

You might remember a few weeks ago I told you the story the ANCIENT GREEKS told each other to explain why bad things happen in the world - the story of PANDORA'S BOX. So today, I will tell you the story of ADAM AND EVE, which is how Christians explain why bad things happen in the world. Now - normally, I wouldn't think I had to tell you this story. But recently I was told about a special 'masterclass' that was put on by a very famous writer - the idea he would spend the whole day teaching English to a group of 16 year old children who had been selected from all over the country because they were so good at English. This writer began the session by telling the students, 'I thought we would spend today look at some passages from JOHN MILTON'S PARADISE LOST'. The students looked pretty blankly at him, so the writer went on, 'I don't if you have heard of it, but PARADISE LOST tells the story of how Adam and Eve were expelled from the GARDEN OF EDEN.' Still a lot of the students looked really puzzled. So the writer asked, 'How many people here have heard of the story of Adam and Eve' - and most of the students hadn't heard of the story. So - to make sure you aren't one of those students (but know more than them when you are seven years younger than them!), let's get into the story of ADAM AND EVE. But to understand the story we have to go back to the beginning of time.

In the beginning, there was only God. But God was not alone. God was made up of three persons - THE FATHER, THE SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT, which was the LOVE that

passed back and forth between Father and Son. God could have existed like that for an eternity (and maybe God did), but LOVE wants to be shared, and so God created millions of angels, made out of pure spirit, who would share in God's Love. The angels were led by the three archangels MICHAEL, GABRIEL, and LUCIFER (meaning 'light bringer'), and Lucifer was the most senior of the angels and the closest to God. God could have existed like that for an

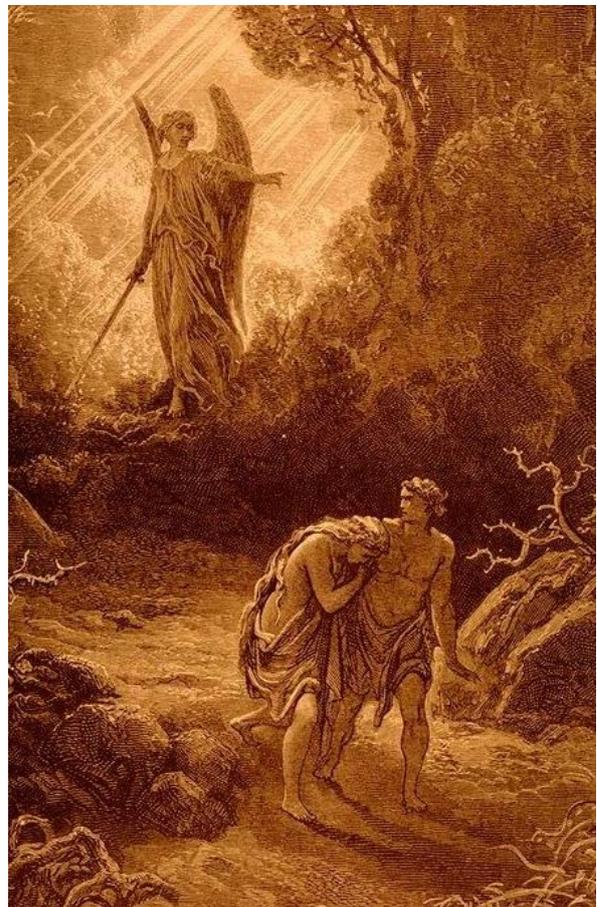


eternity, surrounded by millions of angels (and maybe God did), but LOVE wants to be shared, and so God proposed to create creatures, with bodies, and among these creatures, would be HUMAN BEINGS, who were made in God's image and able to share in God's love. So God created ADAM and EVE, and planted them in a wonderful garden, the GARDEN OF EDEN, and told them to take care of all the creatures he had created. And the Son took on a human form, and became JESUS, and would walk with Adam and Eve in the cool of the evening.

But Lucifer could not take the idea that human beings like Adam and Eve might be loved by God, and he challenged God, saying 'Who made you God! If you are going to spend your them loving these disgusting creatures, maybe I should be in charge'. But God showed Lucifer who was in charge by throwing him and the other angels who were on Lucifer's side out of Heaven. And Lucifer became the Devil.

Furious at what had happened, the Devil decided to get revenge on God. He made his way into the Garden of Eden and turned into a snake. Now - God had told Adam and Eve that they could do whatever they liked in the garden, but they were not allowed to eat the fruit from two trees in the Garden - the TREE OF GOOD AND EVIL, and the TREE OF LIFE AND DEATH. God warned Adam and Eve that if they tasted the fruit from those trees, they would die. He did this because while LOVE wants to be shared, you can't force someone to love you. So God wanted to give Adam and Eve a choice - Love me, and do what I have asked you to do, or don't love me, and do what you want to do. The Devil, knowing what God had told Adam and Eve, slithered up to Eve and said, 'Why is that you never eat from that tree over there?', indicating the Tree of Good and Evil. Eve explained, 'Because God told us not to - he told us we would die if we tasted the fruit from that tree.' The Devil said, 'That's not true! - Why did He say that? No, no, no - if you eat the fruit from that tree you will become like God, and will know everything that God knows.' And Eve was tempted by this, and took an apple from the tree and ate it. Adam immediately felt that something had changed in the Garden, and he ran to Eve and said, 'What's happened? What have you done?' And Eve said, 'Look - I had an apple from the tree, and I'm still alive. The snake here said we would become like God if we ate from the tree. Look - have an apple and see.' And Adam was tempted by this, and ate the apple. And the Devil laughed to himself - these humans had been so easy to bring down.

