

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

GENESIS

A THEOLOGICAL COMMENTARY

THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB

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SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

Our modern society is so filled with lies that it's hard for the average person to get a good grip on what sin really is. We've filled our lives with expediencies: excuses, special interest groups, outrages against profiling, minority groups, rights and privileges, "no fault" legal claims, genetic predispositions, contextualization, modernization, etc. We don't have any fixed standard anymore for what is right and wrong.¹ It's as if our culture is stressing the fact that "right and wrong" is a contextual and relative matter and extremely difficult to nail down, and in trying to do so we have no right to pin guilt on anybody who may have the slightest legitimate reason for what they did. Which means our legal system ends up being a nightmare of contradictions and injustices and caprice, and sin reigns.

Even in the Church this sickness prevails. Christians say they believe the Bible, but their actions show that they use the Bible predominantly to support what *they* want to do – which often is directly contrary to what the Bible *says*. We are like a ship at sea, "tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes." (Ephesians 4:14)

But God weighs in with his statement on sin in an unexpected way. For as complex as we make this issue out to be (it's not, but we pretend that it is), he shows us what sin really is in just the first eleven chapters of the Bible. That's all. This amounts to less than 0.008% of the entire Book. And the real core of the issue is in Genesis 3. The other 99.992% of the Book covers what it takes to solve the problem of sin. God makes it plain and paints it in livid colors for us.

The ideal world

One reason we must start with God in our Biblical Theology is so that we can put the issue of sin in its proper perspective. We can't understand what sin really is unless we see what God is. Sin involves, fundamentally, our attitude toward God – nothing else. Our modern attempts to define what is right and wrong, as we leave God out of the picture, are self-deception and will get us nowhere toward a solution.

Let's review what we've learned so far about God:

- **First**, God is holy. He is totally taken up with his perfections – his perfect love, his limitless power, his infinite wisdom, his pure righteousness. The Trinity dwells on the perfections of God constantly, and God's passion for his innate characteristics burns as an "unapproachable light." (1 Timothy 6:16) We really can't understand God's view on any matter until we see him in his holiness, and then the overwhelming reality of God's holy nature bears down on us in a light that clarifies everything. Our petty grievances and childish lusts evaporate instantly in light of this God for whom all things exist.

¹ A sad example of this is a popular computer game I recently learned about which features a gangster thug who owns a strip joint, and somebody (the "bad guys?") kidnapped his lead stripper. The point of the game is to steer the thug through situations and difficulties to get her back; who knows what that might entail. So the bad have become "good;" this is the way America is training her youth now.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

- **Second**, the Logos takes it upon himself to reveal the truth about God to us. He is the Light sent out by the Trinity to show us the way to God, reveals the reasons we need to take God seriously, and enables us to integrate into the spiritual world of God that is the foundation of our physical lives. God is leaving no opportunity for us to make excuses – the knowledge of God surrounds us in Creation, it is published openly in God’s Word, it is testified to plainly in the work of the Church (or at least it’s supposed to be!). He is showing us exactly what he expects of all of us, so that we are without excuse. (See Deuteronomy 30:12-14 in this regard; Paul quotes this passage – Romans 10:6-10 – to show that God himself makes sure we find out the truth about him.)
- And **third**, appropriate actions are expected from us, as is true with everything the Logos shows us. If God must get glory, and if we were designed for that purpose, and if the data about God is freely accessible to all of us, then it seems that the ball is in our court now, so to speak. We should be responding to God. We’ve been given responsibilities in his Kingdom, access to resources in Heaven to carry out those responsibilities, guidelines to make sure we do our work to God’s specifications, warnings that this work is urgent and needful. God didn’t make us to be receivers of blessings only, but rulers who will carry out his will and fill the world with his goodness. We are co-laborers, sons of the Heavenly Father, burdened yet privileged with the opportunity and responsibility to glorify God in his Creation – using what we receive from him to do this work.

God would not have put us in his world with these kinds of responsibilities without also providing a bridge, as it were, between him and us. He designed his Creation in a certain way, according to ten Categories, that connected the spiritual world of God with our physical world. Here is that list in review.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Miracle | • Blessing |
| • Command | • In Christ |
| • Wisdom & Understanding | • God’s Glory |
| • Eyewitness | • Judgment Day |
| • Spirit of God | • Revelation & Faith |

These were ever-present realities that supported, guided, and set standards for our lives in this world. At no point were we apart from our God, or without light, or left to our own. Through these categories we could know the will of God and please him in what we did in his Name.

So man has great need of a vital connection with God if he would rule the world as God intended. He needs God’s wisdom and power, the resources of Heaven, free access to the Kingdom agenda (or God’s will for his Creation). These things come only from God; they are not inherent in the physical world – we have to go to God for them. And as man applies God’s will and God’s resources to the circumstances of life, it becomes obvious that an other-worldly influence is imposing and maintaining a divine order on chaos, through man, bringing God’s peace and prosperity and justice that would otherwise never happen on its own. At Creation God set up the entire system; since then it’s been man’s responsibility to maintain it.

God didn’t create Adam simply to be a farmer; man has to create various social structures for various needs: political, educational, daily survival, justice, co-ordination between individuals and families and larger groups. This work would encompass the entire globe, involving all the progeny that Adam and Eve

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

would produce, in all their complexity and variety. But in order to successfully accomplish all this, *everyone* has to be in constant communication with the Logos. The societal demands of millions of humans require nothing less than free and continual access to Heaven. But the Logos doesn't show us everything that God is doing – only those parts that we as individuals need to know in order to do our own part. Each of us has access to a portion of the mind and will of God.

