

*Spiritual Suicide – Why It Is So Easy To Be Bad*

*No man sins for someone else.  
—Baba Metzia, 8.*

**What fell, exactly?**

In Chapter 3 we discussed the reason why God allows “moral evil” in the world. It has to do with the fact that love cannot be imposed; it must be freely chosen. And real freedom to choose cannot exist without at least two different options to choose between. So if love is to exist, there must also be “no-love” or evil. But...

*“...what about the bad things that happen without any human decision, the so-called “natural” disasters that have caused at least as much suffering as Nero, Vespasian, the crusaders, Stalin, Hitler, and Pol Pot combined?” (TGAM)*

- ▶ See **Ge 3:14 & 17**. What was cursed along with Adam and Eve?

Much later, the Torah contains a warning of what can still happen, even to a “land of milk and honey” as a result of one man’s idolatry. Read **Dt 29:18-19**.

- ▶ What do you think the ancient Hebrew expression “the watered land as well as the dry” meant?
- ▶ Given your answer to the question above, what would suffer “disaster” due to this man’s idolatry?

In the last lesson we saw Biblical evidence for the idea that “moral” evil is contagious across the generations. But that’s not the only effect of the Fall...

*“The New Testament teaches that the corruption Adam and Eve released upon the universe has also infected the animals, atmosphere, oceans, and land. This explains disease, hurricanes, and earthquakes. The Scriptural basis for this is first found in the Garden of Eden, where the Torah describes an environment so benign that clothing is not required and all animals are vegetarians. [See Ge 1:28-30] We are in such perfect harmony with our Creator that we feel no fear of him, no need to cover ourselves [Genesis 3:8-11 implies that Adam and Eve did not hide from God before the “original sin”]. But after the expulsion from the Garden, the Torah describes spiritual perversion spreading like wildfire. Cain becomes a murderer. Humanity challenges God with towers up to heaven. The climate becomes capable of producing a worldwide flood. Humanity and animals descend into violence and carnivorous behavior. Life spans in the Bible become shorter with each passing generation from Noah to David due to the expanding influence of violence and disease.... [See declining life spans before and after the flood in Genesis 5 and 11.] I believe these are signs of a pollution rippling out from the first sin, corrupting everything it touches.” (TGAM)*

- ▶ What is the relationship between humanity and animal life in **Ge 1:28-30**? In **Ge 9:2-3**?

**GOD LOVES  
AN HONEST QUESTION!**

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- ▶ See **Isa 65:23-25**. What changes does it describe? What significance does Isaiah's prophecy attach to your answer to the question above? (Note: Due to **Isa 6:17** it seems this prophecy refers to the end times. Compare **2 Peter 3:13** and **Rev 21:1**.)
- ▶ Read **Ro 8:19-23**. Is this passage limited to human beings and animals?

### Why does this matter?

"Sinfulness is not a choice, it is a condition..."

*"...If sin exists as a kind of plague upon the world, then I would expect the Scriptures to mention that it can come without warning, like a bad case of the flu. And sure enough, in Leviticus I find many references to sacrificial ritual in response to unintentional sin. [Lv 4:2, 22, 27] Leviticus also says an Israelite can become unclean, "even though he is unaware of it." [Lv 5:2-3]" (TGAM)*

- ▶ What impact does the Torah's concept of "unintentional sin" have on the idea that we become estranged from God purely because of the choices we make? What is its impact on the idea that we can return to harmony with God by confessing, repenting and making reparation?
- ▶ Does the idea that Adam's "original sin" spiritually polluted all of creation offer any comfort when considering the problem of "natural evil" versus a loving God? (Hint: remember why God allows "moral evil" in the world.)
- ▶ See the "Lord's Prayer" in **Mt 6:12-15**, does Jesus imply our moral choices are irrelevant in light of our sinful condition?
- ▶ Does Jesus' teaching appear to support the idea of "unintentional sin"?
- ▶ What solution to the dilemma of sin does The Lord's Prayer suggest? (Compare **Ro 7:24-25**)
- ▶ If all of humanity has been corrupted by evil unintentionally, is God fair to condemn us? (Hint: see **Ps 143:2** and **Luke 12:8-10**)
- ▶ If all of humanity has been corrupted by evil unintentionally, are we fair to condemn each other? (Hint: see **Mt 18:32-35**)

### What should we do?

The Torah clearly defines a process for Israel to follow in order to take some of the world back from the corruption that defiles it. Here is one example of that process:

*Sacrifice a bull each day as a sin offering to make atonement. Purify the altar by making atonement for it, and anoint it to consecrate it. For seven days make atonement for the altar and consecrate it. Then the altar will be most holy, and whatever touches it will be holy. (Ex 29:36-37) NIV*

The word translated as "atonement" in the Exodus verse above is *kippur*, as in *Yom Kippur*, Judaism's famous "day of atonement," which is viewed by all

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*(continued)*

Rabbinic Jews as an annual opportunity to atone for their individual and corporate sins. Why would God command Aaron and the priests to “atone” for an inanimate object like the altar? As part of the world Adam’s sin has cursed, even the uncut stones of the alter required atonement and consecration before they could be used for good by God.

- ▶ How might the idea of “making atonement” for the altar apply to human relationships? (Hint: see **Mt 5:38-48.**)
- ▶ How should this “atonement” concept guide our lives in terms of the work we do, the things we consume, our interaction with the natural world? (Hint: see **Col 3:23, Dt 20:19-20,** and **Lv 17:3-4.**)
- ▶ How can we Christians consecrate our lives (become holy, as the Lord is holy) in a fallen world? (Hint: See **Ro 7:24-25, Mt 6:13,** and **Prov 3:5-6.**)
- ▶ What does a holy life “look like?”