



10

Effects of the Fall

Key Themes

- God subjected the universe to a Curse.
- God's plan of redemption was in place before time.

Key Passages

- Genesis 1:29–31; Deuteronomy 32:4; Genesis 3:14–19; Romans 8:19–22; Revelation 21:1–5

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe the extent of the effects of the Curse.
- Identify the effects of the Fall that will be reversed in the Consummation.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Write on the board, “How much of God’s creation was affected by the Fall?”

Have students use bookmarks to mark Genesis 1:29, Genesis 3:14, Romans 8:19, and Revelation 21:1 in their Bibles.



Activity: A Cursed Creation

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Students will put some of the skills of inductive study into practice as they examine the text of Genesis 3 to identify all of the components of the Curse pronounced by God.

Student Guides

Pencils



Studying God’s Word

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The effects of the Fall of Adam have impacted everything in the creation. From the death that would come to Adam—and every person—to the death of animals, beginning with those that were used to cover Adam and Eve’s sin, the entire creation is now groaning under the effects of sin.

Study the Prepare to Share section.

Go Before the Throne.

DVD player and TV or computer

Preview the video clip “Was There Death Before Adam Sinned?” (2:08) from the Resource DVD-ROM.



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

To prepare your heart and mind for this week's lesson, read Genesis 1:26–30, 3:14–19; Romans 8:18–25.

What was life like before the Fall of man? Can we even imagine it? Probably not. However, there are some clues in Scripture that help us understand a bit of life in a perfect world.

First of all, there was no death. Death came as a result of Adam's sin (Romans 5:12), and is called an enemy that God will one day destroy (1 Corinthians 15:25–26). Secondly, the earth that God created was "very good" (Genesis 1:31; Deuteronomy 32:4). There were no hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes, or other destructive events. God upheld His creation perfectly. Thirdly, man and the animals were vegetarian (Genesis 1:29–30). There were no animals eating other animals, and Adam and Eve did not eat meat. In fact, permission to eat meat did not come until after the Genesis Flood (Genesis 9:1–3). And finally, Adam and Eve had a perfect relationship with their Creator. He spoke with them and they experienced unbroken fellowship with God.

The day that Adam and Eve disobeyed their Creator has been called the saddest day in the history of the universe. God had given them a perfect creation—no death, disease, or suffering. They had been given dominion over the animals, and were told to be fruitful and multiply (Genesis 1:28). However, Eve was tempted by the serpent (Satan) and she ate the fruit that God had forbidden them to eat. Adam joined her in her rebellion, and the world has never been the same.

As a result of their rebellion, God punished the serpent (Genesis 3:14), the woman (Genesis 3:16), and the man (Genesis 3:17). The serpent was cursed more than all the beasts; he would crawl on his belly, and eat dust. And, in a spiritual sense, one day Satan's

head would be crushed by the seed of the woman—Jesus (Genesis 3:15)! The woman was subjected to increased pain in childbirth, and the desire to rule over her husband (Genesis 3:16). The ground was cursed on account of the man; it would now bring forth thorns and thistles, and with difficulty man would eat of its fruit (Genesis 3:17–18). Man would now die: "In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).

The Fall and the subsequent Curse brought disaster to the very good creation. We are now experiencing the futility, the groans, and the pains of a universe subject to darkness because of sin (Romans 8:19–20).

We are all affected by the Fall—not only by the Curse God placed on the universe but also by sin. Because every human is a descendant of Adam and Eve, we are born with the same sin nature found in Adam (Romans 3:23). Consequently, we are all bound by the Curse and must endure the distress, pain, suffering, disease, and natural disasters that accompany it. But that is not the end of the story. For we know that Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, has overcome death (1 Corinthians 15:54–55). And all who repent of their sins and turn to Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness will be redeemed to enjoy eternity in the perfectly restored universe—a universe that promises the end of death, sorrow, crying, and pain (Revelation 21:4). We eagerly await this with hope and expectation of finally seeing our Savior face to face (Job 19:26–27).

APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

The account of the Fall often presents controversy. One of the issues discussed involves animals. If everything was perfectly peaceful in the garden, as Genesis 1 and 2 indicate, then why are so many animals designed with features and structures that seem suited for attacking, tearing, killing, and eating? Scripture tells

us that animals were originally vegetarian (Genesis 1:29–30). So, how did they acquire their ability to kill? Where did these defense/attack structures come from?

Creationists have suggested several answers that make sense and fit within the biblical text:

- Originally, these features had a good purpose, but as the environment changed, the purpose for these features had to change as well.
- God added new features to creatures at the Curse so they would be able to withstand the onslaught of violence provoked by sin.
- Although not necessary in a perfect world, God designed the original creatures with the features they would need to live in the fallen world God knew was coming.
- God placed designs for these features in the genes of the original creatures, but they did not become active until after the Curse.

While we do not know exactly how the animals acquired these defense/attack structures, this we do know: according to God’s Word, our final authority, animals will once again get along with each other and with man (Isaiah 11:6–7).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the Bible can be divided into three great periods: the pre-Fall world, the post-Fall world, and the Consummation.

The pre-Fall world: God’s original creation was perfect—no sin, no disease, no death, and perfect relationships with one another and the Creator. Because of our present sin-cursed world, riddled with decay and death, it is hard to even imagine the pre-Fall world!

The post-Fall world: The Fall of man and subse-

quent Curse of Genesis 3 affected the entire creation. This is why the Apostle Paul describes our present world as “groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now” (Romans 8:22). The creation is broken; it is in “bondage to corruption” (Romans 8:21). Sin, disease, carnivory, natural disasters, and death are the course of this present world—“red in tooth and claw” as Tenyson wrote. The sin in the Garden of Eden affected the whole cosmos.

The Consummation: At the Consummation, when Christ shall return as Judge and King, the Curse will be removed. God will sum up all things in Christ, putting all enemies under His feet, and death itself will be destroyed. The new heaven and new earth will be a return to Eden-like agricultural fruitfulness (Ezekiel 47:12; Revelation 22:1–3), and perfect harmony in human relationships (1 Corinthians 13:8–12), in animal life (Isaiah 11:6–8), and in everything under the rule of the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus. Earth will receive her King, and all will be restored. What a glorious hope we have!

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Eternal God, thank you for your Word and the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Help my students to fully grasp the meaning of sin and redemption as we study what your Word says. Be pleased, dear Lord, to soften their hearts so that they will one day yearn for the day when they will see you face to face in the new heaven. Give them the boldness to walk according to your Word and to share the good news of the gospel with others.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Review

Last week we began our look at the second of the Seven 7 Cs, Corruption, which entered into God's perfect creation. We saw that Adam rebelled against God's command and ate the fruit after Eve had been deceived by Satan. Because God is just, He must punish sin. However, He showed mercy to Adam and Eve, covering their sin with the skins of an animal. This was a foreshadowing of the blood sacrifice used to cover the sin of people until the perfect Lamb, who would come to take away the sins of the world, offered Himself on the Cross.

Adam and Eve had tried to cover up their sin and shame with some leaves, but their efforts were not sufficient and God stepped in to cover their sin. We often

act the same way, trying to make up for our sins by praying more or serving more to please God. We have to remember that Christ was the perfect sacrifice for sin—once for all—and that we cannot add to that work. God's grace and mercy are the basis of our standing before Him. He planned to redeem believers before He even created us and we can find great comfort in knowing that Christ has covered our sins.

Today, we are going to look at the effects of Adam's Fall and the Curse that God pronounced on His creation as the result of sin, as well as the future hope of those effects being reversed when God restores the creation.