As God manages the entire Creation, he reveals to each of us the part that we need to do our job. The beauty of the system is in the co-ordination that naturally results from our firm connection with God. We don't have to know what our neighbor has been given to do, because as he does his part it will perfectly fit in with what we are doing. There will always be peace and harmony among us as long as we are each following God's will exactly. And the overall Kingdom, though it grows ever more complex and varied, will become a glorious whole that will show off the amazing wisdom and power and purposes of the Creator. Nothing will be out of order or cause chaos or confusion; the system will work just as perfectly as the structure of an atom.²

But what's really amazing about God's system is that each human being is a willing participant, a son of God doing his/her part in the family. We aren't like electrons or protons, but we are thinking, feeling humans who understand God's will and, like him, are passionate about his Kingdom. In God's profound wisdom he has made us *independent* from him in will and awareness, yet able to seek and understand and love him to the point of a perfect union of will and purpose with him. We aren't robots; we are sons in his Kingdom – we live for God's glory.

Man was made “in God's image” – and that means *we look like him* (with similar capabilities for our physical realm, and the same desires). It's a simple idea, and it shouldn't cause such theological confusion among us as it does. In other words, man is the son of God – a member of the family. It means that man can work on the same level as God does according to the seven character traits of the Perfect Son.

- **Creation** – Able to live in God's presence
- **Heir** – Access to the spiritual Treasures of Heaven
- **Holy** – God-centered in all things
- **Priest** – Glorify God and administer God's fullness to others
- **King** – Rule at God's right hand over his Kingdom
- **Wisdom** – Have the mind of God
- **Prophet** – Reveal God, the very presence of God

Man not only has the capability of doing these things, he is responsible to do them as God's son. No other creature is in this kind of relationship with God. In this way man is unique.

And of course there is a risk when there is love and trust between two equals:³ without any coercion whatever, the two willingly work together. It's a common purpose of the two *wills*. We open our hearts

² For example, Isaiah 65 describes an idealized world in which, instead of friction and war, there will be peace and harmony. It's not describing the animal kingdom, but instead it's using the illustration of the union of incompatible species to show us the drastic change that has to happen to get men and nations to cooperate with one another.

³ I say this in light of the “image of God” concept, and “ruler” over God's Kingdom – not ontologically as we will see in the Son of God later. We aren't equals as he is the divinity; but we are *family* – and that puts us on the same level in one respect,

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

to one another, both for the other's benefit, hiding nothing, risking everything, proving that love unites us both in a common bond and purpose. That's the unique relationship that Adam had with God at the beginning – Father and son working together for God's glory.

The guarantee of success, of course, is to live strictly by the continuous revelation of the Logos. And to have millions, billions of independent human beings in perfect harmony with the will of God, in all their complexity of needs and works, is a glorious vision – the highest manifestation of the wisdom and power and majesty of God who orders all things well.

What is sin?

But sin ruins the whole system.

It's very easy to understand what sin is; but why there is such a thing as sin is a mystery that we will never understand this side of glory.

The functional definition of sin is actually very simple: ***sin is lawlessness***. (1 John 3:4) God specifically told Adam in Genesis 2 not to eat the fruit of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 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." (Genesis 2:16-17)

So sin is, on its simplest level, a refusal to be ruled by God.

But we have to go deeper to fully understand the nature of sin. That command of God involved two things. *First*, anything that God tells us to do is the right thing, the best thing, the only good thing, for everyone concerned. In his infinite wisdom as the Creator, he knows exactly what each part of his Creation has to do in order for the entire system to work perfectly. So we start with him, not ourselves. To do otherwise is to court disaster, especially at this stage when Adam and Eve were still new to their assignment.

Second, to forbid eating this fruit wasn't just a capricious act on God's part. This particular fruit had special significance. *It is the ability to make one's own judgment as to what is good and what is bad*. The concepts of "good" and "bad," in the original Hebrew language, aren't limited to moral issues. They have a broader scope including what we think would be good for us, or what we think we need, or what we don't want, or what we think would be harmful to us. Getting a second car, for example, involves a judgment call on our part – would it be a good or bad idea?

In light of the fact that Creation is the product of an infinite Mind, designed for his glory alone, and we can't possibly understand even that part of it which concerns ourselves, of course God would not want Adam to make his own decisions on how to use and rule Creation. Man is supposed to rely completely on God's commands, God's will, God's standards, God's purposes. Any deviation at all from that straight line would be catastrophic. Man wasn't to act on his own judgment, but according to the Plan that his Father taught him. The two were supposed to work together, not separately.

by God's creative decision. We may be "only" adopted family members, but we are nevertheless treated as sons in every respect.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

What happened next reveals the vulnerability of love. Man – the son of God, given glory and honor as part of the family of God – listened to the Tempter and stood up on his own two feet as independent of God. And why not? If we are made in God’s image, then we can *be like God* and do the same things that God does, without his involvement. And so Eve made a decision based on her own standards, and in pride both of them turned their backs on God to become independent spirits.

Heaven stopped.

We cannot imagine the grief in God’s heart unless we put ourselves in his shoes, so to speak, and see this as he does. The Father’s greatest delight is in his sons. He has given everything he has to them; he has personally raised them and educated them and trained them to assist him in conducting his Kingdom affairs. He has given them his authority – they speak in his Name, in fact they bear his Name, the greatest honor that Heaven can bestow. There is a special bond between Father and son that’s characterized by loyalty and faithfulness, unity of purpose, both standing together to achieve the Father’s goals. But when the son breaks that special bond that is between him and his Father, the glory and joy between them that could have been is destroyed now. It’s akin to a divorce: it causes grief, betrayal, anger, alienation – the kinds of emotions that only happen in the closest and most vulnerable relationship between two persons. The real tragedy here is that, typical of such situations, the son in his ignorance cares little about what happened; it’s the Father who is left behind in grief. *He alone knows what could have been.*

Sin isn’t just a philosophical problem for God to solve. We know this by two facts – the ferocity of his wrath against sinners; and the staggering solution that God used to solve the problem – the sacrifice of his own Son. In light of these facts, we can only surmise the extent of the grand design, the great glory, the joy and fulfillment that could have been if man had worked with God. Only when something of this nature is ruined could God be prompted to react in such fury as we read about in the Bible.⁴ The stakes were far higher than we can imagine.

Where has this rebellion put us now? Probably the best word to describe it is *alienation*, with all the attendant evils of that status.

