

“THE FALL OF MAN.”

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First Christian Reformed Church
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Sermon Texts: Genesis 3:1-24
Belgic Confession: Article 14

Introduction.

Last week we considered the creation of man and how God created man in His own image and made man just a little lower than the angels. Man was bestowed with great dignity and honor, created to glorify God and to enjoy God forever.

God made a covenant with Adam, a covenant that had one positive commandment, fill and take dominion; and one negative commandment, don't eat. If he obeyed he would lead all humanity into an even higher and greater state of existence, an everlasting communion with God confirmed in perfect righteousness.

But Adam failed to understand the honor or recognize his excellence and plunged the human race into darkness, sin and death. Only when we understand this great height will we begin to fathom the great depth of the abyss into which we fell.

Last week we saw that Genesis 1 through 3 stands the test of historical narrative. There's no break or shift in the narrative from myth to history. It's not fictional poetry. Adam and Eve are treated in the entire Bible as just as real as Abraham, Moses, David and Jesus. All their genealogies are traced back to Adam.

The Fall also is treated as historical narrative in all Scripture and is the reason for there being sin and death in our world. Romans 5 states clearly that “sin came into the world through one man” (Romans 5:12).

Genesis 3 is God's revelation to us to explain how sin and death came into our world. This evening we will consider the Fall and the consequences of the Fall.

The Fall.

When did the Fall happen?

Some say on the sixth day, the same day as man's creation. Others say on the eighth day or very soon after. Scripture doesn't say so any guess would be pure speculation.

How did sin enter the world?

Satan used a serpent to deceive Eve. He started with a subtle question, “Did God really say?” Then he lied, “You will not surely die.” He creates doubt, unbelief, then tempts with pride and a desire to be like God.

He questions what is true. You will not die.

He questions what is right. It is OK for you to go ahead and eat.

He questions who she is. You will be like God.

Genesis 3:6-7 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

It was an entirely willful and voluntary act. The blame rests entirely on Adam and Eve. What they did was an inconceivable act of disobedience, a revolt against the sovereignty of God.

It's impossible for God to do wrong or even desire to do wrong. There is no sin or evil or wickedness in God and therefore it doesn't come from God.

Job 34:10-11 "Therefore, hear me, you men of understanding:
far be it from God that he should do wickedness,
and from the Almighty that he should do wrong.
11 For according to the work of a man he will repay him,
and according to his ways he will make it befall him.

James 1:13-14 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

First the angels and later man sinned willfully, voluntarily, of their own choice. Though God ordained it and permitted it, the blame rests solely with free moral creatures.

After Adam and Eve sinned what did God do happen? Who did He seek out?

Genesis 3:8-12 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." 11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

It was Adam, not Eve, that God made answer for what happened. Why? Adam was the God-appointed head. Adam was the patriarch, the one from whom God made Eve, and from whom the rest of the human race descended. Adam is called the Federal head or covenant head of the human race.

Please do not confuse this with male domination or some kind of masculine tyranny. The Federal Headship of Adam or male headship refers to a partnership between two spiritual equal persons in which the male bears the primary responsibility for authority and leadership, a relationship he is to lead in a God-glorifying direction.

Male domination ignores a woman's spiritual equality before God and tramples her personhood, dignity, virtue, value, worth and rights. The man who treats his wife or daughter or other women

in this way is a fool and fails to understand the meaning of woman's being created in the image of God, and of the meaning of male headship.

Who is responsible for sin entering the world?

Was it Eve? Was it Eve first and then Adam? Was it Adam and Eve together? Many say it that way, but the Bible says it a different way.

I Corinthians 5:21-22 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Romans 5:12-21 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through *one man*, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned. ... 15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through *one man's* trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. 16 And the free gift is not like the result of that *one man's* sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 17 For if, because of *one man's* trespass, death reigned through that *one man*, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

18 Therefore, as *one trespass* led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19 For as by the *one man's* disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

The responsibility for the Fall and for the beginning of original sin rests not with Adam and Eve, but solely with Adam. He tried to pass the buck and blame it on Eve but that didn't work.

