

Humanity Falls

DARRELL DELANEY

When I was in high school, a chemistry teacher explained the concept of diffusion in class. He brought out a large beaker, filled it with water, and dropped a couple of spoonfuls of colored ink into the water. What started out as small drops soon covered every square inch of the water in the beaker, tainting the water. The Fall of creation is this way, because one sin tainted all of creation. Today, we are focusing on the profound doctrine of the Fall, its implications, and the need for a savior in Jesus Christ, next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we are in episode two of our four-part series on Reformed theology; and in the first episode, we talked about the doctrine of creation, and in this one, we are talking about the Fall. So, we are going to do Creation, Fall, Redemption and Consummation, in that order. It is just a way of looking at and understanding, from scripture, how we got here; what is the reason for why the world is the way it is; and I am so glad that it is not going to stay in a bad way, because Christ has already addressed it, and we have something to look forward to, but we wanted to explain how we got here.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; spoiler alert...I mean, Christ did take care of it, but we will get to that in the next program more fully. You know, my friend Neal Plantinga wrote a book on sin a while back titled: *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*; and that is what we find ourselves in. We look around us in life...and we are going to cover a lot of different things in this program...and we say: Things don't feel right. We looked at what creation was supposed to be in the previous program, now we look around us and say: So, God got rid of chaos and replaced it with cosmos; and yet, our world is full of chaos. As you just said, how did we get here? What happened? Well, the Bible has an answer.

DARRELL DELANEY

The Bible does have an answer. God had a set way that he wanted things to be done, and before we get into what exactly happened and why it is a problem, we want to talk about what God did.

So, in Genesis Chapter 2:16, 17, it says: ¹⁶The Lord commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, ¹⁷but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

So, God made everything in the first six days of creation, and the seventh day he gave rest, and then God gave a mandate. This is the only rule. You have one rule. This is the only rule, and this is the command God set in place; and unfortunately, it didn't happen according to plan.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And in Genesis 3, there is this character of a serpent, who is a tempter. Maybe we would call it Satan or the devil. We don't know why it is there, right? This is in the pre-Fall Garden of Eden. Where did this serpent—this tempter—come from? We have no idea. The Bible has no interest in explaining that to us. It is just there:

¹And the serpent is more crafty than any of the other wild animals the Lord God has made. (We are reading now in Genesis 3) He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” ²The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die’” ⁴“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. And that is the original sin, right? A lack of trust in God, that God has their best interests at heart. A desire to kind of light out on their own and become like God. The sad thing, Darrell, as we learned from the previous episode on creation in this Reformed theology series, they were already like God! They had already been created in the image of God, but they wanted something more, and that is how they were wide open to the crafty serpent.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; and this disobedient act, Scott, wasn’t just about eating the fruit God said don’t eat. The serpent actually gave them this idea that they would be like God, knowing good and evil. Basically, you will make your own decisions; you won’t need God in your lives; you can actually be your own God. So, they saw that as a temptation item, and seeing that the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eye, desirable for gaining wisdom...I mean, these three things right there are really something that we continue to struggle with in this world, and they are our temptations. So, this is the thing that you need to know, is that it is actually not good for us to lean into or try to be self-sufficient without God’s help.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; we often hear that the original sin was pride. Not quite right. What did Eve do? She *coveted*! Covetousness was the original sin. She coveted what the fruit supposedly could give her. Very, very clever here; the serpent totally misquotes God: Oh, God is so strict, Eve! He doesn’t let you eat any of the fruit. Oh, no, no...Eve corrects him...no, no, no; we can eat all of the fruit, except for the one in the middle of the garden; and then she adds something God never said...

DARRELL DELANEY

That’s right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Nor can we *touch* it. Ah, the serpent planted a seed: God is too strict. Eve has already taken the bait. She makes God stricter than he was, too. So, she is already on that slippery slope; and after that, eating the fruit was like a foregone conclusion:

⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. ⁸Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

We said in the previous program, Darrell, we were created to worship God in the temple of his creation; to fellowship with God; and now, what is the first thing that sin does? It makes them hide from God.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, now we’ve got shame and we’ve got fear and we’ve got separation from God, who...this is the first time we are seeing this; and this is the unfortunate consequence that the serpent doesn’t mention. There is always a good, shiny thing in the front; but then, never the consequences of the effects that come after. You don’t want to do that. Do you ever listen to those commercials that have medication, and then they say: Side effects really fast so you just kind of glaze over and you don’t hear them? This is exactly what I think the serpent was doing. He was showing the benefit, but he didn’t show the consequence.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; eating the fruit is going to have some side effects: Yes, indeed! Pretty bad ones, I would say, and inevitable ones, too; not just to some people, but all people; and that is that original breach. We are going to be exploring a little bit more of this. The New Testament elaborates this: Romans 5:12:

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all people, because all sinned.