- **First**, since man has declared independence from God’s Law, that has forced us to rule ourselves. We don’t even want God around; the possibility that he might tell us that we’re doing something wrong, or that we have to put other things aside and do what he wants, is intolerable to us. (Psalm 2:1-3) We consider him an intrusion in our lives, not an asset. This refusal to be ruled reaches deep into our psyche.

It’s pride, actually, at the bottom of this rebellion. When man found himself as God’s representative on earth – which gave him responsibilities and privileges that no other creature could claim – that appealed to his pride that he could indeed stand on his own without God’s help. Hence Satan’s ploy. And since man *is* “in the image of God,” that only fed his sense of pride; why can’t the son play the role of God on earth? What’s to prevent his taking the Father’s place? Why would he need God for anything if he’s made in God’s image? His own judgment should suffice for anything that man’s subjects would need. And so the son in his pride left his Father behind and ventured off on his own, not appreciating the fact that it’s *together* that Father and son must undertake this work.

The modern democratic movement is the perfect example of men’s insistence on freedom at all costs. Previous generations in history at least had a chance of understanding what it’s like

⁴ We can see an example of this kind of fury in Proverbs 6:34.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

to live in a kingdom where the rule of the king is law, and disobedience means death. In our day, however, we have 300 million “kings” who insist on their rights and live indolently in independence. We have little respect for authority, we set our own rules, we have made certain that God and his Bible are not included in the public sector to bother us, and we tremble in nobody’s presence. The result is the immorality, materialism, and lawlessness that pervades our society now, for which we pay dearly. The laws of democracy do not trump God’s Law. And yet our present political system, we insist, is the pinnacle of history’s struggle to free mankind from unjust oppression. Unfortunately our “freedom” has turned into freedom *from God*, and that’s our fatal error. There is no such thing as democracy in God’s Creation – only God’s will, for good reasons.⁵

- **Second**, we are (as Eve became – Genesis 3:6) fixated on satisfying our own lusts and passions. The new standard now is not to glorify God but to please ourselves. We measure all things by what we will get from them, how our lusts will be fulfilled. We judge others not by their own merits, but whether they are helping or interfering with our plans. “Right” and “wrong” are measured by whether something helps us or hurts us, according to our own values of what is good or evil. When we get what we want, we get along fine with others; if not, we start a war. (James 4:1-3)

The corollary to this idea of feeding our lusts is that we are now about the business of reshaping God’s perfect Creation into a playground for our lusts. We are changing it, destroying it, reshaping it, redesigning it so that we will get more of what we want from it. This actually is the “world” that we are warned against so strongly in the Apostles’ Letters.

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life — is not from the Father but is from the world. (1 John 2:15-16)

The world that we want is not the world that God made – our world is a source of pleasure, materialism, and power, with ourselves in the middle pulling all the strings. The result, of course, is a moral nightmare. Man wasn’t designed for feeding his lusts with gay abandon. As “enlightened” as many make it out to be, this kind of lifestyle (which goes under many deceitful labels) completely destroys individuals and societies. Paul’s descriptions of the wicked heart is accurate and inevitable:

They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Romans 1:29-32; see also Galatians 5:19-21)

It’s difficult to say too much about this aspect of our sin, because it figures so largely in the message of the Bible. By cutting ourselves off from God, and changing the focus onto ourselves, we are no longer a source of life and blessing to the world around us – there is now

⁵ The idea of “freedom” is probably the single most serious obstacle in the modern Church’s life in God’s Kingdom. Our socio-political ideals are crippling our spiritual principles and opportunities.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

a cesspool of death filling our hearts and minds. We are no longer of use to God and his Creation, and we're destroying ourselves and others with our twisted focus and perverted behavior. The damage is done; nothing truly good can be expected from the heart of man anymore. Even altruism isn't good enough, because the center must be God, not man, and the goal must be God's glory, not man's.

This is where the Bible begins, with the hope that (at least for a few) *some* might be lifted out of darkness and death and given a new life that will get them back on track with God's program.

- **Third**, we know that there's a God, but the door to Heaven is closed now. So we make up new gods to replace what we lost. And that only aggravates the situation all the more. It's true that most of us turn to some kind of religion or god to satisfy our inner needs, but it's always on our own terms. Whatever god we believe in must do things our way or we're not interested. Hence the rise of false religions and "vain philosophies" that purport to give us the answers to life's problems but actually fail miserably in the end. We can't come up with workable solutions so long as we insist on doing things our own way.

The question still remains, however – how could something like this happen in God's perfect world? The mystery of sin in God's creation is a conundrum that has perplexed man since the beginning of the world. The problem can be stated this way: we are told that God is *good*, and that he is *all-powerful*. But if God is good, why did he allow sin to ruin his world? And if God is all-powerful, couldn't he have prevented sin from happening in the first place? In light of who God is, it doesn't seem to make sense that sin could happen in a world that this good God made.

The appearance of a paradox as we study the Bible means only one thing – we're missing some of the picture. The first rule of interpreting the Bible is that any confusion is due to our limitations, not the inadequacy of God's Word. If we have two truths like *God is good* and that *God is all-powerful*, and yet the reality of sin seems to contradict them, then obviously we're out of our depth here. There is a deeper reality that God hasn't shown us yet about the world he made. We can study the story of Genesis 3 to glean some of the data about sin, but we won't be able to get to the bottom of it as God sees it. Whatever we do, we must give God the glory and confess that he is good *and* all-powerful, and yet not charge him with ignorance or weakness or (even worse) having a diabolical scheme to trap us unjustly for his own pleasure. There are some things that will remain mysteries for us in this world (Deuteronomy 29:29), and to press too far for a "logical" or reasonable answer will inevitably dishonor God in some way, or glorify ourselves at his expense. We are responsible only for what he has given us to understand.

