

IN THE BEGINNING

A Study of Genesis 1-4

St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Minot, ND



Before and After...

Before Genesis 3, Adam and Eve had complete and total harmony. They were in harmony with the Garden and its food, they were in harmony with each other, they were in harmony with themselves, and they were in harmony with God. However, after eating the fruit, this all changed. Consider the ramifications: A) they were cast out of the Garden, B) the ground became cursed, C) they covered themselves with fig leaves, D) they blamed each other, E) and they hid from God. Now, it is interesting to note that each of these dimensions is an area of discipline for study in our society today. For example, A) geography is the study of the movement and interaction of mankind with the earth; B) ecology is the study of organisms and their environment; C) psychology is the study of the human mind and human behavior; D) sociology is the study of human social behavior and interactions; E) and theology is the study of the nature of God and His relationship to human beings. In other words, all of these above-mentioned studies are disciplines that attempt to study the effects of sin's corruption upon the various dimensions that were corrupted/poisoned by sin in Genesis 3.

Study 5

Chapter 3

Before and After...

Divine Pity?

Fear, Shame, Control, & Blame

What Fig Leaves Do You Wear?

*Arguments for Creation:
Cosmological, Teleological,
Morality, and the Resurrection*

Divine Pity?

Why were Adam and Eve sent out from the Garden? Simply stated, 'divine pity.' As is stated in Genesis 3:22, God expelled Adam and Eve with compassion so that they would not live forever with a sin-torn and sin-defaced life. Yes, if they had stayed in the Garden and eaten from the tree of life, they would have lived forever in constant fear, shame, guilt, and toil. And so, the Lord God cast them out with sadness. With the upward fall, mankind had achieved a pitiful and sorrowful godlikeness – knowing good and evil yet soiled with sin.

Fear, Shame, Control, & Blame

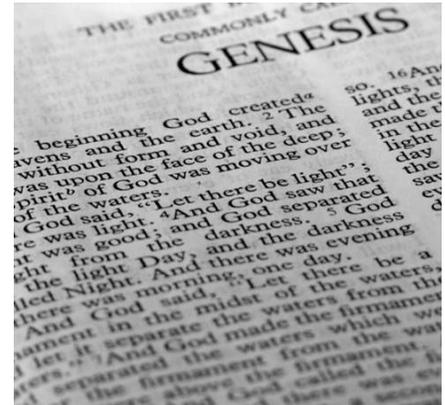
We often do not easily notice sin in our world and lives. However, we do see the effects and results of sin: fear, shame, control, and blame. Yes, indeed, fear, shame, control, and blame are results of sin – they are ways that we respond to sin and try and control the effects of sin.

Fear looks at the threats of life and produces timidity, dread, and faithlessness. (See 3:10)

Shame is stirred emotions that come forth from a conscience burdened by guilt. Instead of confession, shame leads mankind to hide, perform, and/or fix the problem of guilt. (See 3:7)

Control is the myth that we can tame the threats and guilt of life in a way to set a favorable outcome for ourselves. Control can even become aggressive when we control other people for the sake of reducing our personal fear and absolving our personal shame. (See 3:7)

Blame is the strong inclination to cast condemnation on someone or something else. By casting blame, we are not only relieving shame from ourselves but we are also maintaining control in our lives – we are giving a reason why something bad has happened. Blame allows us to still feel in control. (See 3:12)



Note: According to a Jewish view of sin, sin is something that crouches to get us; sin is a mere intention of the heart that must be resisted. We Lutherans see sin as a poison that permeates our whole being. We see it as an innate disease.

What Fig Leaves Do You Wear?

It is interesting to see that Adam and Eve's response to sin was to immediately sew fig leaves together to cover themselves. And then, they went and hid.

This was their response to sin, which then leads to a very good question – what fig leaves do we wear? What do we immediately do to cover shame? Where do we fearfully run to when exposed?

Mankind has all sorts of fig leaves (i.e., tactics) in managing sin. For example, consider the following:

Denialism: a way of denying a consciousness of error. *"I didn't do it!"*

Blaming: a way of shifting the consciousness of error to someone or something else. *"They made me do it!"*

Legalism: a way of managing a consciousness of error. *"I'm not as bad as they are."*

Substance Abuse: a way of numbing a consciousness of error. *"The bottle helps me escape my pain."*

Churchianity: a way of protecting oneself from a consciousness of error. *"Oh, yeah, I am a sinner but I do a lot of good things in the church for God."*

Spiritual Schizophrenia: a way of confusing a consciousness of error. *"Oops, my sinful nature did that again. Silly old Adam."*

Works Righteousness: a way of overcoming a consciousness of error. *"If I buy her flowers and do the dishes, she will then forget my mistake."*

The list could go on and on. To the point, though. All of these tactics are ways that we cover, manage, and try to atone for the sin that we commit. They are human solutions to sin.

Rather than leave Adam and Eve hiding with fig leaves, the Lord did something completely contrary. He came towards Adam and Eve. He confronted them and clothed their nakedness with the shed blood of an animal (maybe a lamb). He also gave them the promise of the coming Seed (i.e., Savior) who would make all things right. In other words, there is an alternative to fig leaves and that is the way of grace – the way of Christ. The atonement is the only way that sin is ultimately dealt with for the sake of the human conscience, and for the sake of eternal life. The way of grace says, *"I am a sinner that is clothed and covered by the shed blood of Jesus that atones for all of my sins, making me white as snow and righteous in God's sight."*