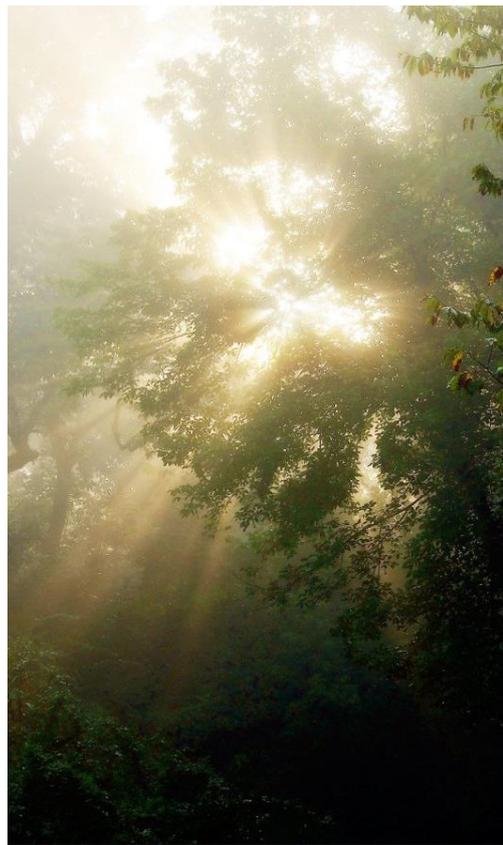
Instantly, everything changed. Adam and Eve looked at each other and were ashamed and tried to make clothes for themselves to hide themselves from each other. And when Jesus came walking into the garden in the evening, Adam and Eve hid from him as well. Jesus called out, 'Where are you? Why are you hiding?' And when they came out, he said, 'Why are you wearing clothes? Who told you to do this?' And Adam said, 'It's Eve's fault - she gave me an apple to eat from the tree you told us not to eat from, and I ate it.' And Jesus was sickened by the answer - the first time a human being had tried to blame someone else for something they had done wrong. And Eve followed up by becoming the second human being to try to do this, 'It's the snake's fault - he told me you lied to us about what would happen if we ate from the tree.' God's love was still pouring all over Adam and Eve (he would never stop loving them, whatever they did), but their disobedience meant that they could no longer contain it - they were no longer filled up with it, but it just went straight through them. And without God's love filling them up, they were separated from God and unable to do what God wanted them to do. Jesus said, 'I didn't lie to you - you will die. Not today, and not tomorrow, but one day. It's inevitable - your bodies can't live forever without being filled up by my love. And things are going to be hard for you from now on - you will have to leave the Garden of Eden because I can't trust you not to try to live forever by eating from the



Tree of Life and Death. And if you eat from that tree we can never be together again, and I promise we will be together again one day.' And with that, he sent them away from the Garden of Eden, posting a couple of angels at the entrance to make sure they could never come back in again. And ever since human beings have lived on Earth. And while life on Earth was hard for Adam and Eve - they had to work to get the food they needed to eat and build shelter for themselves against the weather - they were relatively happy. Until their sons argued, and their first born son, CAIN, killed their second born son, ABEL. And they realised just how much evil they had released into the world through their choice.

After dealing with Adam and Eve, Jesus confronted the Devil, who had resumed his original appearance. 'This is not over,' Jesus said. 'You said the human beings would become like gods. I'm going to prove you right - I will raise them up so that they become gods with me and Father and the Holy Spirit. 'You cannot,' said the Devil. 'They rebelled against you, just like I did - so you have to punish them just like you punished me and expel them forever from Heaven.' 'But you knew what you were doing when you rebelled, but they didn't know what they were doing because you lied to them. They did wrong, but not as wrong as you.' 'Well,' said the Devil. 'They still need to be punished - and it's got to be worse than having to live on the Earth.' 'They will be,' said Jesus. 'They will be - even if I have to do it myself. Now back to Hell with you.'

And Jesus was left alone in the garden, and his eyes filled with tears. He saw all the thousands of years of suffering that were ahead for the human race, and all the creatures that were supposed to be controlled by the humans. And as he looked at the Tree of Good and Evil, he saw thousands of years into the future when, in order to take on the punishment that the human race deserved, he would come down to Earth and after a while, be hung on a tree and killed. And he would be killed between two thieves, symbolising the first two thieves, Adam and Eve. But he also saw that after he died, his spirit would descend to where all the spirits of the dead lived, and he would take to Heaven anyone who wanted to come, including Adam and Eve. And then three days later, he would return to the Earth and when people saw him, the wounds he had received when he died would mean that he looked just like Adam did before he disobeyed God - he would have light shining from his forehead, and from his hands and from his feet, and from his heart. And he would tell everyone the good news, that the price had been paid for the disobedience of the human race, and that anyone who wanted it could live in Heaven with him and the Father and the Holy Spirit and share in God's Love and be raised to the status of gods themselves and rule over the entire universe.



Comforted by this thought, Jesus took one more look at the Tree of Good and Evil, and left the Garden of Eden and set about bringing the human race back to God.