The *possibility* of sin lies in how God created man – as an independent "I am" apart from God.⁶ We weren't made to obey God simply by instinct, or by physical law, but by our wills – we obey him because we love him. He's our Father. And that by definition allows for the possibility of *not* wanting to. If there is light, then that means there is also darkness through which the light travels. Here is the mystery of the existence of sin, or at least as far as we're allowed to take it. In God's demand for obedience he puts the matter in our hands, and now it's up to us to obey. But the real possibility is also there that we may not obey – otherwise it wouldn't be an act of our wills.

⁶ Lewis has a poignant way of describing this particular miracle: "One's own self to be walking from one good to another, walking beside Him as Himself may walk, not even holding hands. How has He made me so separate from Himself? How did it enter His mind to conceive such a thing?" C.S. Lewis, *Perelandra* (Scribner: 1996; p. 60). The answer, of course, is that we were made to be in a Father/Son relationship.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

Why would God open the possibility for disobedience like this? Because he was creating a son, nothing less than that. An uncoerced, unnecessitated will – just as it exists inside the Trinity. A *willing* son reveals the glory of God much more than an automaton would. Of course a rock will be what God made it to be; it has no choice. But for a human to willingly be what God wants him to be, when the possibility exists to disobey, is an astounding piece of creation – it reflects trust and honor, a relationship unique with God that the rest of Creation doesn't share, the opportunity for loyalty and faithfulness. And it's the fullest expression of God's glory when someone who is capable of understanding that glory is just as passionate about it as God himself is (otherwise we would fall prey to our pride). In effect, then, what we are describing is a true son whom God has honored by making him part of the family. It was the Father's love that opened the door for man to respond in kind.

The Lie

There was simply no reason for Adam and Eve to disobey God's plain command. The possibility for disobedience was there, but their experience up to this point was an Edenic existence filled with all the pleasures they could ask for as they depended on God alone. The fruit of the Knowledge of Good and Evil would have no draw for them in light of what they had already.

But the story turns tragic with a third player. He is called the "serpent," but the rest of the Bible is plain about the identity of this character.

... the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan ... (Revelation 20:2)

We have some information in the Bible about the history of Satan – his name means "the accuser," for example, and his main strategy is lies and deception.

... your father the devil ... He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44)

He is a "fallen angel," and that fact goes a long way to explain why this original deception of Eve was so successful. Angels are created beings who stand in the place of God as he works in his physical creation. The word "angel" in fact means "messenger" in Hebrew, and "the one sent" in Greek. Angels are God's "winds and flames of fire" (Hebrews 1:7); God sends angels to carry his Word to people. He does works of destruction and miracle through his angels (see the plagues in the book of Revelation). In other words, angels are the lights from Heaven in whom can be seen the hand of God himself; in fact people often mistook their glory for the glory of God. (Revelation 19:10)

When angels fall into sin (and we aren't told much about this in Scripture) they of course lose the blessings that come from being with God. But their nature, the pattern they were created with, doesn't change. We can see this tendency in man himself: we are still "in God's image" even though we are sinners; we are still rulers over his creation, even though we use our powers and skills for evil instead of God's good. In the same way, the angels still *look* like sources of information, like "lights" that shine the way for us – even though they've lost the connection to the original Light. They are still messengers, but now they bring the wrong message.

We get a hint of Satan's story in Ezekiel 28: his pride overtook him. First called Lucifer, the "light bearer," he looked at his own glory as the messenger of God's light, and decided he could do well enough as a messenger without God. Because of that act of pride he was cast down from God's presence, because

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

no creature of God can be independent of God who is the only Light, the source of all light and wisdom and power. No creature can rebel against God in this way and continue to serve him. Satan himself, of course, experiences the death that this separation from God entails; his inner self broods on and breeds darkness instead of light, and he foments destruction. He is now a source of darkness and the opposite of good; he spreads death instead of life, lies instead of truth, separation from and rebellion against God. But through deceit, Satan still retains the apparent design of being a messenger and light even though it's now a false light.

For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. (2 Corinthians 11:14-15)

He speaks seemingly with authority, he still speaks in God's Name, and in this way deceived Eve into thinking that what he spoke to her was more light, giving her a deeper insight into the situation.

But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4-5)

He is still pretending to be a messenger of God. We know by instinct that light is directional, that it came from somewhere, but we can be easily deceived as to *where* the light is coming from. By definition truth must come from God; but is every "truth" really from God?

We ought to be alarmed at how easy it is to be deceived by another "light." But the downfall of the lie is built into its structure: *it has to deny what we already know is from God*. It follows God's command, it doesn't precede it. God had already spoken to his son about this issue; he told Adam, face to face, that eating this fruit would result in death. God's original command trumps everything else.

So the lie has to first deny that original truth in order to succeed. "You will not surely die." (Genesis 3:4) And this claim has characterized every sin that has ever been committed in history. It is a deliberate strike against the government of God, his position as King, and his authority as our Father; it encourages our desire to be independent of God and to feel no need of him in any way, to live according to our God-like image.

The lie fits hand in hand with the true nature of sin. The lie encourages and tempts us (in other words, opens up the opportunities) to run our own lives and feed our passions. Hence the wicked love the lie, and refuse to hear the truth. "Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19) Darkness has no love for the light, nor does it understand it.

The lie appears in many forms but always with the same meaning: "Nobody will know about it!" "Nothing bad will happen!" "You can get away with this!" "It's none of God's business!" "God isn't watching!" So if one side of the coin of sin is rebellion against God's rule over us, the reverse side is our vain hope that we will escape the penalty of sin in the pursuit of our desires. We have talked ourselves into believing that we can live without God, that we don't need his resources, that we don't need his light to show the way for us because we can make our own way just fine. In other words, if we take God out of the picture, we think that nothing bad is going to happen as a result, in fact life will actually get a lot better for us.

