

The Fall into Sin (Part 1) Outline

Selected Passages and Genesis 3

- I. Evil exists
 - A. A most evil event, October 7th
- II. Theories regarding God and evil: World Views
 - A. All world views should account for sin and evil in the world.
 - B. Examples of current world views regarding God and evil:
 - 1. Sin and evil do not exist, they are social constructs.
 - 2. There is an impersonal, unknowable , rational power in the universe that launched everything including all that is good and evil.
 - 3. Sin and evil are illusions, all life actually is an illusion. We live in a virtual reality...welcome to the Matrix!
 - 4. God is good therefore everything is good you just think some things are not good. All sin, evil and death are an illusion—Christian Science.
 - 5. There is no God therefore there is no explanation for sin and evil.
 - 6. The Christian world view.
- III. Sin and evil, most difficult subjects.
 - A. The human mind cannot fully comprehend all that defines evil. We will always be left with it being a mystery, but the Bible gives us such valuable understanding.
- IV. God did not create sin and evil.
 - A. Many Christians believe God DID create sin and evil— Isaiah 45:7 KJV.
 - B. The Biblical evidence is clear—God did not create sin and evil:
 - 1. 1 John 1:5
 - 2. James 1:13
 - 3. Proverbs 8:13
 - 4. Habakkuk 1:13

V. Evil was not created.

A. Evil is not a thing.

1. Evil is the absence of God.

“Evil is a lack of goodness. It is goodness spoiled.” J. P. Moreland

VI. Where did evil come from?

A. Evil did not originate in the Garden of Eden.

B. Old Testament clues:

1. Ezekiel 28:13-17 (New Testament reference: 1 Timothy 3:6).

2. Isaiah 14:12-15

C. God made creatures who had the freedom to choose good, or to refuse good.

1. Satan chose to defy Holy God out of pride.

2. Man and woman in the garden chose to disobey God.

3. Example: Romans 1:18-31

VII. God did not create evil but He ordained it.

A. God allows evil.

B. God decreed evil.

1. The sovereignty of God—God is in control of all things. Nothing happens in this universe that is not “decreed” by God.

VIII. Evil is temporary.

A. 1 John 3:8

The Fall into Sin (Part 1) Pastoral Notes

Genesis 3:1-7

I've been in evil and sin all week... that is... I've been immersed in what the Bible has to say about evil and sin... We've made it through the first two chapters of Genesis... and everything has been good... very good....that is now all going to radically change...

I had originally planned to dive into the narrative of chapter three... that most familiar account of what we call the fall of man that took place in the Garden of Eden... but the more I thought about it all... the more I felt the necessity to set the table so to speak with all of us getting a biblical understanding of sin and evil...

The results by Saturday was I had way to much stuff... this morning would be a very long sermon... finished before dinner or two or three shorter sermons... for your sake I chose to do the latter... so this morning is going to be a little different...

I'm afraid what I'm going to begin with is not a pleasant or "good" subject... but then... the passage we come to in Genesis chapter 3 is anything but pleasant and good... but it is a necessary passage It is vital....

Genesis 3 brings up many questions...many of which remain mysteries... but I think it is worth our time to address some of these before plunging into the garden....the topic of evil... Everything in the universe was good then in chapter three everything is corrupted...It is in Genesis 3 that evil enters into God's good creation.... I was reminded of Genesis 3 last February.

Last February as most of you know I went to Israel at a most unique time... Israel was (and still is) in war with Hamas... the country was void of the usual tourist... the hotels were full... but not with tourist.... But with displaced refugees....whose home had either been destroyed by Hamas missiles or were being threatened by them.

I had no idea what we would really see or experience when 23 of us pastors from the states were bussed over to the Gaza border.... The entire time there was the chance of our bus being blown apart by one of the hundreds of missiles continuously being launched on to the bordering Jewish Kibbutz's where we were headed to.

What we saw and experienced getting out of our bus... and entering the residential apartments of Kfar Aza...one of the most devastated of the kibbutz's was beyond comprehension...these rows of small little apartments that housed mostly young people in their 20's who had come to the kibbutz to learn growing vegetables and fruit... they reminded me of the hippies of the 60's...

