

The Covenant of Life & the Fall

Q&A #12: **What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?** When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

Q&A #13: **Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?** Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

Q&A #14: **What is sin?** Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Q&A #15: **What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?** The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Q&A #16: **Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?** The covenant being made with Adam not only for himself but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.

Covenant of Life (Works) (Gen. 2:16-17)

- What is a covenant?
- What was different about God's covenant with Adam, compared with covenants into which we enter?
- What were the key elements of the Covenant of Life?
- What is the danger we need to avoid when reflecting on the Covenant of Life?
- Were there any conditions in the Covenant of Life that were unfair to Adam?
 - Did Adam have the liberty to obey?
 - Did Adam have the ability to obey?
 - Was he tricked to disobey?
 - Were there any inducements to obey?
 - Were there any disincentives or consequences of disobedience?

The Fall (Genesis 3)

- Did Adam and Eve keep the Covenant of Life?
- What tactics did Satan use to tempt Adam & Eve?
- Adam and Eve's sin was a.) unbelief, b.) coveting, c.) rebellion, d.) all of the above
- What can we say about Satan being allowed to tempt Adam & Eve, especially if God really preserves and governs all of his creatures and their actions?
- Does God bear a measure of responsibility?

What is Sin?

- Two types of sin: Not doing what God commands are sins of _____, while breaking a command is a sin of _____.
- In the Garden, God defined sin as disobedience to his command. Satan suggested however, that sin was "anything that proves to be harmful to _____." Does Satan use the same angle today?

History, Fable, or Fiction?

- What are some of the views people have about the reality of the Fall?
- Why is it important that Adam be understood as a real historical person, as opposed to a symbolic character in an important moral fable?

Consequences of Sin

As a result of disobeying God, several consequences may be observed from the Genesis account.

- Disharmony with _____ (Gen. 3:7)
 - Disharmony with _____ (Gen. 3:8-10)
 - Disharmony with _____ (Gen. 3:12); (Gen. 4:8)
 - Disharmony with _____ (Gen. 3:17-19)
 - Pain in _____ (Gen. 3:16)
 - Access lost to _____ (Gen. 3:23-24)
 - _____ for Adam and everyone thereafter (Gen. 5:5)
- All descendants of Adam, by _____, inherit sin.
 - Was Jesus Christ also born with original sin?
 - Man's holiness, righteousness, and knowledge before the Fall replaced with _____, _____ and _____
 - To what practical evidence of the reality that all have sinned can one point?
 - Was it unfair that the whole human race depended on Adam's obedience?

The covenant of life, like all others initiated by God, was a result of God's grace, his unmerited favor, to us. As the Creator he is under no obligation to make a covenant with anyone. The promise to Adam for keeping the covenant was life- not just physical life, but eternal life. The condition of the covenant was obedience. In order to receive God's blessing, Adam had to obey God's commands, including the special command not to eat of the fruit from one particular tree. Adam had the ability to obey had good reason to obey, and had no need to disobey. Adam's punishment for disobeying was death. When Adam sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, he forfeited God's blessing and faced death- both physical and eternal. Adam's and our hope (through grace) is to return to paradise- in heaven. The heavenly paradise described in Revelation will have no special conditions (i.e. no tree from which we may not eat). We will enjoy God forever.

Adam and Eve freely chose to sin. Not even Satan could have forced them to disobey God. They both had the freedom and the ability to choose what was good. Adam and Eve fell from their perfect estate. They were real people, who actually lived. They believed Satan's lie and fell into sin, losing their original righteousness. Sin is a violation of God's law. The absolute standard for every motive and every action is God's perfect law (as revealed in the Bible). This standard lays bare our sins of omission and commission. Sin is terrible. God takes every sin seriously, and so he has attached the death penalty to it. Revelation 20:11-15 describes the final terrible penalty for unrepented sin. We should abhor sin because God does. Sin can be forgiven. When we confess to God that we have sinned against him, and ask him to forgive us for Christ's sake, he will do so. Believers must confess, believe, and abandon sin in order to experience God's forgiveness.

When does a person first become sinful? When they are one or two? Later? The Psalmist says, "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Ps. 51:5). We are sinful even before we are born! How come? Well, it has to do with our family resemblance... to Adam. Adam was mankind's covenant representative. When he decided whether or not to obey God's commands, he did so on behalf of all mankind. It's sort of like your family. Your Mom and Dad chose to marry each other and they chose to have you as their child. For better or worse, you carry genetic characteristics from both of your parents. You didn't ask to have these traits, but they are forever part of you. Now, sin is not a genetic trait. It is, however, very much a part of you. Adam's natural descendants fell through his sin. When Adam fell, mankind fell with him. Adam's nature was corrupted by sin, and all his descendants have inherited that corruption. But this does not apply to Jesus, since he was conceived not by ordinary means, but by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was the covenant representative of believers. As Adam represented mankind in his disobedience, so Jesus represented all believers in his perfect obedience and atonement for sin.

God could have abandoned mankind after the fall, but he mercifully provided a way for sinners to be saved. He sent his Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. So, whenever you sin, you can be forgiven by taking these three steps:

- 1.) Confess: Admit to God that you have sinned against him. What did the prodigal son say when he returned to his father in Luke 15:21?
- 2.) Believe: Ask God to accept Jesus' death as the payment for the sin you have confessed, and trust him to do so. What does 1 John 1:9 promise?
- 3.) Abandon sin: What advice did Jesus give in John 5:14 about sin? If you really trust God to help you, you will be able to say no to Satan the next time he tempts you (1 Cor. 10:13).