But what sin did was nothing less than alienate Father and son. By design, the son can't live without the Father.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

The result of sin

Sin should never have happened. We have to keep in mind that we were created to be God's sons, and as sons fully responsible for our actions. Sin was not something that God wanted, nor did he set things up to promote it in any way. Even though some theologians have come to the conclusion that it was part of God's plan ("If God knows that something will happen, doesn't that mean that he, the Creator and King, *planned* for it in some way?") We can't tread on God's glory by attributing sin to him in any way at all, in light of his terrible fury against sinners. But we also can't say it was any surprise to God, because that would be to limit his infinite knowledge. But he had no part in it, and no desire for it to happen. Sin was entirely our own doing.⁷

What it did was open the floodgates of misery and ruin upon God's perfect world. Instead of being a channel for Heaven's blessings on earth, man now turns his own lust upon the world and perverts it into a new creation that will serve his passions. Through faulty "wisdom," by standards that change according to his whims and personal goals, he twists the world into a materialistic and immoral playground. He doesn't even have the power and wisdom to fix things when they go wrong; he doesn't even know God's original design and how far from normal his perverted world is becoming. He turns right into wrong, and wrong into right; billions suffer under the oppression and ignorance of man. The whole history of mankind has been the ebb and flow of the forces of darkness sweeping across men and nations creating havoc and destruction. The world is like a house full of children with no adults present: insanity rules, not wisdom; trivia overrules true crises and the truly important gets sidelined, and everyone is out to get what they want at the expense of others.

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. They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. (Ephesians 4:18-19)

And when situations fail (as they inevitably will), instead of learning from the failures and seeking the right and just and good, people "return to their vomit" like dogs (Proverbs 26:11) and refuse the simplest reforms – they would rather die without God than do without their pleasures and self-will. It's like pulling a plug out of the outlet. The light has been replaced with darkness, truth with lies, life with death. Instead of being a distributor of life, man has become a source of destruction in God's creation. We are prostituting the world for our own pleasure instead of bringing out the glory of God in it. And yet strangely all this madness is painted with the varnish of "dignity" and "truth" and "rights" and taught to each generation.

Like a mother who murders her own baby who depends on her, man has turned traitor and is destroying everything that God has put under his hand.

This seems a harsh assessment of human history, but Scripture confirms it.

None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one. (Romans 3:10-12)

This passage is a classic representative of God's general judgment over mankind's rebellious attitude. There are many more, and they are unanimous in their agreement on the devastation and reprobation (not dignity!) that sin has brought into the world. Out of all men's works, there is nothing that God wants; all

⁷ Otherwise the judgment of God against sinners would not be just.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

that we've done has trashed his creation and now he feels the need to destroy it all and start over. This is certainly a sobering assessment of all of our efforts.

Man became truly naked in his sin. As representative of our condition, we now identify sex as part of our animal nature, our base passions, a humiliating reminder that we hide from others to preserve our dignity.⁸ But physical nakedness only illustrates our helpless status in the larger moral sense: in eating this fruit, Adam immediately lost his wisdom, power, protection, resources – his glory. And without God's resources, sinners are without his protection in a hostile world – all the more reason for them to fill their passions as a replacement of their lost innocence. Hence sexual sins usually head the list of characteristics of the reprobate.

Separation from God inevitably leads to chaos and destruction. We no longer have access to the mind of God; we don't know his will because he has pulled away from us and isn't leading us anymore. That means we're on our own now – we have to decide what to do, and how to interact with others. Instead of one will ruling the entire universe, there are now billions of independent wills making decisions based on their own differing standards. The results are, of course, catastrophic – we can't possibly know the best thing we should be doing, let alone make any valid judgment calls about what our neighbors are doing. We of course are going to conflict with our neighbor's actions and war will be the inevitable result. Life turns into self-centeredness, self-interest – with little to no regard for others. (Philippians 2:21) We make excuses for why we do what we want (or what we call “the right thing for me to do”) that others will inevitably disagree with. Not only is there now war with God, there is war among men also. (James 4:1-2)

That's the practical result. The personal aspect was an even deeper tragedy: the son has turned against the Father and has rejected his love. What was a trust relationship has now become personal war. War between strangers is bad enough; but a war in the family is a deep hurt that is often irreconcilable. (Proverbs 18:19) It's a deliberate strike against the openness that is necessary to a relationship, the vulnerability that comes with love, the possibility of hurt as we give ourselves to each other completely.

A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother. (Proverbs 10:1)

We know the truth of this proverb in our own lives. Many of us will shake our heads over the stupid and immoral lifestyles of people we aren't close to; but when our own children do such things, it brings shame and disgrace on us; we end up getting deeply hurt by their actions. We often feel (justifiably or not) personally responsible for their failure. There are going to be serious discussions in the family as a result.

It's this element of open war between Father and son that most strikes me as the reason behind God's fierce anger against sinners. We have struck at God's heart with our treachery; this isn't a matter of some benign or indifferent deity in space somewhere who is mildly irritated with the troubles that we're causing here on earth. Our sin has insulted deeply the God we were created to love, the God who loved us.

Genesis 4-11 finishes out the story by showing us the **scope** of sin. It wasn't limited to only Adam and Eve; it infected all of their descendants. We are immediately told what we sinners are capable of when we start making our own judgment calls and deciding for ourselves what is right and wrong. Murder was the first crime, as brother struck down brother in a fit of religious envy. In a few generations the scourge of sin was so universal, so deep-seated in the human heart, that God destroyed almost all of

⁸ And we are also embarrassingly aware of our helpless fixation on sex – we know it's a weakness now, which is why we try to hide it in our pride.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

humanity with the Flood. But sin lived on even in Noah's descendants; again the world united in pride against God and he had to take measures to disperse the nations and insure that they couldn't gather together in a united effort against him. Sin's scope is universal and complete; none of us are exempt, and the results have been calamitous for all.

The penalty

We had to attempt, at least, to paint this picture of man the sinner in its true color – black – if we're going to begin to comprehend God's wrath against sinners. In other words, we must be *really bad* for God to react with the kind of otherwise inexplicable fury that the Bible describes. If we don't understand the passion of his anger, it's because we don't truly understand the problem – or him.

In all political organizations there are penalties for not following the rules. And in God's Kingdom, there were two penalties against man for rebelling against God.