Peace loving... back to the earth... love, peace and rock and roll!...maybe a little kooky...these weren't radical Zionists... or radical Jewish orthodox religious people... many of them were students from other countries living there to learn agriculture....

But we walked through the decimated rows of apartments... 122 days since the October 7th attack by Hamas...the kibbutz is exactly as it was after the attack... we could still smell death as we walked down the street... apartments scorched from grenades and mortars...thousands of bullet holes in all the blood stained walls ... we were allowed to enter a few of the apartments.

What we saw I will not repeat any more here... it is Sunday morning...we heard the testimonies of some of the survivors... chilling stories... horrific deeds of terrorism... you've probably heard about the Hamas young man who grabbed a cell phone off a young girl he had just killed... and dialed his mother.

"Mom, I killed more than 10 Jews with my own hands," he said. "Please be proud of me, dad."
The Hamas fighter then repeatedly urged his family to look at his WhatsApp feed to see what he had done.

We saw some of that footage that was made into a 43 minute film from footage taken from body cams they collected from deceased Hamas... you literally cannot watch it!... leaving the kibbutz... the bus was very, very quiet... can you imagine 23 quiet pastors?... somebody broke the silence... *How could anyone do this?...* somebody said *Hamas are wretched animals...* someone else added...*don't insult the animal kingdom... animals don't do this!..* it truly was a reflective time as we drove away... *where did such evil come from? How can man be so depraved?*

How could over 3000 young men plan...premeditate...then decimate, murder 1200 people ... the youngest was a newborn baby just 14 hour old.... The oldest was a 94 year old woman...how can that many men do the indescribable horrific acts that took place October 7th. ?

That night in my hotel room I asked all those questions... WHY?...HOW?...God...*why did you allow that? Why didn't you stop it?...*

All of you who have lived any length of time have experienced evil in your lives... some of you have experienced evil at the level I just described and you have been permanently affected by it... I know, you've shared with me.

All of you regardless of age have experienced the results of sin... you've each done your share of it...what happened to mankind to end up such depraved beings?

World Views are essential... World views are the lens in which we view the world... the explanation for the essentials in life... a good world view explains who we are... why we are here... what we are to do while we are here... and where are we going?...what's it all for?

And a good world view must have an answer for the problem of sin and evil in the world...I've studied many, many world views... there's truth in most of them... but most of them fall short of THE truth...

- One view is that sin and evil don't really exist... this is a Marxist view by the way... sin and evil are social constructs...they are subjective... what one culture deems as being evil... another culture deems them as good...the idea of good is also a subjective social contrast.... This world view does NOTHING to explain October 7th!
- There is a cosmic power: unknowable, impersonal, some kind of rational power out there with no personality, no relationship, no ability to connect to us, but some cosmic eternal power, rational power that launched everything in our universe...including good and evil. But good and evil are subjective... subject to interpretation... We live in a virtual reality, welcome to the Matrix!

Philosopher Nick Bostrom proposed in the *Philosophical Quarterly* that the universe and everything in it might be a simulation...and since that publication... there has been an explosion of adherents to that world view. ...again... tell the survivors of October 7th it was all in their imagination!

- Another view that suffering, and evil, and death don't really exist... God is good, and therefore **everything is good**, you just think it's not good.... That is to say again that evil is an illusion, suffering is an illusion, and death is an illusion.

“Who in the world believes that?” Christian Science believes that?... as one wise sage said... that's neither Christian nor Science!

Hindus also say the entire universe is an illusion. So, you can take some kind of esoteric mystical approach to the reality of evil and agree with those people.

None of those answer October 7th in any meaningful way,.

- There is no God... therefore no objective evil

The Philosophy department at Stanford set out to explain the existence of evil... beginning with the assumption that sin and evil are not social constructs... but has been defined by a higher being... God... and set out to prove the reality of evil...this is their logic and conclusions:

1. If God exists, then God is omnipotent, omniscient and morally perfect.
2. If God is omnipotent (all powerful) then God has the power to eliminate all evil.
3. If God is omniscient (all knowing) then God knows when evil exists.
4. If God is morally perfect, then God has a desire to eliminate evil.
5. But evil exists
6. If evil exists and God exists, then either God doesn't have the power to eliminate all evil, or doesn't know when evil exists, or doesn't have the desire to eliminate all evil.
7. Therefore, God does not exist.