A Cursed Creation

MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

We are going to start our lesson with an activity. You have been learning a lot about how to look at a biblical text in order to understand what the text has to teach us. I am going to turn you loose to look at the Curse God pronounced in Genesis 3. I want you to scour the text for all of the information you can find about the Curse and we will discuss the passage in a few minutes. Refer the students to the activity *A Cursed Creation* in their workbooks.

Monitor the students and offer them questions to ask of the text if they are getting stuck: How many curses are there? What does each curse involve? Are there figures of speech that need to be understood?

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Discuss the various aspects of the Curse from the following list:

- *The curse on the serpent included parts aimed at the serpent (crawling and eating dust) and parts aimed at Satan (hatred between the offspring of Satan and the offspring of the woman, and a Savior who would eventually crush Satan).*
- *The punishment on Eve included increased pain in childbirth and a desire to rule over her husband.*
- *Adam's sentence included hard labor to produce food from the ground and his eventual death (returning to dust).*
- *The ground was cursed and would now bear thorns and thistles.*

- *Since the serpent was cursed "more than" the other animals, we can infer some sort of curse on all animals, even though the details are not spelled out.*

Understanding the effects and extent of the Fall is essential if we are to understand the nature of the world that we live in and the nature of mankind and the relationships between people and God.

One major effect of the Fall and God's Curse is the relationship between husband and wife. In Genesis 3:16, Eve is told that her desire will be for her husband and that he will rule over her.

? **What authority structure did God establish at the creation of Adam and Eve?** *Adam was to lead, under God's authority, and Eve was to be the helper of Adam. This is confirmed throughout Scripture and expressly described in Ephesians 5:22–33 and other passages.*

Since the Fall, women have the desire to be in control in the marriage, and husbands have a tendency to not be the leaders that God has called them to be. Only the gospel can reverse this condition. With the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, we can overcome these sinful tendencies and live a life worthy of the calling of Christ. When we try to do those things apart from Christ . . . we fail.

Although you didn't study this part of the passage, in Genesis 3:22–24 God cast the couple out of the garden. He did this to prevent them from continuing to eat the fruit of the tree of life and as a sign of the broken fellowship with God.



► Write on the board, “How much of God’s creation was affected by the Fall?”

► Have students use bookmarks to mark Genesis 1, Genesis 3, Romans 8, and Revelation 1 in their Bibles.



Studying God’s Word

READ THE WORD

Another impact of the Fall was on the food supply. This might seem like a trivial issue, but it ties into a very important concept—the connection between death and sin. To introduce this topic, we are going to watch a short video segment and then look at the text to see if it supports what we hear from Ken Ham. *Show the video “Was There Death Before Adam Sinned?”*

Now, let’s read Genesis 1:29–31 together. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Genesis 1:29–31

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? Who is speaking in this verse? Look at Genesis 1:29. *God.*
 - ? Who was God speaking to? *Adam and Eve.*
 - ? What did God command Adam and Eve to eat after He had created them and called them to rule over the earth? *Herbs with seeds and trees with fruit bearing seeds.*
 - ? Now look in verse 30. Who was God addressing here? *Every beast of the earth, birds, creeping things—animals.*
 - ? What did God command the animals to eat? *Green herbs.*
- How did God describe the condition of His creation immediately after giving this command? *He called everything that He had made “very good.”*
- ? And, when did all of this happen? Look in verse 31. *The sixth day of creation.*
 - ? How many years ago did this all happen? Look at the Seven C’s Timeline. *About 6,000 years ago.*

God told Adam, Eve, and even the animals what they should eat after He created them. And then He ended the Creation Week by telling us that He thought everything He had made was very good.