- **Physical death** – Adam and Eve were not designed to die physically. We aren't specifically told what God planned for an ever-growing population in a world of limited resources, but certainly if the Creator could place them in Eden in the first place, he could work out a long-term solution for their progeny. By the fact that the Tree of Life was also in the Garden we can surmise that man wasn't supposed to die in any form, physical or spiritual. But God immediately cut off our access to the Tree – he certainly didn't want a criminal living forever and causing unlimited damage to the world. This act reveals God's intention to stop the Project as it was originally designed, and start on a new Solution that would replace the original Creation with a new Creation.

In light of what Adam had in the Garden of Eden (the word "Eden" in Hebrew means "luxuries, delights, dainties" – that is, life was *really good!*), this curse meant changing a life under the Father's loving care to a hard scrabble – Adam has to make his own way now in a difficult world. No longer will things just work; he's going to find this world a "hedge of thorns."⁹

And his destiny was not life anymore, but death. There are many forms of "death" in this world, only one being the demise of the body. Disease, poverty, failure, war and destruction, nature's terrors, ignorance – everything that occurs as a result of ignorant and unrepentant sinners. "Successes" are temporary and deceiving; instead, "death is the destiny of every man" – and we gain nothing in a world full of emptiness. (Ecclesiastes 1:3) Now that God's curse is upon us, we can expect to get nowhere for all of our efforts except the grave.

- **Spiritual death** – This is by far the more serious of the two deaths. In the day that man ate of the fruit, his soul died to God. The inner awareness of God, the constant vision of God being the center and all else connected to him (like seeing and feeling the sun in the sky), was lost. Now for all man knows for certain, there is no God.

The effects of this curse are profound, and are the very foundation for all of man's problems. With no connection to God, man can't truly live on any level. He has none of Heaven's

⁹ There's an interesting abrogation of this curse in Matthew 6:25-34 – in Christ's new Kingdom, man won't have to struggle to meet his physical needs anymore.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

resources at his disposal. He doesn't have the wisdom and understanding of the Creator, the Judge, the King that are vitally necessary for doing his own job in this world. Hence the darkness and ignorance that prevails, the humbling failures, the desperate struggling for answers that won't come anymore. What's worse is that, from God's side, the door remains shut; which speaks volumes about what God intends to do with this rebel. There will be no answers or help anymore. "The soul that sins must die." Man cannot and will not be allowed to continue on as he is; he *must* be destroyed. The present condition of mankind is completely unacceptable to God and cannot be remedied without a total transformation. The remedy, in other words, is *not* going to come from man himself – there is nothing there to work with.

One would think that man would have woke up to his desperate condition and tried to make amends. We have to consider this option because it apparently explains the attempts of religions all around the world to "appease" a God that we all know exists and whom we are afraid we've offended. After all, we want him on our side! But this shows our misunderstanding of the situation; our efforts of appeasing God is only a ruse to manipulate him to conform to our conditions (i.e., we want his blessing on our continued state of rebellion), and we are not appreciating this problem from his viewpoint. We have to see that we ourselves must be destroyed to solve the problem effectively.

The truth is that all of humanity – *everyone* – is dead and under the curse of the wrath of God. The masses of men, women and children all through history have no hope at all unless God chooses some here and some there for eternal life. The stories of the Bible that show God's saving work is a light for the few in the midst of total darkness. Unfortunately the ordinary, day-to-day experiences that typify our lives give us little to no hint that the situation is really this bad.¹⁰

The **wrath** of God is probably one of the most difficult concepts to grasp in the Bible, and certainly it's not for the faint of heart. Basically it concerns the unmitigated fury that God is going to pour out on his enemies. It's difficult for us to conceive 1) that God could be so angry with men, and 2) that he could do such terrifying things to them. But we already looked at the nature of God and his glory – we saw that not only does he deserve all glory, but he also didn't intend his own son to become his worst enemy. On both counts he has been deeply insulted and the criminal seemingly has no intentions of changing. Creation should have been a magnificent exposition of his glory; instead it has become a broken sewer.

Twice God has gotten furious with man. The first time was when the son he created in his image rebelled against him and ruined the world; the second was when the new sons – Israel, again created in his image according to the Heavenly pattern – kept rebelling against him. There are two judgments here that continually interweave throughout Scripture. All of humanity is legally liable to God for failing him along the lines of Creation. But the people of God – the descendants of Abraham – have gone deeper with their sins; they have sinned against grace, for which (as Hebrews 6:4-7 tells us) there is no remedy. Both crimes, however, speak of the amazing privileges that the Father has given his son and the utter rejection of that special relationship. The son's rejection strikes at God's heart; man is not an ordinary criminal.

Like it or not, God has responded with an anger that goes off the charts, so to speak. You can read about what God intends to do with the wicked and rebellious in numerous places in the Bible – there are

¹⁰ In other words, the message of the Gospel is not "If you don't believe, you'll go to Hell," as if "A is the cause of B." People are already cursed and under God's wrath – see Ephesians 2:1-3. The Gospel is an opportunity to escape the destiny of the masses as they flow through this world into eternity.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

examples like the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, the rebellion of Korah against Moses, the plagues against Egypt, the wholesale slaughter of the Canaanites when Israel pressed into the Promised Land. And we must mention, as the primary example, the Flood in Noah's day when God destroyed everyone except Noah's family. In other words, this is not a God to be trifled with.

He seemingly has no problem making the wicked suffer intensely for their insult. Unlike many of us, God willingly uses death as a viable punishment. See, for example, the kinds of things God told the Israelites would happen to them if they rebelled against their new status as his chosen people.

The LORD will send on you curses, confusion, and frustration in all that you undertake to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me. (Deuteronomy 28:29)

The curses involve horrific evils like diseases, drought, mildew, defeat, cancers, rapes, murders, robberies, slavery, oppression, cannibalism – the kinds of things that we thought were the repertoire of barbaric peoples. Threats like this one reveal a different level of sensitivity in God than we have; most of us would never think of doing such things to others, whereas God has every intention of carrying out his threats with no hesitation. Evidently the Creator has rights that his creatures do not have.

