



Who Messed up the Perfect World?

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.” (Genesis 3:1a, NIV)

Imagine a perfect world! No murders, no diseases, no drugs, no gangs, no divorces, no hurricanes or biting bugs! What would a perfect world look like? God gives a vivid picture in the first two chapters of Genesis.

The creation

The very first words of the Bible tell us that God created the world. *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1, NIV)* He made the world for people to live in, to be a home for all his creation. Have you ever had fun creating something, maybe a model airplane, a delicious sundae, or designed a dress? You can imagine what fun God had creating the light, air, sea, land, plants, sun, moon, stars, birds, fish, and animals! He created in an orderly manner and made everything perfect. As he looked at his creation, he must have smiled because five times the Bible records: *“And he saw that it was good!” (Genesis 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, NIV)*

The creation of people

After creating the world, God said, *“Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life.” (Genesis 1:26, NIV)* God created male and female – pure, perfect and holy. (Try to imagine life without a pimple or a bad hair day!) Like their Creator, they had minds with which to think, emotions so they could love, and a will to make right choices. Most important of all, because God is Spirit, he breathed into them his Spirit that enabled them to communicate with him. He placed them in the wonderful Garden of Eden (believed to have been in modern Iraq).

Think of the most beautiful place you’ve ever been. What made it beautiful – mountains, trees, sunsets, oceans, flowers, or sand? Whatever you’ve seen would not compare to the beauty and wonder of the Garden in Eden. Everything Adam and Eve needed, God provided. They had beautiful trees, sweet smelling flowers to enjoy and seed-bearing plants and fruit trees for their food. Adam must have had a brilliant mind! To use his mind, God brought to Adam all the livestock, birds and wild animals for him to name. To satisfy his need for friendship and love, God gave him Eve to be his companion. Under the careful eye of God they were to rule over everything, caring for the animals and tending the garden. No weeds! No sweat! The Bible says: *“You put us in charge of everything you made, giving us authority over all things.” (Psalm 8:6, NIV)* Then he

gave them the greatest gift of all: his presence. He walked in the Garden and talked with them. What a peaceful, beautiful world – a perfect world.

One rule

God gave Adam and Eve only one rule. One! In the center of the Garden, he placed two special trees: the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God warned them: “*You may freely eat any fruit in the garden except fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of its fruit, you will surely die.*” (Genesis 2:16-17, NIV) What a reminder that God was their Creator, and they were his creations! They had two choices: to obey or to disobey.

The temptation

Many times Adam and Eve must have walked by the forbidden tree and gladly obeyed the God they loved and trusted. But unknown to them, Satan, God’s great adversary, had entered their garden. Disguised as a beautiful, upright serpent, the great deceiver schemed to spoil God’s perfect world. He thought, “If only I can persuade Adam and Eve to obey me instead of God, I can gain control of the whole human race. I can be the ruler and prince of the world!”

Slyly, he asked Eve, “Did God really say you couldn’t eat from these trees?” “Oh,” she explained, “we can eat from all the trees except one – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We must not eat it or even touch it, or we will die.” Satan, the father of lies, replied, “That’s not true! God knows if you eat from that tree, your eyes will be opened; you’ll be just like God. You’ll know everything – even good and evil.” (Genesis 3:1-5)

His words penetrated Eve’s mind. She began to question and to doubt God’s word and his goodness. Have you ever done that? She must have wondered: “Did God tell us the truth? Is he keeping something from us? Does he really want what is best for us? How could becoming “like God” be wrong?”

The Bible tells us Eve **looked** at the tree. She **saw** the fruit, so fresh, delicious and pleasing to the eye. She **believed** it would make her wise! She **took** it, **ate** it and gave some to Adam. (Genesis 3:6) (Satan still tempts that way.) She believed Satan! Tragically, she and Adam fell into the same sin that caused God to throw Satan out of heaven – the sin of pride.

Separated from God

The Bible says that the serpent deceived Eve, but Adam deliberately chose to disobey God. In a moment of pride, unbelief and rebellion, he had declared, “I will cast off God’s rule. I will be like the Most High God.” At that moment, sin and death entered the world, destroying the intimate fellowship Adam and Eve had with their Creator. Their legal right to rule the earth now belonged to Satan, whom Jesus called the “prince of this world.” All Adam’s descendants would be born into the family of Satan, unable to free

themselves. Because of Adam and Eve's desire to run their lives, the world is in a mess. No wonder this event is called "The Fall." However, God had an amazing plan. One day he would send his beloved Son Jesus, a sinless man, to die on the cross and take the punishment for the sins of the world. People who believed in Jesus would be forgiven of their sins and have a relationship with God. Jesus would destroy the works of Satan. That would not restore the messed up world, but it would make it possible some day to spend eternity with God in a perfect new heaven and a new earth. (Read Revelation 21) Praise God for his wonderful, amazing grace! (Undeserved favor)

Attitude check:

- Has your prideful attitude caused you to make a mess of things? What action will you take to trust God to help you?

Explore:

- Read Genesis 3. If you had been Adam, would you have chosen differently? What choices will you make today – to obey or disobey God?
- Read, "What Are Satan's Abilities?" (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)
- Record in your journal what you learned about God's love and forgiveness.

Talking with God:

- Father, search my heart for any prideful attitude. Help me desire the same attitude of humility that Christ Jesus had. (Philippians 2:5-11)