

Why Is This World So Messed Up?

If everything started out so well, how did we get into the problems we have today? The very simple answer is: Sin. Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin. (Romans 5:12)

There is a poster you can find in stores these days that says: "This life is a test. It is only a test. Had this been a real life you would have been instructed where to go and what to do."

We might chuckle at that and think for a moment it is true. But it is not. From the very beginning men and women have been given instructions as to how to live, and then the freedom to decide whether to obey or not.

So, Adam and Eve as the first of God's human creation, were given freedom to eat of all the trees in the Garden of Eden, save one. God gave to them a probationary command, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shag not eat. (Genesis 2:16) This was a test of man's submission to the fact that good and evil are defined by God, not by man.

What was the temptation? The devil asked Eve, Has God indeed said? (Genesis 3: 1) Satan disputes the character of God. God had wanted Eve to be like Him, and that is why she was not supposed to eat of the fruit.

However, Satan changes the meaning of what it is to be like God to mean God does not want you to be a competitor of His. God is doing this to hurt you, to deprive you. What does Eve do? She decides to put the hypothesis of Satan next to the hypothesis of God and then she would be the final judge between the two. In that moment, she inverted the proper relationship with God and decided she would be God and the true God would be subject to her judgment. This is moral relativism!

So man fell into sin when he failed to glorify God and was selfish.

How could he do that? I do not know. Sin is irrational, then and now. Man who was made to have fellowship with God, who lived in a perfect setting, threw it all away. Thus, man was banned from the garden.

When Adam acted, he acted for all of us. He was our federal head (our man, our representative in Eden, so to speak). Adam stood for you and I on that day. It was like God said to Adam, You are going to stand for everyone else who lives. What you do, they do.

Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. (Romans 5:12) Death came to all men. Why? All sinned. The universal reign of death is explained by the fact that all men sinned. The way Paul writes this indicates that this took place once and for all at a point in time. It is not a continuing process, but a particular, discernible, past event. On account of the sin, death came. The particular sin is that sin of the one man, Adam, and so death passed to all men, for at that particular point all men sinned in Adam.

Paul explains the reign of death by two things. First, it was one man's sin. Second, it was the sin of all men. In other words, the one man's sin = the sin of all men. Death, sin and judgment are all tied to Adam's one sin.

And what was that original sin? Man was striving to be God.

What do we find as we look out on our world today, as we read the newspapers, as we watch the television? We find that sin has impacted the way man lives. It distorts man's abilities. Man was to have dominion in the world. Today we take advantage of the created order and our environment. Even worse, we lord it over other people. Now we stress our independence. We will decide what is right and wrong rather than obeying God's law. Then, we try to redeem ourselves and our culture through social projects, moral reform and technology. All to no avail, as things seem to be worse rather than better.

Life is not a test. It is the real thing. Often we look around and think if only all these other people would get their act together, then this would be an okay place to live. Unfortunately, we never hold up the mirror to ourselves, and ask the hard questions: Do I love God with all of my heart, soul, mind and strength? Is everything that I do to the glory of God? Do I love my neighbor as I love myself? God knows the answer to those questions and so do we. When we face reality, we have to say All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23), including me!