In fact, when you take a final toll on how much of the Bible shows us an angry God, it would be quite a significant percentage of the book. For instance, most of what the Prophets have to say is a revelation of God's anger against his own people for their rebellion and immorality. If we would heed the modern rejection of the "angry God" motif in the Bible, we wouldn't have much of the book left to deal with. So we can reasonably assume that sin seems to be a perpetual problem with man, and in God's eyes it's nothing less than treachery in his Kingdom.

When we get to the New Testament the wrath of God takes on a name – Hell. We won't get into an extended discussion here on what the Bible says on this subject,¹¹ but suffice it to say that Jesus and the Apostles took it very seriously. We don't need to embellish it (as artists and authors have done over the centuries) to make it worse than it is, because it's already bad. Jesus described it as a place of darkness "where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:48 – a description already known in the Old Testament from Isaiah 66:24.) Fire, as we've seen, is the first impression that God makes on us when we come into his presence. So we can assume that the wicked will forever be burned with the reality of the God they denied, and will have nothing else from God to alleviate their suffering (in darkness, since light is the function and blessing of the Logos). Again, a punishment singularly apropos for those who rejected God.

The point here is that the wrath of God is way beyond our reckoning, and taking care of this matter of our sin against him has risen to the level of alarmingly urgent. This alone explains much of the passion of the Bible on certain topics – there are certain concepts that are weighted much more heavily than others, and therefore have top priority for all men. And the solution of this problem (as we mentioned before) must be very plainly laid out in Scripture so that all *can* understand and deal with it in a timely and effective way. We only need the Bible to do this.

¹¹ See my book *What the Bible says about Hell* (Ravenbrook Publishers: 1999).

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

The Church and sin

At this point we should say something about what the Church *ought* to be doing about sin but often isn't.

One of the most difficult things to do in ministry is to convince people that they really are sinners, that their sin is a “stench” in God's nostrils, and they don't deserve a thing from God. The picture that the Bible paints of the human heart doesn't give us any hope. One of the purposes of the Law was to convict people of their sin, to prove to them that they don't measure up to God's standards. We're supposed to, but we fall far short of the mark. We ought to be obeying the Law, but it's not a problem of ability – it is our willful rebellion against God. It's a moral problem, not an intellectual one. In fact, the Bible's message is that sin is our primary problem, and Jesus has come to address *that* problem – no other. If it's always the first item on Christ's agenda, it should be on ours as well.

The Church's duty is to convict sinners of their sin. Once you do this, the sinner will (if God is working on his heart) cry out to God in his distress and seek salvation from his sin. If he can see that he's being destroyed from within, he will go to the Physician of souls and plead for mercy and spiritual healing. The Church certainly has the tools to do this job in the Word, the gifts of the Spirit, and its organization under Christ. But the picture must be painted as black as it really is, or we're not going to see that the remedy that God has given us is totally appropriate.

Today's Church has long since given up on this most important task. Now people don't come to church to be healed of their sins; they come for many other reasons instead – entertainment, social hour, friendship, fulfilling their religious duty. In fact, many churches are congratulating themselves for the good job they're doing in our society (even though it's falling apart)! People will tolerate the preacher occasionally mentioning sin from the pulpit, and they don't mind hearing about the sinners down the street, but they have no intention of baring their own souls and being healed of *specific* sins. Woe to that teacher or preacher who confronts someone with their sin! The church will lose an offended member, and there goes their money too.

So even though the Church should be a spiritual hospital, almost nobody is taking advantage of that now. In other words, the system is actually working against the Spirit and the Word as it lulls its members to sleep. The old lie actually reigns in today's ministries: *don't worry, you're OK, nothing bad is going to happen*. And what's really offensive to God and serious Christians is when people bring the sins of the world into the church. (1 Corinthians 5; 2 Peter 2; Jude)

What the Church ought to be telling people is what James taught us.

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. (James 4:8-10)

James knew about the holiness of God, the impossibly high standards of Heaven, the fiery passion of the Trinity for righteousness. He knew the purpose of the Law and how to apply it to the heart. He also knew that very few who profess faith in Christ would ever see the inside of the Temple in Heaven; they are “ungodly” hypocrites who can expect nothing but wrath from God. But even though the Apostles' rebuke is hard to take, they are actually doing us a service: they're pointing sick people (not those already “righteous”) to the Christ who can heal them.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy. (Proverbs 27:5-6)

But it's probably been at least 50-100 years since churches were faithful messengers of Christ when it comes to addressing sinners; our modern churches are based on consumerism and entertainment models now. Talking about sin will empty churches like ours overnight; the foundation and resources for healing sinners just aren't there anymore.¹² So Christ's warning is remarkably relevant for our generation.

On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? And then will I declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. (Matthew 7:22-23)

The current situation

There's something else in this story that should be disturbing to us. One would think that the Creator, if he was so angry with man's response to him, would have simply wiped the slate clean and started over. After all, we see God's predisposition to wholesale slaughter of sinners in several places in Scripture. Why didn't he simply kill Adam and Eve outright and make a new man?

The answer is that God requires satisfaction for sin. By simply eliminating us, he would be saying in effect that the mistake was his, and he just needed to try again and do it right. But by leaving the sin on the table, so to speak, he was distancing himself from culpability. This was man's fault, and man is going to pay for it – the son has to face his responsibility. Disobeying and dishonoring God is no small matter; the case has to have its day in court. And destroying man as if he never existed is no penalty; that would be a mercy in light of the other option of punishment.

So the way things stand right now, every one of us are facing judgment in God's court, and it's not going to be pretty. God is going to reveal every thought and act that we've ever done in our lives. He is going to make it clear who the guilty party is, and expose the nature of our sins, the extent of our sins, the results and consequences of our sins. (2 Corinthians 5:19) He's going to open our hearts for a full inspection, under the spotlight of Heaven that shows everything, and reveal to everyone what we really are inside. (Psalm 139) No more hypocrisy or hiding what we are; no more lies and deceit. Judgment Day is going to be a fearful thing to endure.

