselves. So God released them to misuse themselves and their bodies as they pleased.

Romans 1:24–25

²⁴ So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies. ²⁵ They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.

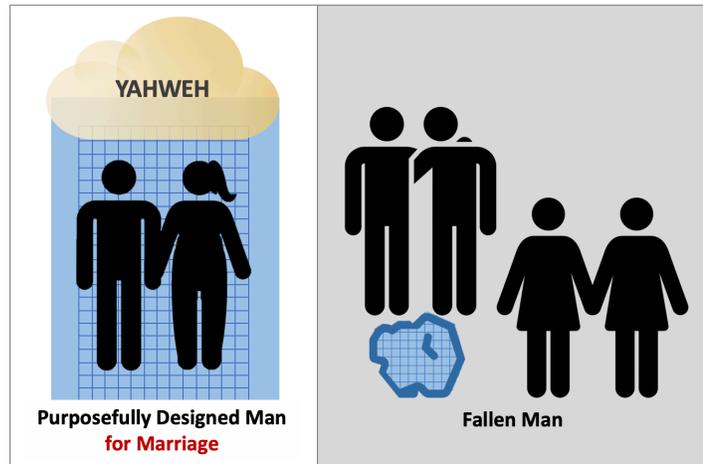


Marriage

God designed marriage to be one man and one woman joined together. But when they rejected Him and His design for marriage, God again released them to go against their very own natures and practise abnormal behaviours.

Romans 1:26–27

²⁶ That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. ²⁷ And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.

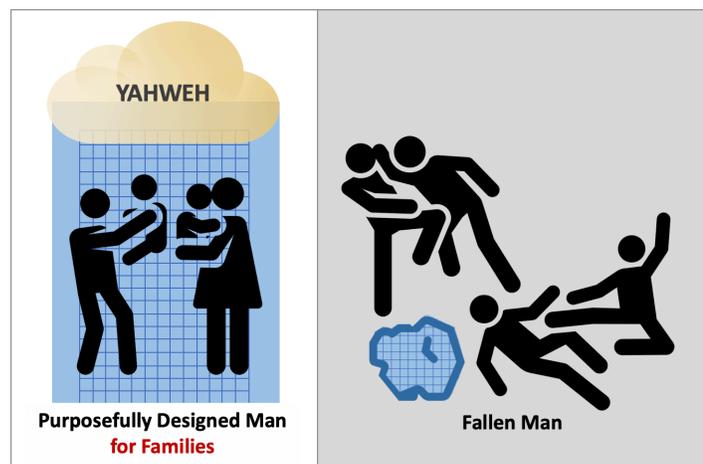


Family

Finally, instead of the harmonious and productive family life that God intended for all mankind to have, because of their rebellion, God also released them to go against each other. Specifically, people disobey their parents and behave in such a way that it ruins all the relationships they have.

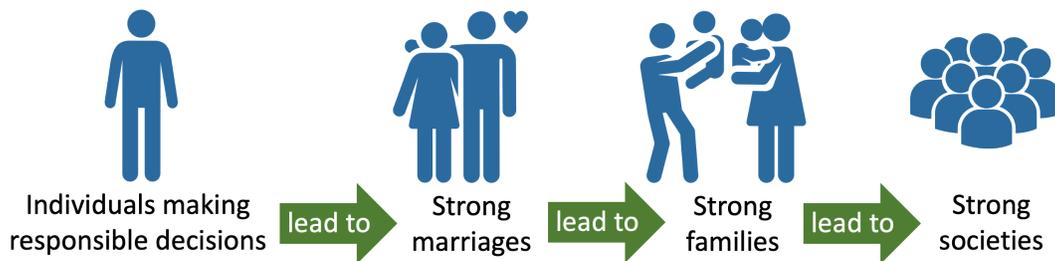
Romans 1:28–32

²⁸ Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. ²⁹ Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. ³⁰ They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. ³¹ They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. ³² They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.



God had designed man to live and thrive within a loving relationship with Him. When man rejected God, they pretended the Creator didn't exist and only focused on the creation. God abandoned them and let them do whatever evil their hearts desired. And that is what we're seeing in the world today.

The divine institutions are like interconnected blocks, with each institution building upon the previous one:



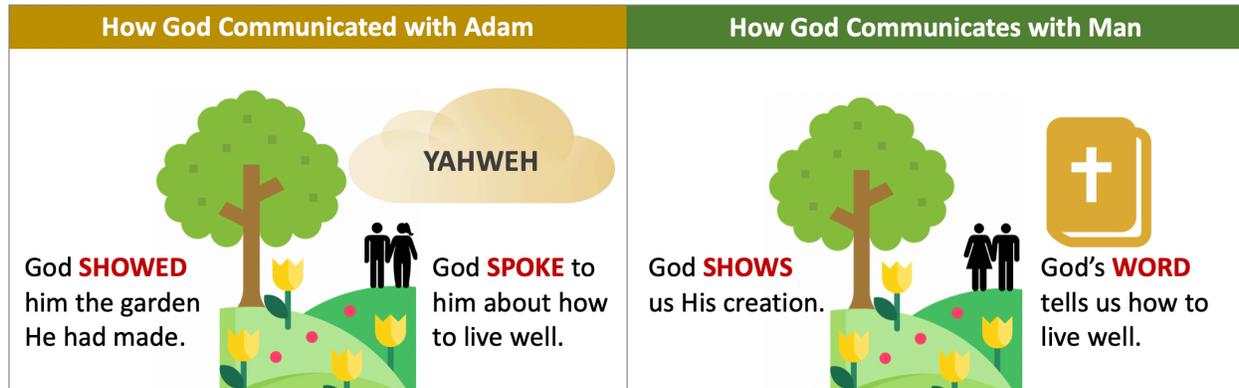
- Societies cannot be strong without strong families.
- We will not have strong families without strong marriages.
- And we will not have strong marriages unless individuals are making good responsible decisions.

Rebellion against God's lovingly set up divine institutions is destructive. Where marriage is dishonoured and families are broken, society collapses. Poverty, crime, immorality and death are unavoidable results.

Without a good understanding of Scripture, we destroy God's purpose for the divine institutions. For instance, marriage: we see many Christians supporting all forms of marriages, encouraging divorces, encouraging people to just do what makes them "happy" because they think it is the loving thing to do. After all, their reasoning is that God is a God of love so surely He will let people marry whomever they love. This reasoning stems from a lack of knowledge about God's design and purpose for the divine institutions.

Today, man tries to fix these problems through laws, social programmes and even redefinitions of what "normal" is. But none of these can fix the problems. It is because man is trying to fix the symptoms and not the root cause.

As long as the Creator-God of the universe is ignored and His plans and purposes for man are disregarded, no good will ever come out of man's attempts. When we ignore instruction manuals of complex factory machinery and do whatever we want, things will not go right. This is because we did not invent the machinery. In the same way, God created the whole world and He as Designer, has to tell people how it is supposed to work.



If we ignore God, we will face the consequences. God cannot be mocked.

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

Man and Satan are always trying to rebel against everything that God, in His infinite love and wisdom, has put in place. What is evil is portrayed as good. What is good is portrayed as evil. In our own lives, God has provided us His Word so that we do not remain ignorant. We should take the time to understand God's purpose for the divine institutions.

Banished

Immediately after the Fall, God decided to banish Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. God did this not because He hated them, but because He still loved them.

Genesis 3:22–23

²² Then the LORD God said, "Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!" ²³ So the LORD God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made.

God did not want Adam and Eve to live forever trapped as sinners, so He prevented them from eating from the fruit of the tree of life. While God was allowing the consequence of sin, that is physical death, He was also working towards His plan to deliver man from the Second Death.

Genesis 3:24

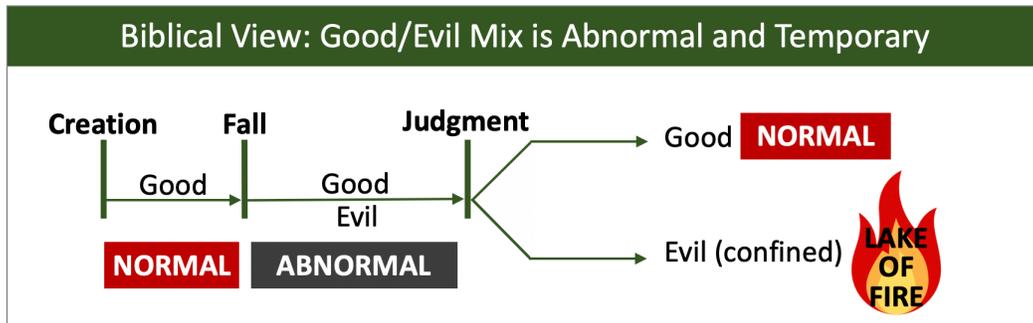
After sending them out, the LORD God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Angels were given the power of the sword to kill, to prevent people from trying to re-enter Eden. God was giving a visible warning to man that they should not try to force their way back to the garden. That time of innocence was over and man could not fix the problem. However, God was not stuck and He had a plan to solve the sin issue.



As we have seen, the Fall had massive consequences on man, nature and on the divine institutions that God gave man. The result is a world in chaos. But in the midst of evil that we live in, we must not lose hope.

We must remember that evil is abnormal. God did not create the world with evil in it. He created a perfect world and He will make the world perfect again. In other words, God intends to bind evil. It had a beginning, and it will have an ending. As we go on, look out for God's plan for history and how He will get rid of evil and restore a perfect world.



Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions as a group or use them for personal reflection.

1. How has the victim mentality impacted the society in which we live in? How does it impact the way people think, behave and live? How has our own thinking been influenced by the victim mentality?
2. How does “me, myself and I” as the final authority affect the way a person lives?
3. Why does a good God allow so much evil and suffering in this world?



Pre-reading for next lesson: Exodus 20:1–21; Matthew 19:1–9; Luke 3:23–38; Romans 5