

Reference: VARIOUS  
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## The Fall and the Environment

Purpose: To review the elements of the doctrine of the fall that are relevant to developing a Biblical position on the environment.

### 1. Introduction

Last time, Creation and man's part in it:  
It was "very good" – perfect, pleased God and reflected Him  
Therefore, all environmental issues arise from sin  
Man was perfect, made in God's image  
Man was placed as ruler over the earth – stewardship  
Given responsibilities to tend, defend, subdue, fill  
Would joyfully have done these things for God's glory

This week, the fall and how this has changed things  
Where can we look to see how things have changed?  
The curse of God in Genesis 3  
Subsequent history – murder of Cain, Flood etc.

### 2. The immediate aftermath of the fall

#### 2.1. *Man's fellowship with God broken*

**Genesis 3:7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings. **8** They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

What does this indicate?

Instead of desiring to be with God, they run away  
Could not bear to be in His presence in their shame  
Changed heart

#### 2.2. *Man Blames God for the Problems*

**Genesis 3:12** The man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." **13** Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

It's not my fault!  
It's the woman YOU put here with me  
It's the serpent YOU created that deceived me  
Failure to accept responsibility  
Looking out for number 1  
Relevance to the environment?

### 2.3. *God's curse*

What was cursed as a result of the fall of man (according to Genesis 3)?

#### 2.3.1. The serpent

**Genesis 3:14** The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat All the days of your life; **15** And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."

Note the promise of redemption

#### 2.3.2. The woman

**16** To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you."

#### 2.3.3. The ground

**17** Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. **18** "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; **19** By the sweat of your face You will eat bread,

#### 2.3.4. The man

Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

Relevance for the environment?

### 3. The lasting affects of the fall on Creation

#### 3.1. *The nature of God's creation*

Does God still view it as "Very good"?

No – sin has defaced it

The revelation of God is still there but marred

Still enough to render man without excuse

**Romans 1:20** For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Like a big gash across a beautiful portrait

And it wasn't just Adam that fell

The ground itself was cursed - all creation fell also.

It was placed in bondage to corruption

It is now in bondage to corruption:

**Romans 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. **19** For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

futility = vanity, pointlessness

corruption = rottenness, decay

If you removed man from the world, would not be perfect again

Adam's sin had much broader effects

Creation is in bondage.

The creation is in slavery to decay

Important principle for environmentalism - why?

#### 3.2. *The Position of man in God's creation*

##### 3.2.1. What position did man have?

He was steward of the earth for God

How does this change?

Not quite as definitive a ruler now - there is resistance

Now there is death in the creation

Now there are animals that will fear man

Animals that will attack and kill man

Animals began to be killed for sacrifice

A change of diet as man's situation changes from the garden to post-flood.

**Genesis 9:1** And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. **2** "The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. **3** "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.

##### 3.2.2. What was man commanded to do?

He was still to tend the ground, still to cultivate

**Genesis 3:22** Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— **23** therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.

**Genesis 4:1** Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with *the help* of the LORD."

Still to populate the world (Noah)

**Genesis 9:1-3** And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. **2** "The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. **3** "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.

#### 3.3. *The nature of man in God's creation*

Made was made in God's image

But now that image was marred too

All the moral aspects of God's image defaced, hideous

Left with reason, intellect, creativity

But even these were made to serve the creature not the Creator

What do we know about man's heart post-fall?

How would he have reacted to these responsibilities from God?

How would he have borne the responsibilities?

What would he have sought to do?

Now he lives to serve himself

Outside of Christ he hates God's commands  
He rebels against them  
Only obeys if there's something in it for him  
Not seeking God's glory but his own gain

Now we can see how environmental issues arise:  
All from sin; some directly from man's activity  
Others from the curse on the ground and the fall of creation  
itself

#### **4. Conclusions**

What principles do we draw from this?

- ❑ Both man and the creation are affected by the fall
- ❑ Creation itself is in bondage to corruption; Problems would not end even if we could take man away
- ❑ God is still revealed in creation but the picture is defaced
- ❑ Man is still made in God's image but again the image is horribly disfigured.
- ❑ Man is still steward of creation but his dominion is altered to be harder and less complete than before – there will be rebellion, toil
- ❑ Fallen man does not and cannot exercise this stewardship for the glory of God but for selfish purposes which give rise to outcomes that can affect the environment
- ❑ All environmental issues are a result of sin - whether they are man-made or natural