

"In the beginning...EVIL" 2.25 + 28.10

I read about...

- A woman who was a ticket agent for a major airline; she told a story about a family that came up to buy a ticket for a flight that was getting ready to board. The parents came up & bought their tickets & she asked how old their son was & they told her 4. In those days if a child was 4 yrs old or younger the ticket was ½ price! The ticket agent spoke up & said, "He doesn't look 4 yrs old, he looks @ least 7 or 8 yrs old." She gave the parents a skeptical look, but they stood by their story. The parents turned around to grab their bags & when they did the ticket agent leaned over the counter & said to the little boy, "Really, how old are you?" Without blinking he said, "I'm 4 yrs old." The ticket agent said, "Do you know what happens to little boys who lie? Little boy spoke up, "YES, they fly half price." ☺

We often mistake just how big of an impact one small choice, one small decision or thought or word CAN BE.

Enjoying the Olympics new sport that has caught my attention: Short – track speed skating: often the race is literally won by the edge of a skate = in a millisecond.

It's the same in everyday – life:

- One small moment in time can change the state of our health;
- + 1 small moment in time can change an important relationship;
- + 1 small moment in time can change our reputation.

Bible describes, "...in the very beginning", Adam & Eve made a choice, that radically impacts all of us today.

Allow God's word to set the context for this critical moment in time that continues to produce ill-effects on all of us.

I. Paradise Found Perfect Living Conditions

A. Genesis 2: 4 – 9 or p. 4 in pew Bible

- Initially living conditions in the Garden of Eden were ideal:

B. Genesis 2: 15

- Initially Adam was given a job (meaningful work) to fill his day:
 - Please notice work was a natural part of the living conditions God originally created in the garden.
 - Let's dispel a cultural misnomer that work is a result of the Fall, its not a curse, from the very beginning it was a natural part of Adam's life.

C. Genesis 2: 16 – 17

Adam had access to delicious food, fruit from God's garden!

- Initially only 1 rule or 1 prohibition = very plain ~ no veiled mystery
 - "...eat freely of every tree in garden" EXCEPT~ ONE
 - Do not eat from, "the tree of the knowledge of good & evil."
 - 1st INTRODUCTION of FREE WILL ~ choice

Pretty good deal = PERFECT NUTRITION, Adam's body wasn't going to die as long as he had access 'the tree of life' v 9

- This rule (prohibition) was put into place for Adam's protection & well-being. Never neglect that God was not a tyrant laying down arbitrary rules to prevent Adam & Eve from enjoying themselves.
 - Oddly God still knows what is best for us; He has set forth guidelines for us in scripture, for the most healthy, satisfying life imaginable.
 - As CREATOR, God never 2nd guesses about what's best for us!
- Paradise came @ a cost. To live there, the 1st family had to submit to the Creator of the Garden of Eden, God Himself!
 - Pretty fair-price for PERFECT living conditions

Only 1 thing was missing in Paradise, only 1 thing God said was 'not good':

D. Genesis 2: 18 – 22

- I once heard this portion of scripture explained thru the eyes of a kindergartner:

At Sunday School they were teaching how God created everything, including human beings. One of the little boys in class was especially interested when his teacher explained how Eve was created out of 1 of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week his mother noticed him lying down as though he were ill, & she quickly asked her little boy what was the matter? Grimaced look on his face he explained, "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm going to have a wife." ☺

- I love the 'old school' explanation of why Eve was taken from Adam's rib:
 - Not a bone from his head = not intended to reign over her husband
 - Not a bone from his foot = not intended for her to be walked all over
 - But from his side as an equal companion for him; act of completion!

E. Genesis 2: 23 – 25

- Initially in the Garden, God created ideal honeymoon for the 1st family. Adam & Eve were...
 - Free from guilt = they were not ashamed
 - Free to love = they were not inhibited; no stupidity
 - Free from death = they had unlimited access to the tree of life
- A wise person once commented; "It must have been a perfect marriage because Adam didn't have to hear about all the wonderful men Eve could have married, & Eve didn't have to hear about how much better Adam's mother could cook." ☺

Bible indicates that living conditions were absolutely perfect UNTIL

II. Paradise Lost 1st sin

A. Genesis 3: 1a

- "...shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God made."

- This verse left to stand on its own, raises a difficult question that needs to be addressed = So, did God create evil?
- “Serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God made.”
- Thankfully we have the entirety of God’s scripture to help us answer important questions like this, that often go unanswered:
 - We have to back-track a few verses; Genesis 1: 31, “Then God looked over all that He had made & saw that it was very good!”
 - Obvious answer is NO, because we all know that EVIL is not GOOD!

The text DOES NOT INDICATE when or how the serpent became evil; but clearly EVIL entered the created world @ some unknown point AFTER God’s work of creation was completed.

I believe Ezekiel 28 sheds light on Satan’s origin; how EVIL entered our world.

B. Ezekiel 28: 11 – 19 or p. 647 in pew Bible

- The description of the king of Tyre is not apt for the 1st man Adam; but rather the imagery fits Satan quite well who was originally created as “a mighty angelic guardian or cherub” Ezek 28: 14.
- POETIC ALLUSION ~ Ezekiel likens the downfall of the proud king of Tyre to the FALL & curse on Satan in Genesis 3.

Back to the beginning of God’s story:

C. Genesis 3: 1 – 5

- Notice Satan approached Eve with the very same tactics he uses in enticing us to sin?
 - 1st, Satan questioned God’s Word = “...did God really say that?”
 - Did God really say, “There’s only 1 way to Him?”
 - Did God really say, “...sex is only for marriage?”
 - Did God really say, “Forgive enemies, settle differences before taking communion, don’t allow sun to go down on your anger?”
 - 2nd, Satan defied God’s Word = “...you won’t die, that’s a lie”
 - Common day arguments, “...there’s no such thing as absolute truth?”
 - That’s O.T.; you know we are a N.T. church?”
 - 3rd, Satan reverses God’s Word = “God doesn’t want your eyes to be open”
 - Common day rationale, “...you are an intelligent being, you don’t have to obey all those archaic rules & regulations.”
 - “It’s okay to have your own political agenda, those guys aren’t biblical.”

Text picks up speed

D. Genesis 3: 6 – 7

- Did you catch how the treacherous woman tripped up her poor defenseless husband? ☺
 - Who's @ fault? No innocent parties here = Eve was persuaded by a supernatural being, Adam was enticed by another human being.
 - Notice how they respond to God.

E. Genesis 3: 8 – 13

- Adam takes it like a man = he blamed his wife.
- @ this moment, Paradise crumbled, the perfect living conditions were destroyed by 1 small decision.
- death entered the world, painful toil is required for food as well as painful childbearing
- @ this moment in history = ill effects of sin were introduced, marital discord, broken families, thru time of disobeying God's word divorce entered world history. PAINFUL – PAINFUL!

Hints of God's PEACE PLAN from the very beginning:

- 1st hint - Genesis 3: 14 – 15 - God's curse on Satan; evil has a stopping point!
- +
- 2nd hint - Genesis 3: 20 – 24 - God's dress code; God made garments of as a symbol that our sins couldn't be covered w/out shedding of blood.
- From the very beginning, God made plans to reconcile us to Himself!