

The Fall

Humankind was not 'neutral' in the garden of Eden, halfway between righteousness and sin so that he could have gone in either direction. No! In paradise man was righteous. God creates nothing evil. Mankind was made in the image of God, in righteousness and purity.

- **Man created righteous - but innocent and untested**

But his righteousness was untested. The human race was under test as to whether it would maintain the righteousness that God had given it at creation. They were innocent but not confirmed in steadfast righteousness. Adam was told to be obedient^{□1}. No other alternative was put before him. Yet there was the possibility that he would disobey. If he sinned by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would come under judgement.

□1 2:16, 17

- **Adam – the head & representative of humanity**

Adam was the head of the human race. He is a representative and agent for the entire human race. The very name means 'man'. In Genesis we read first of 'the man', 'the adam'. Then the word becomes a name, Adam. What happens to Adam happens to 'man'. The first time the word is a name could be Genesis 3:17 or 3:21. It is absolutely certain it is a name as in Genesis 4:25. All mankind is 'in' Adam^{□1}. The entire human race was involved when Adam sinned. Humankind fell when the most perfect specimen of human righteousness could not maintain his righteousness. What happened to Adam showed what would have happened to any one of us.

□1 see 1 Corinthians 15:21; Romans 5:12–21

God's way of salvation works similarly. In Christ we are restored. Just as Adam represented us, Christ represented us. Christ lived a godly life for us. Christ bore our sins for us.

- **The tree – a test with consequences**

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was given that name because man is under test. He will experience good if he obeys the command. He will experience evil if he disobeys the command.

- **Punishment - death**

The first reference to any kind of punishment in the Bible is in Genesis 2:17 where Adam is told not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. *'In the day that you eat of it you shall die'*. From the very beginning of the Bible, the wages of sin is death.

Adam's death

It is not simply the physical termination of earthly life. Adam lived for 930 years! It was not the loss of immortality. Immortality would have been given to Adam via the tree of life if he had been obedient. 'Immortality' was something over and above what he had by virtue of creation^{□1}. Genesis 2:17 gives the impression that 'death' would come upon Adam immediately if he sinned.

□1 see 3:24

- (i) **Ruined relationship with God**

(i) It consists of a **ruined relationship with God**. After his sin the man became full of fear towards God^{□1}. From this point on humankind will each one be born with a damaged relationship to God. He is born in spiritual death.

□1 3:8–10

- (ii) **Ruined relationship with human beings**

(ii) It involves a **ruined relationship with human beings**. After his sin the man who had once delighted in the woman^{□1} now blames her and criticizes her^{□2}. This also is immediately seen in what follows the story of man's fall. In the next incident murder comes into the human race. Brother rises up against brother^{□3}. As the story of the human race goes on we see progressive decline. Polygamy enters the human race at Genesis 4:19. Murder becomes a matter of pride in the life of Lamech^{□4}.

□1 2:23

□2 3:12

□3 4:8

□4 4:23–24

- (iii) **Ruined relationship towards God's creation. The creation**

(iii) It involves a **ruined relationship towards God's creation. The creation** that was originally given to him now will not be so responsive to him. The ground is cursed^{□1}. Hardship and toil come into man's labour^{□2}. 'Thorns and thistles' come into his environment^{□3}. This cursed relationship to physical territory is made even greater in the story of Cain, where he is

□1 3:17

□2 3:17

□3 3:18

'cursed away from the ground'. He will not have a piece of territory to call his own, and will become a wanderer.

(vi) **Vulnerability to the harassment of the serpent**

(iv) It involves **vulnerability to the harassment of the serpent**. After Adam's sin a permanent enmity between two human 'seeds' will continue in the human race^{□1}. Genesis 6:1–8 is a mysterious passage but it is most likely to be interpreted that as the human race deteriorated it became increasingly vulnerable to evil powers. Genesis 6:1–8 records a grotesque sin, one that no longer can be committed, and one that brought the destruction of the human race in God's judgement, the flood.

□1 3:15

(v) **Subjection to physical decay and physical death**

(v) It involves **subjection to physical decay and physical death**. Eventually the creative event of Genesis 2:7 will be reversed in Adam's life and he will 'go back to the dust'^{□1}. The point is underlined in Genesis chapter 5, where of each generation it is said 'And he died'.

□1 3:19

(vi) **Removal from the presence of God**

(vi) This death also involved **removal from the presence of God**, a change of location. He was no longer allowed in God's paradise. The way for his entry into the presence of God was barred^{□1}.

□1 3:22–24

When humankind is said to be 'dead in trespasses and sins', the thought is wider than physical death in the way the word is ordinarily used. It involves being ruled by Satan^{□1}, being under God's wrath and without personal contact with Him^{□2}. Being without the life of God. 'Death' in the rest of the Bible is more than simply physical cessation of earthly existence.

□1
Ephesians 2:2
□2
Ephesians 2:3

Beyond death – further revelation in the Bible

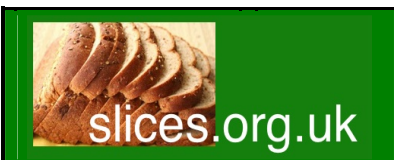
Does 'death' in Genesis 2:17 look beyond the grave? Actually there is no discussion of anything 'beyond the grave' in Genesis itself. When the rest of the Bible reveals that the 'death' which comes through sin goes even beyond the grave it is **developing** Genesis 2. In doing so it extends the text of Genesis 2:17. Genesis 2:17 itself does not say anything of what this 'death' might involve **after** Adam has died. Its horizon is earthly. The rest of the Bible will go further.

• **Heaven – like the garden of Eden**

Revelation 2:7 lets us know that our ultimate heaven will be like the garden of Eden – only there will be more and it will be greater! The 'garden of Eden' will be restored in some way, and God's people will be brought into paradise. Our ultimate glory will be a garden and a city^{□1}. In the pictures of the other end of the Bible, there is a fountain of life, and the water of life^{□2}. The curse of the fall will be abolished. We have a fortaste of it even now. 'There is a river whose streams shall make glad the city of God'^{□3}. Heaven is anticipated in the church. The church of Jesus Christ is like a temple and the river of life flows through it, to be experienced in different degrees at different times^{□4}. Paradise is restored by Christ. It is enjoyed now through Jesus, but ultimately it will be enjoyed in full measure in the new heavens and new earth.

□1
Revelation 21:2
□2
Revelation 22:1
□3
Psalm 46:4
□4
Ezekiel 47:1–12

• **Heaven – anticipated in the Church**
• **Enjoyed in full measure in the new heavens and new earth**



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