That really doesn't answer anything!...what they didn't do is say anything about the origin of evil but only that God must not exist.

There's many, many, world views...only one has...I believe an explanation for sin and evil in the world...and an explanation for God's hand in it all... and that is the Christian world view.... Are you surprised?

The Christian world view on sin and evil begins in Chapter 3 of Genesis... this is truly one of the essential passages in all of Scripture... what happens in chapter three is the reason for the rest of the Bible!...Genesis three tells us what happened to us... the rest of the Bible tells us what to do about it.

Genesis three is the fall of mankind... Genesis 4 all the way to Revelation is God's path to redemption from this fall.

Chapter three gives us great insight into how an October 7th could happen... it gives us insight as to what is wrong with the world...why there's cancer... why there is murder... theft... embezzlement... hate... lies... spider bites...

I don't know who said it...*Ignore the teaching of this chapter in history and the story of humanity becomes impossible either to understand or to explain.*

But there's some things we should know about sin and evil before we get into Genesis 3...I think we need some theology to help us understand that vital chapter.

1. (III) This is a tough subject... no matter how thorough you are reading the Bible... you will still have questions about evil... in fact... the deeper you dive... the more questions you may surface with.... There is a time when we must admit it's a mystery... but much can be known....

2. (VI) God did not create evil Sometimes... man... theologians get so smart they conclude that God actually is the author of sin and evil...In the beginning God created everything... and God is as the philosophers said.. omnipotent and omniscient...add to that His sovereignty... the logical conclusion rather than eliminating the reality of God... God created sin and evil... for His purposes....

Some, quoting Isaiah 45:7, seek to make God the author of sin: "**I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things**" (KJV).

However, the KJV's word evil, from the original Hebrew rah, is better translated as "**calamity.**" The context of this passage concerns God's sovereignty over natural disasters. God is sovereign over all things... Exodus 4:11... **And the Lord said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, The Lord?**

So... Isaiah 45:7 is best translated... as the Legacy... **The One forming light and creating darkness, producing peace and creating calamity; I am Yahweh who does all these,**

God is sovereign over nature and He uses natural disasters for His good.

But He is not the author of sin:

1 John 1:5

5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all

God would have to have darkness in Him to produce darkness... something that didn't exist before.

James 1:13

13 No one is to say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. Not only that but He hates sin

Proverbs 8:13

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride, arrogance, the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate. Moral evil originated with the creature, not the Creator.

Everything God created was good!... We saw that in Genesis 1... Habakkuk 1:13 says to God **Your eyes are too pure to see evil, And You cannot look on trouble.**

3. (V) Evil was not created

At first it might seem that if God created all things, then evil must have been created by God.

However, evil is not a “thing” like a rock or electricity....or a mountain... You cannot have a jar of evil.

Evil has no existence of its own; it is really the absence of good. Some weak but fair pictures: holes are real but they only exist in something else. We call the absence of dirt a hole, but it cannot be separated from the dirt.

If a person is asked, “*Does cold exist?*” is anyone here in this room going to argue that cold doesn’t really exist?...so does cold exist?... the answer would likely be “yes.” However, that’s wrong!. Cold does not exist.

Cold is the absence of heat....darkness does not exist...darkness is not a *thing*... it is the absence of light....write this down... this is vital.... **Evil is the absence of good, or better, evil is the absence of God.**

The most horrifying condition to be in is one with the absence of God... in fact... some theologians describe hell is a place absent from God...a place where He has completely removed Himself... imagine that!... the complete absence of God... there is not a place in the entire cosmos where God is completely absent...

Imagine all His grace... His love... His compassion.. His provisions... His strength and power removed... the more God is removed from a person... a situation... 3000 Hamas terrorists... the more evil will occur...

Thinking about that October 7th horror... it’s not because these men were animals... it is because **they were godless**... {They had Allah...but Allah is not God....they were godless...But God was there in those kibbutz’s on October 7th. [expound]}

Definition of Evil

Evil is the absence of God.