We will tease that out a little bit more in the next segment of this program, Darrell, but the Bible doesn't ever exactly tell us how this works. You had the nice illustration in the beginning: He put some food coloring, and eventually you don't just have a couple red parts of the water...all the water is pink. I mean, it goes through everything; and that is what the Bible says happened with sin. Exactly why and how sin after that affected everybody...tainted everything...we are all now pink water instead of clear water...it doesn't tell us precisely what the mechanism is, but *that* it happened...*that* it passes down generation to generation, of that there can be no doubt in the Bible.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is true; and in just a minute, we want to talk about just how pervasive the Fall is for all creation. So, stay tuned.

Segment 2

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, in the first segment, we talked about how it happened...the Fall of humanity...and the things that actually are recorded in scripture on what happened. So, now in this segment, we want to talk about the implications of that and how it ripples through all of creation.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We said at the end of the last segment, Darrell, that the Bible never quite specifically tells us how this worked...how sin spread. That once it came, it would now be inside every person; but we do believe that is the clear teaching of scripture. I mean, Isaiah 59:2:

Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so he will not hear.

Sin has created this barrier between God and us, or opened up a Grand Canyon...a chasm between God and us. And really, Darrell, what this gets at, since we are talking about Reformed theology in this series, but this predates Reformed theology; this really goes back all the way to the theologian Augustine, who worked in the 300s and 400s, very, very early in Church history. It is original sin. We now have this doctrine of original sin, and it has two main components: Corruption and guilt. Corruption: we are born bent. We are born bent. We are already sinful, even before we sin. And then, the other one is guilt. We are also, and this is the more controversial of the two parts of original sin, we are also born guilty; even before we do anything, we are already considered guilty; because it is sort of like a class action lawsuit against us. It is like: You are human, you are guilty; and that is what original sin teaches.

DARRELL DELANEY

And we got into that in the last segment, in that verse where all sin came through one man, Adam...the first Adam. He is the representative of humanity; and because he disobeyed, we are all kind of set into this situation. There are further implications in Genesis 3, where it talks about how: ^{verse 3b}Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you. So, it went from God giving dominion to humanity to it turning into a domination...a more domineering and ruthless power and competition in relationships, especially in the marriage relationship; and in the family and community relationships with other people, it becomes more competitive and contentious.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; not just in marriage, but in all of life. Our relationships have been sullied; our relationships have been messed up. Even the physical creation is affected. Genesis 3 again:

¹⁷“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. ¹⁸It will produce thorns and thistles for you; and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

So, the environment. It is almost as though, Darrell, human sin has poured poison into the soil. It is like it has that pervasive an effect on the creation.

DARRELL DELANEY

It has; and it also has an effect on the person working. So, work has turned and degenerated from a delight and a joy and an act of worship to a toil, a striving, work-aholism and things that make you actually deteriorate your health-wise, deteriorating because the ground has been cursed and it makes it harder for you to achieve. You work hard and you get little, and these things are happening as part of the Fall of humanity, Scott.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; Paul picks this up in Romans 8:20-22: For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

The pervasive spread of sin cannot be overstated biblically.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, now creation is also suffering; and in Romans 8 it says it longs for the children of God to be revealed. So, you know, when you see natural disasters and you see earthquakes, tornadoes and things of that nature that damage a lot of things...I am thinking Katrina, I am thinking earthquakes over in Nepal; I am thinking all types of different disasters: tornadoes throughout the state of Michigan; and these things happen as a result of the Fall. Humanity wants to be redeemed, and it is really going to take a while before Christ comes back and reestablishes these things; and we are going to get into redemption in the next episode, but for now, you understand where these things are coming from.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; it affects the physical creation and the creatures; and of course, needless to say, there are moral and ethical consequences of the Fall, right? Romans 3: ¹⁰There is no one righteous, not even one; ¹¹there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. ¹²All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.

