

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

15 May 2016

Topics

A.M. Bible Class:

Maturing in Christ (Hebrews 6:1-12)

A.M. Lesson:

Our future glory (Romans 8:18f)

P.M. Lesson:

God's love and ours (1 John 4:7-21)

Wednesday:

The God of the covenant (in the annex)

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

***Great are the works of the Lord,
studied by all who delight in them. Psalm 111:2
Please silence your cell phones and other electronic devices.***

Genesis 3:23-24, NJB

So Yahweh God expelled him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he had been taken. He banished the man, and in front of the garden of Eden he posted the great winged creatures and the fiery flashing sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

A Fallen World?

John Goldingay

The event in Genesis 3 is often referred to as the "fall." It is an odd expression. To begin with, did they fall or did they jump? Falling is usually something that happens to you; the snake went out of its way to trip them up, but Adam and Eve decided to do what they did.



The Old and New Testament do not use the word *fall* to describe what happened; the term comes from

a Jewish book from the New Testament times called 2 Esdras, which appears in the Apocrypha or deuterocanonical writings that are accepted by some churches. *Esdras* is the Latin equivalent of the Ezra

who appears in the Old Testament. Ezra comments on the fact that whereas Adam alone sinned, his "fall" from the possibility of immortality affected us all (2 Esdras 7:118). That represents a key implication of Genesis 2-3. People needed to eat from the life tree if they were to live forever; the first couple's disobedience meant they lost the possibility of immortality; and this act affected everyone who followed. Just before 2 Esdras was written, Paul in Romans 5 makes the same point without using the word *fall*.

But in Christian thinking the idea of a fall has become a kind of myth that has broader meaning; it sometimes adds to Scripture, and sometimes contradicts Scripture. For instance, the fall idea often implies that human beings were created immortal, which goes against Genesis. It often implies that Adam and Eve originally lived a life of happiness and closeness to God and that as a result of the fall their relationship with God was broken. But we have seen that Genesis does not say anything specific about their life before the snake showed up, while Genesis 4 pictures them after Adam and Eve's disobedience as working together with, worshiping, and in conversation with God. Their relationship with God was affected by their disobedience but not terminated. They did not fall from a state of bliss; they failed to realize a possibility. Human beings

“fell short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Again, another idea of the fall notes that whereas human beings could originally be expected to obey God, afterwards they could not do so; we are born in sin. The implication is that the fall somehow brought about a change in human nature. It is true that we need to be redeemed by God’s grace, but, on one hand, when we read Genesis 3 we find the same dynamics of temptation and disobedience as we ourselves experience. On the other, Genesis 4 assumes that Cain can obey God.

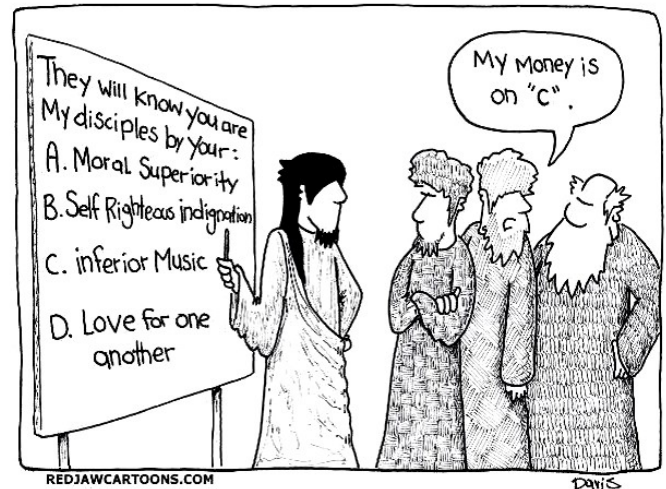
The fall idea goes along with the idea that we live in a fallen world, the idea that originally the world worked in a harmonious way in which there were no earthquakes and lions lay down with lambs. Human sin then spoiled this harmony. But Genesis 3 says only that God cursed the snake and that the ground outside the well-watered garden would henceforth produce thorns and thistles as well as edible plants. Human disobedience (listening to the snake rather than exercising authority over it) meant that creation was subjected to futility, so that it longs and groans for its redemption (Romans 8:19-22). But Genesis 1, with its commission to humanity, suggests this did not mean the spoiling of its perfection. Rather, whereas humanity was made to move toward a goal, its failure meant it moved away from that goal instead. We do not live in a fallen world; we live in a world that has not reached its destiny.

Speaking in terms of the fall thus has misleading implications. The trouble is that we have no convenient pithy expression to put in its place, though I still think it is best to avoid the word. This is not a question whether something terrible happened in the garden. Indeed it did. The first human beings decided to do the opposite of what God said, an act that had a devastating affect on everyone who was to follow, thus the expression “original sin.” The idea of the fall can be a good doctrine, but the word itself is not a good way of expressing it.

I am told there are readers of Genesis who argue the following: If evolution is true, there was no Adam and Eve. If there was no Adam and Eve, there was no fall. If there was no fall, we didn’t need Jesus to save us. But this argument has reversed things. In reality, we know we needed Jesus to save us, and we recognize the way Genesis describes our

predicament as human beings. The question Genesis handles is, Was all that a series of problems built into humanity when it came into existence? The answer is no. God did not create us that way. There was a point when humanity had to choose whether it wanted to go God’s way, and it chose not to. The Adam-and-Eve story gives us a parabolic account of that. They ignored the red light and crashed the train. God brought the first human beings into existence with their vocation, and they turned away from it.

Genesis for Everyone. Westminster John Knox, 2010.



News:

Melinda, Joy Gibson’s daughter, is recovering from surgery.

Billie Martin has requested prayers for professional issues she is experiencing in the workplace.

John and Sharon Cunningham are traveling in Oklahoma.

Prayer list:

Christian Children’s Home in Portales, New Mexico

Dan Keele—mission work

Robin Richards—back pain

Sam Appleton—declining health

John Cunningham—cancer

Norma Robinson—health

Linda Boling—health

H.L. Boling—general health and complications from leukemia

Tatyana Knowlton—macular degeneration

Nic and Ani Self—health and personal needs

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