

What Does the Bible Teach About Living in this Fallen World?

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

A. Defining our terms:

1. Most brethren are uncomfortable with the phrase “fallen world,” believing it to be a denominational concept. It is actually based on Bible doctrine supported by multiple texts.

B. What is meant by “fallen”?

1. The word fallen is used in the Bible to describe someone or something spiritually and morally degraded.
 - a. Israel is described as fallen - Amos 5:2
 - b. The king of Babylon has fallen - Isa. 14:12
 - c. The glory of humankind will fall - 1Peter 1:24
2. Each of these has fallen away from the heights of God’s good will for them, fallen into sin, and therefore fallen under the just wrath of God. Those in a fallen state suffer the degrading and deadly spiritual, moral, and social consequences of sinfulness.
3. The scriptures warn against falling from a saved condition into a sinful state, describing it as falling - 1Cor. 10:12; Rev. 2:5
4. Therefore, “fallen” describes a condition where something or someone has lost a former glory and descended to a lesser, damaged state.

C. The “world” encompasses both the planet itself and the conditions of life on it bound by the rules of time, space, matter, and energy.

1. Originally, the world was different than it presently is.
 - a. Gen. 1:31 - “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.”
 - b. The animals appear to be at peace with Adam, including predatory animals - Gen. 2:19-20
 - c. Adam and Eve are vegetarians in the garden. There appears to be no death in the world until after sin.
 - 1) Gen. 2:16-17, 3:19, 21
2. Child-bearing became sorrowful and painful - Gen. 3:16
3. The ground falls under a curse because they sinned.
 - a. Gen. 3:17-19
4. These things, given as punishment for sin, implicitly did not exist before Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden.
5. Therefore, this is a fallen world. As a result of Adam's sin, the world now must contend with sickness, sorrow, evil, and death. It is not the way the world was created in the beginning; because of sin, the world has fallen from a better, more glorious condition.

I. WHAT IS THE WORST PART OF THIS FALLEN WORLD?

- A. There are many things about life in this fallen world, or as Solomon puts it “life under the sun,” that make living in it difficult.

1. We are bound by the rules of time. We must live as if time was linear, or uni-directional. We can only move forward from the past, through the present, and into the future. The rules of time exist in this world, not in the Divine Realm.
 2. We are bound by the laws of thermodynamics, rules that govern this universe, not the Divine Realm. That is: 1) matter and energy cannot be created from nothing or made to go out of existence, and 2) all systems tend toward disorder and decay.
 3. We are subject to the randomness of events in this world (Ecc. 9:11). Disasters happen, accidents, unplanned and unforeseen circumstances are all part of living in a universe subject to randomness.
- B. However, the worst part of living in this fallen world is the spiritual circumstances of life under the sun.
1. Sometimes called the “human predicament,” it is characterized by two immutable rules:
 - a. All men sin - Rom. 3:23
 - b. All men die - Heb. 9:27
 2. This is a world in which all human beings who reach spiritual maturity (capable of discerning and choosing between right and wrong) will at some point in life choose to commit sin; and, unless the Lord returns in Judgment, every human being born into this world will die.
 3. Furthermore, persons who sin and then die are lost and sentenced to perdition, eternally.
 4. This was not the state of life under the sun before Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden.
- C. This is now a world where sin and death exist and must be addressed.
1. Gen. 2:16-17, 3:19, 22; Rom. 5:12, 18-19; 1Cor. 15:21-22
 2. “Evil and suffering are real. They aren’t an illusion, nor are they simply an absence of good. We are fallen creatures living in a fallen world that has been twisted and corrupted by sin, and we all share in its brokenness. Most of all, we share in its tragic legacy of disease and death.” (B. Graham)

II. WHAT IS LOST IN THIS FALLEN WORLD?

- A. Friendship with God changed into estrangement and enmity with Him.
 1. Israel had to work hard in order to restore their relationship with God.
 - a. Ex. 15:26; Deut. 30:15-20
 2. A relationship with the world precludes a relationship with God.
 - a. James 4:4; 1John 2:15
- B. A loss of the full reflection of His likeness into a distorted image of Him.
 1. Gen. 6:5; Rom. 1:19-24, 3:9-12
- C. Joyful obedience to God’s rules is transformed into lawless rebellion and constant warfare with Him - James 4:1-3, 8, 10
- D. The beauty, tranquility, and vitality of godly family life into sexual-identity confusion, domestic strife, and social aimlessness.
 1. Prov. 19:26, 29:15

- E. Changing dominion as trustees of God's world into a selfish exploitation of the land and the resulting local environmental ruin - Ecc. 5:9; Haggai 1:6
- F. Surrendering knowledge of God's enlightening truth to the darkness of ignorance and the confusion of religiously reprobate minds.
 - 1. Rom. 1:28; John 3:19-21

III. THE WORLD SUFFERS FROM THE SINS COMMITTED IN IT

- A. We now live in a fallen world, and all creation "groans" under the consequences of our sin - Jer. 12:4; Rom. 8:19-22; Isa. 24:4-7
- B. This fallen world is reflected in unfairness and inequities that create despair.
 - 1. Ecc. 3:16, 4:1-3
- C. The fallen world presses the righteous to long for a better world.
 - 1. 2Cor. 5:2, 4; 2Peter 3:13

IV. RELIEF IN THIS FALLEN WORLD

- A. God addressed the problems of His damaged creation.
- B. Restored friendship with us in Jesus Christ - John 10:10, 15:15
- C. Restored the reflection of God's likeness in us through Jesus Christ.
 - 1. 1Cor. 6:11; 2Cor. 3:18
- D. Restored to humankind His original intentions for a relationship with them.
 - 1. Eph. 1:3-7; 1John 3:1-2
- E. Restored His design for the family - Luke 1:17; Col. 3:18-21
- F. Jesus Christ will return and set everything right forever.
 - 1. 1Thes. 4:16-17; Rev. 21:1-5
- G. We live in a fallen world, but we have a RISEN Savior.

V. GOD PUT BEAUTY IN THIS FALLEN WORLD TO HELP SUSTAIN US

- A. "If this cursed and fallen world holds such beauty as what I see, Imagine the beauty of paradise that's gladly waiting for me." (Joyce Rachele)