So, without that power of Jesus, we will talk about a little bit in the next segment, but then more fully in the third program of this four-part series, without that, Darrell, this is what, in the Reformed tradition, total depravity...we talk about total depravity. It doesn't mean that a given person is as totally bad as they can be in every area of life, but it means every area of life is affected; that the totality of depravity means there is no part of our lives that we can point to and say: Oh, this one is sin free. There is no sin in this part of my life. No; there is.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; everything has been tainted and affected, just like the illustration of the drops in the water; and so, you know, these things that are happening...humans are often suffering in situations where there is disease, or there is poverty; where there is war. These are all consequences of what happens in broken world living; and in the book of Job it makes it clear in Chapter 30. Job says this in his lament. He says:

²⁶Yet, when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, then came darkness. ²⁷The churning inside of me never stops; days of suffering confront me.

Job had this experience of how some of these things can be super overwhelming. If you have ever felt overwhelmed by the things that are happening that you see on the news, that you read in the paper about, then you are in good company of understanding how broken this world is; and there is room for lament there, Scott.

SCOTT HOEZEE

There is; and another thing to lament is injustice. You know, the Old Testament prophets assailed even Israel. God's chosen people fell so far from God that injustice was in the land. Isaiah 1:23: Your rulers are rebels, partners with thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them.

It is just all very, very, very tragic—the scope of it all. It just affects every segment of life; and again, even Israel, the chosen people of God, struggled constantly with this in all areas of society.

DARRELL DELANEY

It affects externally things that are happening in the world. It affected internally our identity, and our purpose has been marred and scarred and we are getting confused on what our true purpose is. Romans 1 makes that clear, that we chase after idolatry and we chase after self-centered interests. It says: ²¹Although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God, nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

Scott, it is clear that, even though we are not worshipping birds and reptiles and things of that nature any more, there is a lot of new wave idolatry that is happening in digital devices and personal interests, and we have done a lot of different things creatively, unfortunately due to the Fall.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; we said in the first program, we were created to worship, and that instinct is still in people. We just keep missing the true target. It is like, we are falling down in worship before all the wrong things. When what we really need is to have the Holy Spirit open our eyes so that we can see God again clearly, and worship that Creator, and now Redeemer God. We struggle, you know; we struggle. Even Paul in Romans 7:

¹⁸For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but cannot carry it out. ¹⁹For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

A lot of us find ourselves there all the time; but is there a little hope, even in this program, Darrell? Well, Genesis 3:15, God does say to the woman: I will put enmity between you (that is, the serpent) and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

In other words, a nice seven-syllable word: the *protoevangelium*—the first preview of the gospel. There is going to be the struggle with that serpent, but God is going to do something at the end of the day to win that decisively.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, the implications of the Fall are vast and multifaceted; and they affect all parts of creation; and I am so glad that is not how the story ends, even though things happen in the Fall, it explains clearly why we need a savior; and in the last segment of this episode, we will talk about just that; so, stay tuned.

Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, along with Darrell Delaney, and you are listening to *Groundwork*, and this episode, the second of a four-part series on sort of the four main themes of scripture—the four main themes of Reformed theology. Creation was the first episode, this is the second episode on the Fall; still to come, Redemption, and then finally Consummation; and Darrell, we have just established why the world is the way it is, but also, we know the world cannot stay that way. God doesn't want it to stay that way. *We* don't want it to stay that way; and so, we start to steer in the direction of something maybe a little more hopeful.

DARRELL DELANEY

I think that we made clear...I know that we cannot fully extend...it would be its own series, Scott, if we tried to explain all the implications of the Fall, but we do want to make sure that we crystalize the radical seriousness of the sin and how it needs to be addressed; and it also makes it clear when God talks about this in the book of Romans. Paul the Apostle writes this. He says:

3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

And that is actually highlighting the fact that we all need a savior...we all need redemption...we all need hope; and we are in a situation the Fall has brought us into. We are born in sin and shaped in iniquity, like Isaiah says.

SCOTT HOEZEE

The *Heidelberg Catechism* begins famously...this is a key confessional document in the Reformed tradition...you know, the first question is: What is your only comfort in life and in death? And it is that we totally belong to God through Jesus; but then, the second question says: What do you have to know to live and die in the joy of that comfort? And the answer says: First, I have to know how great my sin and misery are. You are not going to even want to be delivered until you realize how bad off you are. It is bad news that you have to accept first to get to the good news. I have to know that I am really bad off, and then that will make me even more thankful for the deliverance that comes.

