

## **Genesis: It All Starts Here**

### *An Autopsy of Sin*

**Intro:** Sin is part of the human experience in our world today. This is beyond rational dispute. However, it is wise to ask some questions regarding the “Why” and “How” we arrived at such a miserable state. The primary question in an Autopsy is “What is the cause of death?” In this message, we will seek to understand the underlying causes of the first human sin in an attempt to understand “How” and “Why” humans continue to sin. Of course, the Gospel of Jesus Christ also has much to say about a fantastic solution as well.

### **Genesis 3:1-7**

#### **Why talk about SIN?**

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If there are many people who decide not to address the subject, and if there are many more who do not want to hear about it, then why in the world would anyone bring it up? Well, that is a good question...

First, it inevitably comes up. Even if someone doesn't use the word “sin,” they are most certainly going to use some vocabulary to describe the difference between what is “good” and what is “bad.” Consider this: Is it good to lie? Is it moral to murder? Is it right to oppress others? Each of these questions requires an answer that will necessarily involve the concept of sin, because Sin is any lack of conformity to or disobedience of God's commands (God's moral law). If it is not good to murder, then why is it not good? Such an absolute judgment of morality forces an appeal to some transcendent truth or law. Therefore, one may appropriately argue, murder is not good (i.e. it is wrong) because God commands the protection and preservation of life. To disobey such a command is wrong, not good, and sinful. One may leave off the “sinful” part, but the concept has necessarily been at least introduced.

Second, Jesus talked about sin... a lot. Even a skim across the surface of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) will cause the reader to notice that Jesus was very interested in the subject of sin. Jesus called people out for being sinners (Jn. 8:21); Jesus talked about the negatively captivating effects of sin (Jn. 8:34); and Jesus talked about the need to be free from sin (Jn. 8:36). This is just a short look at a single passage, but the Gospels are full of this kind of talk from Jesus. One might argue that the primary reason God became a man in Jesus Christ was to address the matter of sin (Matt. 26:28).

If the Bible is true about human nature, then all people everywhere are in dire need of something or someone to address their problem with sin. Any honest person must acknowledge that sin is a topic that cannot be avoided by anyone. And, if we are to follow Christ, then we must be willing to submit to His words and stress those things He has already highlighted.

## **Admitting the Brokenness**

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That our world is broken seems to be a given for any rational and honest observer. The brokenness is painful, disturbing, and heartbreaking. Recently, the United Nations has listed a number of goals to tackle the brokenness of our world.<sup>1</sup>

1. End **poverty** in all its forms everywhere
2. Put an end to **hunger** everywhere
3. Ensure **healthy** lives for all people
4. Ensure quality **education**
5. Achieve gender **equality**
6. Ensure universal availability quality **water** and water management
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern **energy** for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable **economic** growth
9. Build resilient **infrastructure** – promoting industrialization and innovation
10. Reduce **inequality** within and **among countries**
11. Make **cities** and **settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**
12. Ensure **sustainable consumption** and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems
16. Promote **peaceful & inclusive societies** and provide access to **justice** for all
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership

## **Message Outline:**

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- (1) Some interesting observations
- (2) The Speedy Distortion of the Human-Divine Relationship
- (3) The Underlying Causes of Death
- (4) How does the Gospel Correct such a Disastrous Distortion?

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<sup>1</sup> See the full list and explanation at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>

## Exposition:

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### 1. Some interesting observations

- A. The “serpent” was “made” (v1)
- B. The “serpent” knows and twists heavenly knowledge (v5)
  - i. “Your eyes will be opened,” and you will “know good and evil.”
- C. The “serpent” undermines the very foundation of relationship, truth, and peace – God’s Word
- D. Eve responds with an attempt at clarity, but she also undermines the clarity of Cod’s Word – she adds to it.
  - i. Eve said, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, **neither shall you touch it, lest you die**’” (3:2-3).
- E. The very thing the “serpent” offers humanity is (1) something only God can give and (2) something they already have.
  - i. The “serpent” says that they will be “like God” (3:5).
  - ii. Only God can create (1:1), and only God can give His “likeness” to any creature (1:27).
  - iii. Humanity (male and female) was created in the “**image and likeness of God**” (1:27).
    - 1. Since humanity is explicitly said to be “**the image and likeness of God**,” and angels are never described in this way, it must follow that humanity is “**like God**” in a way that even the “serpent” (the devil – Rev. 12:9) was/is not.
      - a. The irony is dripping here...

## 2. The Speedy Distortion of the Human-Divine Relationship

### A. Human-Divine Relationship BEFORE Genesis 3:

- i. Man was perfectly content with/in God
  1. God provided for man's every need (2:8-17)
  2. God was the initiator on any perceived lack of fulfillment.
    - a. "It is not good that man be alone; I will make a helper..." (2:18).
- ii. Man enjoyed delegated authority under God
  1. Man was to have dominion over all the earth (1:28)
  2. Man named (expressed authority over) the animals (2:19)
- iii. Man and Woman were utterly exposed to each other and to God, and both were fully accepted and loved on all counts (2:25)

### B. The Speedy Distortion of Right Relationship:

- i. Man was tempted to believe God was withholding something
  1. "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of ANY tree of the garden'" (3:1b).
    - a. Since God has placed any limitation on you, God has utterly removed your freedom.
- ii. Man was tempted to usurp God's authority
  1. "You will be like God, knowing good and evil" (3:5).
    - a. You will get to be under your own authority, and you will judge for yourself what is right and wrong – what is off-limits.
- iii. Man's exposure (both horizontal and vertical) brought shame and suspicion on all counts.
  1. "Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked" (3:7).
  2. "...and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God" (3:8).

### 3. The Underlying Causes of Death

A. The chief question in an “Autopsy” is, “*What was the cause of death?*”

- i. We can see WHAT happened.
  1. Humanity believed God was withholding something
  2. Humanity wanted to be autonomous
- ii. But WHY? What was the underlying cause of such thinking?
  1. Distrust of God’s Word
  2. Denial of God’s Goodness

B. God’s Word was Distrusted, and a Creaturely word put in it’s place

- i. First, a questioning of God’s Word
  1. “*Did God actually say...?*” (3:1).
- ii. Second, an outright denial of God’s Word
  1. “*You will not die*” (3:4).
- iii. Third, a creaturely word substituted
  1. “*Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil*” (3:5).

C. God’s Goodness was denied and replaced with a Creaturely “goodness”

- i. First, a cynicism concerning God’s goodness
  1. “*Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of ANY tree’*” (3:1)?
- ii. Second, an outright denial of God’s goodness
  1. “*God knows... Your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil*” (3:5).
- iii. Third, humanity seeks the creaturely “goodness”
  1. “*When the woman saw that... the tree was desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit...*” (3:6).

### 4. How does the Gospel Correct such a Disastrous Distortion?

- A. The Word of God – the Gospel – announces a God who has become a man (John 1:9-14) so that man could be like God (1 John 2:28-3:2)!
- B. God’s Holy Spirit, through God’s Word, creates confidence (Rom. 13:15), life (Titus 3:5), and love (Rom. 5:5)!
- C. God’s Holy Spirit renews our mind (Rom. 12:1-2) and reshapes our posture (Titus 3:5)!

## **My Prayers**

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- May God help us see the foolish nature of our distrust (His Word & Goodness)
- May God transform our hearts and minds to trust and love Him
- May God help us to live as humble servants rather than prideful anarchists