God held Adam responsible even though he was the second one to sin. God gave him the covenant and the commandment not to eat of the fruit of the tree. God put all Adam's descendants under his Federal Headship, from Eve on down to you and me.

When Eve ate the fruit, she didn't cause the Fall. What she did was sin and with sin would come her death. But everything hung in the balance until Adam decided what to do. Notice that after he ate, then the eyes of both were opened to their sin and nakedness.

Presumably he could have said to God, "Eve has disobeyed and eaten of the forbidden fruit. I offer my life for hers; I willingly lay down my life for hers." In so doing the First Adam would have done what the Second Adam did. But Adam ate and in Adam all fell.

Because of Adam the ground is cursed.
Because of Adam death entered the world.

Why did God only tell Adam that He would die? Why didn't He tell Eve she would die also? Because Adam was the head. In Adam all sin, in Adam all die. As the head goes, so goes the rest of the body. As the leader goes, so goes all the followers.

Genesis 3:19 ... for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

I Corinthians 5:21-22 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

By one man sin and death came into the world and by one man redemption and resurrection from death came into the world.

The Consequences of the Fall.

Our Belgic Confession list several consequences of the Fall. It's clear the fall was a very great fall. From the possibility of eternal blessings and life Adam plunged all humanity and all creation into misery, sin and death, and separation from God.

Without true knowledge of our misery we will not seek or understand or appreciate the Gospel of saving grace.

Guilt and shame.

Knowing good and evil they see their nakedness and are filled with guilt and shame.

They try to cover up and fix things with their own resources. This is man's first attempt to make the world a better place by his own means. But it doesn't work.

This is why all our technological improvements seem like they are making the world a better place but they fail. They don't bring improvement to the human heart and soul. On the outside things look great, but on the inside we are full of guilt and shame and darkness and despair.

The human heart can't be fixed by human means. Only God can make a new heart, a clean heart.

Separation from God:

Like Adam in the garden, we don't seek God but hide from Him. Sin cannot stand before God, which is why it loves the darkness.

Isaiah 59:2 your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

Corrupted our whole nature:

Everything good was corrupted.

Genesis 6:5 The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Psalms 14:2-3 The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.
3 They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

Romans 3:13-18 "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive."
"The venom of asps is under their lips."
14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness."
15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 in their paths are ruin and misery,
17 and the way of peace they have not known.”
18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

We are completely bankrupt, in body, soul and spirit, in mind and heart, in knowledge, will and affections.

Darkness of understanding:

I Corinthians 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Ephesians 4:17-18 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

The Bondage of the Will.

We are now slaves to sin. Before the Fall Adam was able not to sin. Now Adam and all his descendants are not able not to sin and able only to sin.

John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

Romans 6:16 ... you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Romans 8:7-8 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

We still have a will but it's not free, it's in bondage to sin and only chooses what is sinful. Apart from outside help, we are without hope.

Physical and spiritual death:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death.

Ephesians 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

The corruption of all creation.

Romans 8:20-22 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

Our Creeds sum up our condition due to Adam's sin:

Belgic Confession, Article 14:

“... having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he has lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God, and retained only small remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us ...

Canons of Dort, III/IV.1:

“But, revolting from God by the instigation of the devil and by his own free will, he forfeited these excellent gifts; and in the place thereof became involved in blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity, and perverseness of judgment; became wicked, rebellious, and obdurate [stubborn, stiff-necked] in heart and will, and impure in his affections.”

All of our pain and suffering and frustration in this life are a constant, daily reminder that life is not as it was meant to be and that this life is not all that is meant to be. This is not as good as it gets. Our pain and suffering and frustration are meant to point us back to God and to eternal life. Only there will we find true freedom and fulfillment.

Application and conclusion.

This is not a myth or a fable. This is God’s revelation to us of how sin and death came into our world. Before this there was no sin and death.

If sin did not enter the world at this particular point in time with this first, real, historic sin, then how do we explain sin and death? We are left with having to say that God didn’t create a world good, but a world that was sinful and fallen. Sin somehow as to be part of God’s original. If Adam is not the source then God is.

This is why we affirm an historical Adam and an historical Fall. God’s Word is truth. All glory belongs to Him, for from Him and through Him and to Him are all things (Romans 11:36).