Hopefully you can see the problem here. The average person isn't doing a thing to get ready for this day; in fact, he's just making things worse with his continued sin and apathy toward God. It's an incredible state of affairs and really pitiful to see. Millions are being born, live and die in complete spiritual darkness and bound to their sin and rebellion against God, as if they were just fodder for the Destroyer. Their problem is both moral and legal: their hearts are steeped in sin and yet they want to remain in sin, even though they know the judgment against sinners. And they are legally in no position to survive the inspection of the Law on that Last Day because their record is damning to their case. *There is absolutely no basis for a happy ending here.* It will be a very simple and clear case:

¹² It is said that Charles Peace, a murderer and burglar on his way to the gallows, was surprised at the lackadaisical manner in which the chaplain was reading the Bible's description of the punishment of the wicked. "Sir, if I believed what you and the church of God say that you believe, even if England were covered with broken glass from coast to coast, I would walk over it, if need be, on hands and knees and think it worth while living, just to save one soul from an eternal hell like that!" Leonard Ravenhill, *Why Revival Tarries* (Bethany House Publishers: 1959; p. 32.)

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

“Is this person a sinner?”

“Yes.”

“Then he has no rights to eternal life. Throw him out into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!” (Matthew 22:13)

Not only is our future bleak, but our present prospects don't look very good either. We have alienated God and have cut off all possibilities of help from that direction. The door of Heaven is closed, we are on our own now (with all the terrible consequences that this reality will impose on us), and even our knowledge of God is extremely limited and almost useless to us. Nothing we do now will please him, and he is under no obligation to be good to us in any way.¹³ So while we're waiting for Judgment Day, we are daily making our case worse with more sin and rebellion.

The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment, and especially those who indulge in the lust of defiling passion and despise authority. (2 Peter 2:9-10)

The revelation of a new Creation

Remember from Genesis 3 that the harshest part of the curse upon mankind was separation from God. This means that from now on we will never know the mind of God, and we won't have access to the information and resources that we need to live in this world of God's without dying. His penalty of ignorance and darkness was deliberate: he really doesn't want us to succeed in this world; he wants us to die. And there's nothing any of us can do about that.

But while that door was shut forever, a new door is about to open for us. Starting with the story of Abraham, God reveals to his special heirs – Abraham and his descendants – a new Creation that he has in mind. It won't consist of this world but of a new spiritual world. The entire Bible focuses on that new world; God goes to great lengths to describe it to us, to get us acquainted with it, skilled at using it, and knowledgeable with its resources. What we have been denied to in this physical world, God gives us the key for to the next world. We are now in the same position that Adam was in when he was first made ruler of Creation.

The Bible is so filled with descriptions of the new Creation that it's difficult to choose an example passage. Let's look at what Paul tells us about it.

For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the Heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put

¹³ Notice the careful wording – he isn't *obligated* to give us anything good. If he does (and he *does*) it's because of a deeper purpose that ensuing events in history will unfold, seen in Providence and in the Redemption of mankind.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. (Ephesians 1:15-23)

You can see here that we are told what that new world is like, what life will be like there, what our position and responsibilities and privileges will be – everything that we wish we knew about the world we presently live in! There we will succeed and prosper, in contrast to our cursed lives here. God is pulling back the veil that hides his world so that his children can see and prepare for a new life with him. We're being prepared to be one with the Son, to rule over that world (as was Adam in this world); so we need to be fully acquainted with it.

In the meantime, God continues to warn us away from this world we live in now – there isn't any life here for us, no hope, no success, no real value. It remains empty and a mystery. We're wasting valuable time trying to make something of it. We do have to live in it for the time being, but God promised he would take care of our physical needs *as long as we focus on the world to come*.

Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your Heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (Matthew 6:31-33)

And when this world hurts us (as a result of the curse), our Father in Heaven will turn the physical pain into a spiritual blessing. He won't keep us from suffering, but he will use it to grow us spiritually – *everything* that happens to us here will result in the image of his Son being formed in our spirits. We may not understand how or why such things happen to us, but our Father understands and is leading us carefully in the Way of Life, according to his love and wisdom. That's what keeps us going in the face of hardship.

So we are about to see the formation of a new Family in the story of Abraham. This Family walks by faith, in the light of Heaven, *through* this dark world into the eternal world of God.

Summary

We needed to thoroughly explore the fundamental aspects of this problem of sin for two reasons. *First*, one of the most difficult things to do in teaching people about God is to convince them of their truly sinful state. We don't understand it, we can't see why God would be so upset about it, and we seem so content to remain in this deadly peril we're in. Convicting people of their sin is going to be an uphill battle.

For example, as Paul describes to the Romans what his Gospel consists of, he spends fully 15% of his letter on the subject of sin (Romans 1:18 – 3:20) – its true nature and extent. It's necessary to truly understand this problem of sin and what we've done to God before we can even begin to understand what God has done for us in Christ. Any "faith" in Christ that isn't based on a heartfelt misery over our sinful state (which is a totally foreign concept in our consumer age) is no true faith in Christ.

Second, the real problem has to be identified so that we can appreciate God's Solution. Sin is not just doing some wrong things, or breaking God's moral code. Sin is not even the issue of gratifying our passions and redesigning God's world to feed our lusts. Sin involves all of these things, but the real crime here is the identity of the culprit himself – this is man doing all of this, the one created in God's image. We were supposed to be ruling in his Name, totally centered on God, privileged with access to his throne,

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

heirs of his fullness, maintaining his world for his glory – in other words, sons entrusted with the Father's Kingdom. The real hurt here is not just the crimes committed but the identity of the criminal.

So God pronounced doom over the entire human race, since we are all like this now. But instead of killing us all outright, he allows the human race to continue (doomed nonetheless) and starts selecting a few out of the masses of history for a complete re-design. These are going to be a new kind of son, not only patterned after the Son in the Trinity but lifted up to Heaven, to his life with the Father, so that they will never sin again. Then God will finally have the kind of children that he wanted all along.

SUMMARY OF CREATION AND THE FALL

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