

Session Two: Sin & Evil

1. Why is it important to understand the Biblical teaching on Sin?

2. What is the Biblical description of humanity as originally created? How does this conflict with the naturalistic view of the world?

3. What is the possible significance of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

4. What are some characteristics of the serpent's tactics when tempting Eve? Do we see any of these tactics in use today?

Fundamentally, sin is not about hurting people or doing wrong according to human evaluations. Sin is disobedience to God's Word and cannot be severed from the spirit that gives rise to it: a breach of trust in the goodness of God's character and in the truthfulness of His Word.

- Bruce Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology*

Temptation, then, in *general*, is any thing, state, way, or condition that, upon any account whatsoever, has a force or efficacy to seduce, to draw the mind and heart of a man from its obedience, which God requires of him, into any sin, in any degree of it whatsoever. In *particular*, that is a temptation to any man which causes or occasions him to sin, or in anything to go off from his duty, either by bringing evil into his heart, or drawing out that evil that is in his heart, or any other way diverting him from communion with God and that constant, equal, universal obedience, in matter and manner, that is required of him.

- John Owen, *Of Temptation*

5. What are the judgments that result from Adam and Eve’s sin? What are the glimpses of mercy and hope?

We are told that as soon as we determined to serve ourselves instead of God - as soon as we abandoned living for and enjoying God as our highest good – the entire created world became broken...Disease, genetic disorders, famine, natural disasters, aging, and death itself are as much the result of sin as are oppression, war, crime, and violence. We have lost God’s *shalom* – physically, spiritually, socially, psychologically, and culturally.
 - Tim Keller, *The Reason for God*

6. What picture does the narrative paint as humanity progresses? Are things back at square one for the next humans born into the world?

7. Why would it be a mistake to blindly accept the actions of patriarchs as a guide for proper living?

8. What was it about Israel that caused God to be merciful to them in spite of their sin?

The Spread of Sin / Spread of Grace in Genesis 1-11

	Adam and Eve	Cain and Abel	Noah and the Flood	Tower of Babel
Rule	Tree	Do right	Conscience/ walk	Scatter
Rebellion	Eat	Fratricide	Total Evil	Tower
Judgment	Death	Nomad	Flood	Language/ nations
Mitigation	Seed	Protective Tattoo	Ark	Abraham elected to bless nation

Adapted from *An Old Testament Theology*, Waltke, p308

9. What additional insight does the New Testament provide regarding the nature of sin?

Some Recommended Reading on Sin and Evil – This discussion has barely scratched the surface of the Biblical doctrine of sin, the problem of evil, and the impact of sin on the whole of life. Below are some additional resources which discuss these topics in more detail.

On Evil and Suffering:

Evil and the Justice of God, N.T. Wright

How Long, O Lord?: Reflections on Suffering and Evil, D.A. Carson

The Reason for God, Tim Keller, Chapters 2, 4, 10 & 12

Apologetics to the Glory of God, John Frame, Chapters 6 & 7

The Problem of Pain, C.S. Lewis

Spectacular Sins and Their Global Purpose in the Glory of Christ, John Piper – Online at:

http://www.desiringgod.org/media/pdf/books_bss/bss.pdf

On Genesis 3:

Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1-15, Gordon Wenham

An Old Testament Theology, Bruce Waltke, Chapter 10

Creation and Fall: A Theological Exposition of Genesis 1-3, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

General Discussion of Sin and Temptation:

Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, Wayne Grudem, Chapter 24

Not the Way It's Supposed to Be : A Breviary of Sin, Cornelius Plantinga

Overcoming Sin and Temptation, John Owen – Online at:

<http://www.johnowen.org/media/OvercomingSinAndTemptation.pdf>

On Original Sin:

Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle, Henri Blocher

Original Sin: A Cultural History, Alan Jacobs

City of God, Augustine, Books 8, 9, & 10 – Online at: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf102.iv.html>

Original Sin, Jonathan Edwards – Online at: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/works1.vi.html>