DARRELL DELANEY

And the second part of that is how I am delivered from all my sins and misery; and the third part of that is how I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance. So, we have misery, we have deliverance, and we have the gratitude that lives after that. So, that is one of the ways that we understand the radical seriousness of our sins, and what we need to do in light of it.

The *Canons of Dort*, also another key Reformed document, explains the situation that we are in, in our total depravity, which you mentioned earlier. It says: As all men have sinned in Adam, lie under a curse, and are deserving of eternal death, God would have done no injustice by leaving them all to perish and delivering them over to condemnation on the account of sin.

So, because God is completely holy, God could allow the justification of our punishment to happen without even saving anybody. We would go the exact way that we deserve because of our sinful nature.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; God could have just let us be. Thankfully, he didn't; but the one thing that scripture makes clear, Darrell, is that neither can God just wink at sin and just wave it away like it is no big deal. God cannot just say: Well, okay, you know; let's just go on. Something big has to happen to overcome the something big that is sin; and we know that at the end of the day, scripture and the history of Israel prove that we are not going to get ourselves out of this mess...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Human beings...we tend to dig our hole deeper, right? I mean, God's chosen people, Israel...they only kept getting worse! So, finally God said: I am going to have to take care of this myself through my Son.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; and so, what God does, Scott, is that he allows Jesus to be the one who is the one who can do something about this; and so, in Isaiah 53, it says that Jesus himself...it is a prophecy about Jesus, who is the suffering servant, and it says: ⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶We all like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

So, we needed a savior who could actually be divine enough to bear all the punishment of all humanity, and human enough to relate to us and connect to us in our experience. And of course, without taking too much thunder from the next episode, which will be Redemption, we wanted to point to the fact that Christ is the way that God addresses the situation of the Fall.

SCOTT HOEZEE

John the Baptist recognized it right away: John 1:29, the first time he sees it: “Look, (John says) the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Jesus will suffer in our place, but because he is also God, he will be able to survive that. Even though he gets killed, there will be resurrection, and God does all that as, you know, Romans said: ^{5:8b}While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!

So, that is what is coming; but as we wrap up this program on the Fall, and before we turn to the redemption more fully in the third program, again, let’s just summarize, Darrell, maybe three final points about why, though it is grim...I mean, pondering the Fall into sin, what happened to Adam and Eve, what has happened to all of us—the evil of history, that is bad news...that is grim; but there are three good reasons why we need to own up to it and acknowledge it.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, Scott. The first one, I think, is to just embrace humility and repentance. We understand that our sinful nature actually commands us and gives us the opportunity to recognize that we need a savior, and that we need his forgiveness. James 4:10 says that if we humble ourselves before the Lord, he will lift us up.

SCOTT HOEZEE

We have to be penitent. Somebody who thinks they have never sinned is never penitent. They never say they are sorry; they never ask for forgiveness. We have to know that we *need* God’s forgiveness; and a second thing: That means we depend on God’s grace every single day. Ephesians 2: ⁸[For] it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

So, every day we recognize that if it weren’t for God’s grace, that line from Romans we read earlier: While we were still sinners... God did not wait for us to clean up our own acts, because that was never going to happen...

DARRELL DELANEY

So glad.

SCOTT HOEZEE

While we were still sinners, he graciously sent Jesus, and we live in that grace every day; that is the second takeaway.

DARRELL DELANEY

And finally, to cultivate a community of accountability: Hebrews 10:24, 25 says: Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

So, we need to make sure that we come together and we worship together; and that will hold us accountable in our community of faith.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; we need to spur one another on to lean into that grace, to recognize that we mess up and that we need God’s forgiveness. So, yes; sin had a devastating effect on the world, Darrell, but thankfully, as you said, God did not let it be the last word.

DARRELL DELANEY

It's a beautiful thing for us to understand that even though the Fall has hurt us, and has a devastating impact on the world, we look forward to the fact that it is not the end, and Christ is our redemption; thanks be to God.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Well, thank you for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We hope you will join us again next time as we dig into the scriptures to help us understand redemption, the third major theme in the Bible's story.

You can connect with us now at groundworkonline.com to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or tell us what you would like to hear discussed next on *Groundwork*.

DARRELL DELANEY

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