

The Articles of Faith; What we believe...

Article III. The Fall of Man

Genesis 2:25, 3:1-24; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-21; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:22

This article of our faith is essential to our understanding of *why* we need God in our lives. This doctrine teaches us *how* human beings came to a state of total depravity and sinfulness in our existence and further points to *why* we need Jesus Christ our Savior. In order for a person to understand the necessity of God in our lives, they must first come to the realization of what is wrong with themselves and then acknowledge that they cannot fix themselves, and then realize that only God can save them, fix them and redeem them through Jesus Christ.

What is traditionally known as "*The Fall of Man*" is the biblical account of how sin entered into the world and thus changed humanity from our original state of innocence and unbroken relationship with God. Sin is defined as willful disobedience or rebellion against God. Sin breaks our fellowship with God and paints a picture on us that is not consistent with the image of God that God created us with. Satan, the adversary is always interested in tempting us and persuading us to not live up to the image of God because we are the crown of God's creation! When Satan tempts us to sin, and we yield we are breaking the fellowship we have with God and denying the identity and purpose for which God made us. We are in essence worshipping self instead of God. Satan always makes temptation seem more pleasing than God's way, but the tragedy is that once we fall into this trap, we cannot fix it or make it right ourselves, and we have rightfully put ourselves in a position of being judged by God's standards of holiness and righteousness. This event with Adam and Eve was truly a *fall* because it is the introduction of sin into the world, and all of humanity inherited this sin nature and the consequences of living with it. Consider the following:

Humanity's state prior to the fall

Before the fall in Genesis chapter 3, scripture records that God had made all of creation and then man and woman, the crown of God's creation. They were in a state of pure relationship and fellowship with God. God had provided EVERYTHING that they needed and had given them authority and dominion over creation. God had even given them each other. They were ONE! Adam said that Eve was "*bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh*". They were a unified couple living together in paradise. They had perfect unity with God and with each other. God had given them provision for all of their needs, and had also given them His law for them to obey. Genesis 2:17 clearly states that they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. As long as they followed God's commands, they were in a perfect state of innocence and fellowship with God and each other. They were naked, but unashamed in a perfect state of innocence. This is a picture of what God's initial plan and desire for humanity was prior to the fall. All was well the way God created humanity, but unfortunately God's plan was not followed as it was designed.

How the Fall happened

The Bible records how Satan, in the form of a serpent enters the scene and tempts Eve and Adam to sin against the command of God. In general, Satan tempted them in three particular ways; ambition, aesthetically and physically. Temptation pulls us away from obedience to God's commands by appealing to our appetites for things that we secretly desire. Ambition involves our longing to be something that we aspire to be for our own ego, but is not God's will for us. Aesthetics means that something looks so good to us that we desire to possess it and control it, again to satisfy self. And physical temptation means that we are drawn by strong desires in our flesh that overcome our commitment to obey God. We essentially let our flesh dictate our actions rather than our faith. Sin may happen with the urging of temptation, but it is ultimately caused by our choice. Sin is a willful choice to purposely, either by omission or commission disobey or rebel against what God has said.

This was the first sin of humanity in God's creation. Humanity had decided to not reflect the image of God that they had been created in. As a result, Adam and Eve and all of humanity and creation came under the judgment of God and died in that moment. The death was spiritual, and would manifest itself physically as well. Death is separation from God and it is caused by sin.

The Consequences of the Fall

As to be expected, the consequences of the Fall of man were very costly. Some of these consequences include:

- A Loss of innocence. They now know that they were naked, and they were ashamed.
- A Loss of Unity and tendency to blame each other. Adam blames Eve and tries to suggest that God giving her to him was the cause!
- A sin nature that leads to death is passed onto all humanity. Once innocence is lost, it cannot be recovered as if it never happened. The sinful nature is passed on from person to person and from generation to generation. We are born in sin and shaped in iniquity. All human beings inherit and learn a sin nature that is prone to disobey God.
- A Curse from God on the serpent, Eve and Adam that includes:
 - *Dismissal from the paradise in the garden of Eden
 - *Hard work and labor
 - *Pain and sorrow
 - *Hierarchical relationships based on power, oppression and authority instead of unity and fellowship.