- ? What does Deuteronomy 32:4 tell us about God’s works? *They are perfect.*
- ? How would you summarize the diet of everything God had created? *Everything had a vegetarian diet.*
- ? If we accept evolutionary thinking, that animals evolved, were animals and man vegetarian as they were evolving? *No, animals would have been eating one another.*
- ? Assuming that God used evolution to create the world, if animals were eating one another and man eating animals, would they have been obeying God’s command to eat only plants? *No.*

Deuteronomy 32:4

Vegetarian:
a person who does not eat meat, but eats vegetables, fruits, grains, and nuts

- ? Would God have called this “very good” if the animals, and man, were disobeying His command? *No.*
- ? The fossil record contains much evidence of death, suffering, disease, and things like cancer and animals eating one another. Would God call these things “very good”? *No, this is not consistent with God’s character.*

Discover the Truth

This idea of a vegetarian diet is confirmed in Genesis 3 when God told Adam that he was to eat the “herb of the field” in the sweat of his labor (Genesis 3:17–19). Adam would also be fighting against the thorns and thistles that were a part of the curse on the ground.

Another important passage to confirm this idea is found when God addresses Noah after the Flood. Turn to Genesis 9 and listen as I read verse 1–3. *Read the verses.*

This is the first time that man was allowed to eat animals! God said very clearly that He had given them herbs before. If there was not an earlier command to eat only herbs, then this allowance to eat meat makes no sense.

This raises some interesting questions from skeptics of the biblical view. Why did *T. rex* have giant teeth? Why do snakes have venom? Why do armadillos need protective plates?

Creationists have suggested several answers to explain these defense/attack structures that make sense and fit within the biblical text:

1. Originally, these features had a good purpose, but as the environment changed, the purpose for these features had to change as well.
2. God added new features to creatures at the Curse so they would be able to withstand the onslaught of violence provoked by sin.
3. Although not necessary in a perfect world, God designed the original creatures with the features they would need to live in the fallen world God knew was coming.
4. God placed designs for these features in the genes of the original creatures, but they did not become active until after the Curse.

While we do not know exactly how the animals acquired these defense/attack structures, this we do know: according to God’s Word, our final authority, animals were originally vegetarian, and they will once again get along with each other and with man as it states in Isaiah 11:6–7.



Genesis 9:1–3

READ THE WORD

Let’s read Romans 8:19–22 together so that we can understand the true extent of the effects of the Fall. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Romans 8:19–22

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? What is the creation waiting for? *The revealing of the sons of God.*
- ? Why is it waiting for this event? *It was unwillingly subjected to futility.*
- ? How did the creation come to be futile? *God subjected it to a curse.*
- ? How is the creation acting in light of its curse? *It is groaning as if it is in labor.*
- ? In light of this passage, how much of the creation is suffering under the Curse? *The whole creation is suffering under the Curse.*
- ? If the whole creation has been impacted by the Curse, how much of the creation needs to be redeemed? *The entire creation needs to be redeemed.*
- ? In Revelation 21:1–5, we read about the reversing of the Curse. What does this passage tell us about the extent of the reversal of the Curse? *Have someone read the passage. The first heaven and earth have passed away, so the reversal of the Curse is complete. Also, “all things” are to be made new, so the entire created order is in view.*
- ? What parts of the Curse are specifically mentioned in this passage? *No more death, nor sorrow, nor crying (tears).*
- ? If death, disease, and suffering have always been part of God’s creation (from an evolutionary perspective), does it make sense that this would be reversed in the Consummation? *No. If God’s original “very good” creation included death, disease, and suffering, why would God remove those things in the future? But if those things are a result of sin and the Curse, then God will do away with death and suffering in the world when He makes all things new.*

Revelation 21:1–5

Discover the Truth

If death and diseases and suffering were part of God’s “very good” creation from the beginning, the reversal of those aspects of the creation seems to be a bit backward. Why would God reverse something that was very good?

The fact that there was a Fall of mankind shows that there was a previously perfect creation and the need to restore it to that perfect state. If the creation is to be restored to its original condition, that original condition could not have included the death of animals or the suffering we see from diseases and natural disasters.

When we talked about the Seven C’s of History, we called the final C—which is actually a future event—the Consummation. God has promised to reverse the Curse that mankind brought into the earth through sin. That future state—a new heavens and new earth—is compared to the past condition. If that past state included death and suffering and earthquakes and tsunamis, we can expect the future state to include those things, too.