Christian philosopher J. P. Moreland has noted, “*Evil is a lack of goodness. It is goodness spoiled. You can have good without evil, but you cannot have evil without good.*”

Or as Christian apologist Greg Koukl has said, “*Human freedom was used in such a way as to diminish goodness in the world, and that diminution, that lack of goodness, that is what we call evil.*”

God is love (1 John 4:8); the absence of love in a person is un-God-like and therefore evil....so in anything you’re doing... the test is... is it godlike?...if it is contrary to God.... it is evil!... And an absence of love manifests itself in unloving behavior. The same can be said concerning God’s mercy, justice, patience.

The lack of these godly qualities in anyone constitutes evil. That evil then manifests itself in behavior that is unmerciful, unjust, impatient, etc., bringing more harm into the good world that God has made. As it turns out, we lack a lot: “As it is written: ‘**There is no one righteous, not even one**’” (Romans 3:10).

Another way to put it...

Anything that contradicts the holy nature of God is evil...Psalm 51... that great Psalm the words of David after the prophet Nathan came to him and confronted him over his sin with Bathsheba... Nathan pointed out to David that what He did is contrary to anything God would ever have done or condoned... David’s sin with Bathsheba contradicted the Holy nature of God.

Psalm 51:4

4 Against You, You only, I have sinned

And done what is evil in Your sight, That’s what we’re concerned with here... actions that are evil in His sight...it is God who is the determiner of what is evil...he is the standard.

So that You are justified when You speak

And blameless when You judge.

4. Where did evil come from then?

The Garden was not where sin came from

The first man, Adam, sinned, and his transgression spiraled mankind into sin, but this was not sin’s origin...just a few passages might help us:

Ezekiel 28:13-15... God told the prophet Ezekiel to have a chat with the king of Tyre... Tyre was one of the gentile nations God was going to judge for the way they treated Israel... King Nebuchadnezzar would soon invade Tyre... Tyre was about a hundred miles north of Jerusalem in what is now Lebanon...

The king of Tyre as noted in Ezekiel was under the power of a supernatural wickedness... verses 13-15 can be taken in two ways as prophesy many times does... it is talking about what would have been the current situation with the king of Tyre and it describes someone more ominous... more wicked... Satan himself...

13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; (both the king of Tyre and Satan had been in the garden of Eden...the king in around 570bc and Satan shortly after the creation of man in Genesis 3)

Every precious stone was your covering:

The ruby, the topaz, and the diamond;

The beryl, the onyx, and the jasper;

The lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald;

And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets,

Was in you.

On the day that you were created

They were prepared. God created Satan as a most beautiful angel with exalted privileges.. an angel that was appointed to guard God's throne...

14 You were the anointed cherub who covers,

And I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; God created Satan... Created him an angel of the highest status... in a similar way... God created the king of Tyre and placed him in the highest status... God's even in control of the gentile nations!...

You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.

15 You were blameless in your ways That isn't true of the king of Tyre... he was far from blameless... but it was in Satan before he fell to unrighteousness....

From the day you were created

Until unrighteousness was found in you. The sin of Satan was pride...Satan coveted God's exclusive throne...as we will see when we get to Genesis 3 next week.

Satan, who was originally created without flaw, as all things created by God were....Ezekiel tells us what happens... he is again describing what will happen to the king of Tyre... who is following the pattern of Satan himself:

16-17; By the abundance of your trade

You were internally filled with violence,

**And you sinned;
Therefore I have cast you as profane
From the mountain of God. The king is cast off his throne... Satan is cast out of heaven
And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub,
From the midst of the stones of fire.
17 Your heart was lofty because of your beauty;
You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor.
I cast you to the ground;
I put you before kings,
That they may see you.**

The apostle Paul in the New Testament in listing the qualities and requirements of an elder points back to what happened to Satan... 1 Timothy 3:6

[An elder should be] **leading his own household well, having his children in submission with all dignity 5 (but if a man does not know how to lead his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?),6 and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation of the devil.**

“Conceited” literally means *to wrap up in smoke...to puff up in smoke... to puff up in pride.*

We need to mention Isaiah 14:12-14 as well... Isaiah like Ezekiel... without realizing it describes two different situations separated by hundreds of years... Israel had been in captivity in Babylon... it is getting close when God would release them from captivity... Chapter 14 describes this great release...

