

GENESIS 3 Original Sin

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,"³ but **God did say, "You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die."**

⁴ **"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman.** ⁵ **"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."**

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ **Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked;** so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He answered, **"I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."**

¹¹ And he said, **"Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"**

¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"
The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."



And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

The Fall...

The story is sometimes called 'the Fall' because it describes the moment when human beings 'fell' from the perfect state in which God had created them.

The disobedience of Adam and Eve is often called 'original sin'. Sin is any wrong action that is against God's plans for human beings.

Is the story true?

- Many Christians take this story literally and believe that Adam and Eve were real people and their sinfulness introduced all kinds of bad things into the world – including pain, inequality, work and death
- It also affected all the human beings who are descended from them, who no longer have a natural ability to avoid doing evil things. This creates more moral evil
- For many Christians, this is the best explanation for the existence of evil and suffering in the world
- God made a perfect world, but human beings sinned and damaged themselves and the world in which they live, and because of this damage, evil and suffering now exist
- Catholics believe that this story is a description of a real prehistoric event, told through figurative language
- It describes the moment in human history when humans first turned away from God
- It explains why human beings still have a tendency to sin and makes clear that we all share some responsibility for the evil and suffering in the world

The Punishments

¹⁴ So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

¹⁶ To the woman he said, **"I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;** with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

¹⁷ To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.

¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

¹⁹ **By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food** until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; **for dust you are**

and to dust you will return."

²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.



²¹ **The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.**²² And the Lord God said, **"The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."**²³ So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.



Many people argue that the story is pointless because Science disproves it. Most modern theologians don't think this a good reason to abandon the doctrine of the fall. They believe that although the story is not historically true, it does **contain important truths about the state of humanity.**

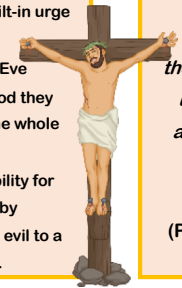
For Catholics, baptism is the point at which they **enter the Catholic Church.** At the service of baptism, water is poured on a baby's head while the priest says: **"I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."** The person being baptised becomes part of the family of God.

Baptism takes away original sin (which all humans have inherited through the first sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden) and gives a new birth in the Holy Spirit. Catholic families are encouraged to baptise their children soon after birth, however sometimes people are baptised later, or even as adults.

Augustine Christian Doctrine

Original sin is an Augustine Christian doctrine (belief) that says that everyone is born sinful. This means that they are born with a built-in urge to do bad things and to disobey God. Christians believe that when Adam and Eve sinned in Eden and turned away from God they brought sin into the world and turned the whole human race away from God.

The doctrine absolves God of responsibility for the evils that make our world imperfect by teaching that Adam and Eve introduced evil to a perfect world when they disobeyed him.



Jesus' Sacrifice

"We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, by the sacrifice of the cross, redeemed us from original sin and all the personal sins committed by each one of us..."
(Pope Paul VI, 1968)

Knowledge Check

1. What is this story often known as? Why?
2. How does the serpent convince the woman to eat from the tree?
3. How is the serpent punished?
4. How is the woman punished?
5. How is the man punished?
6. Why do you think God clothes Adam and his wife?
7. How do Christians 'rid' themselves of original sin?
8. How do Christians interpret this story?

Choose a Task

1. Create a detailed mind-map (try to make this visual)
2. Create a multiple-choice quiz (aim for at least 10 questions)
3. Create a poster/leaflet

CHALLENGE!
Turn over the mat and try to complete your task without looking at the information. Then refer back to the task mat to see what you have missed/could have included.

Exam Question

- a) Describe the Catholic belief on the origin of evil [5]
- b) Describe Catholic belief on the origin of evil [5]
- c) Explain how fundamentalist and liberal understandings of original sin differ [8]