Paul told us that death is an enemy that will be finally destroyed in the Consummation (1 Corinthians 15:26). If death was God's tool to bring about the different kinds of life on the earth, it cannot be called an enemy.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

To recap what we have talked about today, the effects of the Fall of Adam have impacted everything in the creation. From the death that would come to Adam—and every person—to the death of animals beginning with those that were used to cover Adam and Eve's sin, the entire creation is now groaning under the effects of sin.

We must remember that this judgment reflects God's character. Because He is a holy and just God, He must punish sin. If He did not, He could not claim to be just. A just judge (Psalm 7:11) cannot turn a blind eye to sin.

? **How does God demonstrate His mercy toward sinners?** *As He promised, God the Father has sent the Son to pay the penalty for sin, and the Holy Spirit has come to empower God's children, true believers, to fight against the sin remaining in this world. Just as sin entered the world through the one man Adam, Christ—the Last Adam—has reconciled us to God (Romans 5:8–12).*

God's mercy is seen in the plan that He had established before the foundation of the world. In providing Jesus as a substitute to pay the penalty of sin, God demonstrates that He is both just and the justifier, even though all people have sinned and fallen short of His glory (Romans 3:23–26).

We can look forward to a time when the Curse that God pronounced on His creation will be reversed. Just as the original Curse impacted everything from personal relationships to the growing of thorns and thistles from the ground, the coming Consummation will reverse all of those. Just as there was no death, disease, or suffering in the original creation, the future will be the same.

HOLY
JUST

MERCIFUL

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

? To be fair, many people who claim to be followers of Christ and accept evolutionary teachings have never thought through these issues. What approach might you use to demonstrate the inconsistency in this type of thinking? *Sitting down with someone with an open Bible and asking them why they believe what they believe would be a great strategy. A few questions might expose some of the inconsistencies in the ideas of a person who believes there were millions of years of death before sin.*

- ? **What assurance do you find in thinking about the future Consummation, knowing that the original creation of God was perfect and included no death or suffering?** *Knowing that God could create an original creation that was perfect, we can be assured that He can restore the creation to its original perfection. If it took God billions of years to prepare the earth for man, it may well take that long to prepare the new heavens and earth.*
- ? **How might your view be different if you believed the original state of God's creation included animals eating each other to survive?** *To be consistent, you would have to accept that the future state would include animal death. Depending on what you believed about how humans appeared (evolved or specially created), there would have to be human death after the Consummation. Since these ideas directly contradict Scripture, people have developed explanations that limit the perfection to the Garden of Eden or say that "very good" was different then.*
- ? **How can an understanding of the nature and extent of the Fall help you understand the evil that exists in the world?** *In the face of the corruption that we see in the world today, we can know that God did not intend for it to be this way. His original creation was not corrupted by sin.*
- ? **How can understanding the Fall help you find comfort when you face a situation like cancer, the death of a parent, or the chaos of a tornado striking your town?** *Rather than being mad at God for causing such trouble, a proper understanding of the Fall allows us to see that it is man who has brought sin into the world. God's creation was perfect and it is our sin that has corrupted what God intended to be good. We can trust the future to God knowing that we will surely face trials in this world, but that heaven waits for us as an incorruptible inheritance for those in Christ (1 Peter 1).*
- ? **How could you use that knowledge to proclaim the gospel to someone you know who is facing those trials without Christ as his Savior?** *Using the explanation of the originally perfect creation and the Fall into sin offers a perfect opportunity to provide an explanation of the need for a Savior. The sin of Adam can be connected to the sin in each individual's life, and the hope of restoration through Christ can be explained.*



MEMORY VERSE

Genesis 2:15–17 Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for providing a way to restore the brokenness that came through our sin.
- Thank Jesus for offering Himself as a sacrifice on our behalf.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to convict the students of sin in their lives and give them boldness to share the hope of Christ with those who are lost.