



# PHF ELITE SCHOOLS

EDUCATION SKILLS FOR ALL

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### Paradise Lost - Genesis 2-3

The Garden of Eden

[Genesis 2-3](#) sets the design of the world in motion. The creation theme focuses on the human family as the actors in history. While the writer looks forward to the cities of paganism and the covenant community of Israel, he roots human life in a garden where God walks and talks with his people. This carries the historical basic relationships established between man and woman, work and worship, knowledge and culture, life and death: the essence of life.

Was Adam a Man?

Whereas; *'adam* is used to imply *mankind* in [Gen.1:27, in 2:7](#), it implies God creating man out of the soil of the earth *'adamah* (Hb). From there the woman takes on her name because she is taken from man. (Hb. Uses *'Ish* for man and *'Ishah* for woman. In the genealogy of [Gen.5:1-5](#), Adam turns into a proper gender name for male.

Traditionally the English word “man” has been used in both;

- The generic sense of mankind or humanity and,
- In the specific sense of a male.

[The Old Testament](#) does use a generic form of “man”, and for this reason we shall continue traditional English usage. In any case, the important issues of human nature and gender should be decided by interpreting the meaning of the text rather than quibbling over usage.

## Man and Woman in Genesis 2

The narrative in Genesis 2 brings out the Biblical view of man and woman in the image of God. They are both placed in a Paradise, a Hebrew patriarchal family context in which the wife’s desire is for her husband and he shall rule over her (3:16), she will be “the mother of all living” (3:20). In the beginning, such roles either did not apply or were less distinct. True, the Man is created first (cf. [1 Tim 2:13](#)), and the Woman derives from him in name and substance as his longed-for helper. She comes to him in the place of God. Thus Genesis, while it is realistic about living within structures of a fallen world, holds forth a pattern of mutual love in which man and woman find their true natures without losing their gender identities.

READ [Genesis 2:18-25](#)

The complete mankind

When the man saw the lady, the tone of his cry “This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh...” shows he was overjoyed because he had now found someone to share with, laugh with, a companion for him.

The Fall

Adam and Eve’s sin has been called traditionally a “happy fault,” though modern rationalists have called it “the fall upwards” as the race’s necessary coming of age. Such interpretations miss the irony of the story. The serpent’s claim that humans will become “god-like, knowing good and evil” comes true in one sense while in the other sense, humans come to know guilt, shame, toil and death.

Note: Some divine knowledge is not worth knowing, if we are not fit to use it. Therefore the choices we make have their own consequences.

Although the fall is not frequently mentioned in [the Old Testament](#), yet its shadow is all over. Jeremiah laments that “the heart is deceitful above all things and

desperately corrupt” ([Jer. 17:9](#)). Human life is a “chase after wind” (Eccles 1:14). St. Paul looks at the Fall as key to understanding the magnitude of God’s amazing grace in Christ’s death for us (Rom 5:18).

READ [Genesis 3:1-7](#)

The passage deals with the cunningness of the devil employing a good strategy to lure Adam and Eve to sin. Knowing that human beings have inquisitive minds, he had to first come through the woman with the appeal of the fruit. Then woman was made to approach the man. Rarely men disappoint their wives, and Adam yielded to what his wife offered to him.

Advanced Reading

The Origin of Evil

The origin of evil in a world ruled by God is a constant intellectual challenge called theodicy (see pg. 107). There are three classic explanations with regard to creation:

- God and evil are co-eternal (dualism)
- God creates evil (monism)
- God creates only good but good corrupts itself (monotheism)

In classical theology, the good creature who corrupts himself is an angel, Satan. Human sin differs in being the result of temptation and fall into bondage. But is this what Genesis 3 teaches?

Most Christians have understood Satan to be the “ancient serpent” of Genesis 3 (Rev 12:9). The serpent is used metaphorically or in a picture language representing Satan. It is not clear whether the Hebrews had a developed notion of Satan at the time Genesis was written. This doubt is not wholly convincing. The temptation is induced by the serpent and tests Eve and Adam’s potential to disobey God. The enmity between the snake and the woman’s seed (3:15) reflects the first prophecy of Christ’s coming victory over Satan (*protevangelium*). Primarily, reference to the hatred of humans and snakes may be irrational, the curse as a warfare between the demonic monsters of paganism and the kingdom of God and his messiah as in ([Ps 74:14](#)). St. John portrays the whole history of God’s people as

a woman pursued by a dragon, but says; “they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb” ([Rev 12:11](#); [Rom 16:20](#)).

### Sin’s Cycle

The Fall is the premier example of a tragic pattern in human life and history. A proverb states: “What goes around, comes around”; this is true of Sin. In Genesis, the cycle of sin includes:

- Man’s willful transgression;
- God’s righteous punishment;
- God’s sign of mercy.

In Genesis 3 the pattern follows the willful rebellion of the woman and man in, followed by God’s curse upon their lives, and finally mercy in being exiled rather than executed. In God’s wisdom the “wages of sin” have merciful benefits. Shame, the emotional fig leaf of our fellness, becomes a warning and protection against any deeper descent into moral and social chaos.

READ [Colossians 1:15-20](#).

Paul depicts the coming of Christ as a recreation of the world and makes clearer the purpose of God in Genesis in that he looked at Christ as the firstborn of all creation, the first born from death.

## 5. The Primeval Age from Eden to Babylon - Genesis 4-11

### Sin Goes Round Again and Again

The pattern of sin, punishment, and mercy spirals out from Eden into the world of the patriarchs.

The genealogies of [Genesis 1-11](#) remind us that God’s ordering of the human family and its history

has continued even as the individual human life span declines toward poverty and death.

TERMS TO NOTE

- Sin
- Tower of Babel
- Enuma Elish
- Biblical worldview
- Transgression
- Pagan religion