What Isaiah is also describing is the final Babylon at the end of the tribulation... still hasn't happened yet... this will be the final judgement... where Israel will be delivered... Babylon must perish so that the Lord can exalt His people...

So on one hand we see the fall of the king of Babylon 530 bc and on the other hand..... we see the story of the fall of Satan.

**12 How you have fallen from heaven,
You star of the morning, son of the dawn!
You have been cut down to the earth,
You who defeated the nations!
13 But you said in your heart,**

**‘I will ascend to heaven; as high as God
I will raise my throne above the stars of God,
And I will sit on the mount of assembly
In the recesses of the north.
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.’**

Notice all the “I wills” in those verses... five times “I will...”... arrogance... pride...

15 Nevertheless you will be brought down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit.

Satan was created as a perfect, wise, and beautiful angel... But then Satan rebelled: **“You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you”**
That’s when the situation changed....

Scripture hints at the reason Satan chose to sin: **“Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor”**... remember where evil comes from? when God is removed from the situation....

Satan moved his attention off the Holy and on to himself.... Satan’s fall took place at some point before he came as a serpent to tempt Eve in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3. After being thrown to the earth... Satan tempted humanity to sin, and he has continued that practice ever since.

So when God created, it is true that all He created was good... One of the good things God made was creatures who had the **freedom to choose** good. In order to have a real choice, God had to **allow** there to be something besides good to choose. So, God allowed these free angels and humans to choose good or reject good (evil).

God did not have to create evil, but rather only allow for the absence of good.

[Great example Romans 1:18-31... **Therefore God gave them over... 3 times is saying... God removed Himself and let them go where they wanted to go....**

5. God did not create evil but He ordained it

God did not create evil... but He does allow evil.... If God had not allowed for the possibility of evil, both mankind and angels would be serving God out of obligation, not choice.... He did not want “robots” that simply did what He wanted them to do because of their “programming.” God allowed for the possibility of evil so that we could genuinely have a free will and choose whether or not we wanted to serve Him.

God allowed evil to come into this world for His glory... we glorify God when we do the opposite of the men in Romans 1... when we choose godliness and righteousness instead of ungodliness and unrighteousness.... God doesn't give us over... He keeps us... for we have glorified Him.

Let me notch it up...not only did God allow evil... He decreed it.

God decreed that evil would be part of His plan...He was not caught off guard when Satan fell... He was not caught off guard when Adam and Eve sinned... *Where did that come from? I didn't plan on that!*...God was not caught off guard on October 7th.

God is not the creator of evil and He is not the cause of evil. He did not bring evil into existence in a cosmic sense, and He did not and does not bring evil into existence in a personal sense. He is not the cause of sin, nor is He the cause of sins in the lives of people. **But He does use it for His purposes.**

I said that we cannot understand all this... I can't understand why God allowed and how God uses October 7th for His good... but we are told that God causes all things to work out for His good... His glory..

God is sovereign over all creation... He made it... He sustains it... nothing happens that is outside of His plan... we can't understand much of that... our brains are too puny.... That is why theologians have been arguing God's sovereignty and decreed will since the beginning of theologians!.

The fact is... God uses evil and sin to achieve His purposes...it is a part of His decreed... sovereign plan..... Why does God allow sin?... why does He allow evil... why did God allow October 7th?..... why did He allow the horrible death of that 14hour old baby?..... I don't know.

But God is good... He is holy... He is sovereign... He is righteous... He is just... He is love.

6. Evil is temporary

The mystery of evil and why God has allowed its reality with all of the suffering it causes may never be fully known in this world, but Scripture assures that evil is temporary. Once the culmination of God's redemptive plan is complete, Jesus Christ will have destroyed the devil's work forever

1 John 3:8

The one who does sin is of the devil, because the devil sins from the beginning. The Son of God was manifested for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.