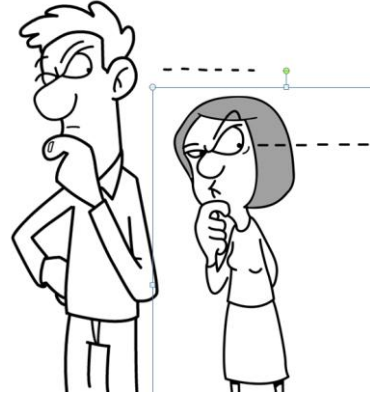


## The First Sin

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The drama in Genesis 3 depicts the first couple, Adam and Eve, at their antithetical worst. The narrative asks to whom they should listen -- God or the snake (3:17). Sadly, in the face of the serpent's assault they were hapless and clueless. Eve was exquisitely gullible. Adam was feeble and negligent. Both were bewildered and culpably unknowing. Their fallibility was on display for the entire divine court to witness. (We must remember, though, that the struggle between the snake and the humans was akin to a bout between Mike Tyson and Bart Simpson. If we are honest, we would fare no better, maybe worse.)



From a literary point of view Adam and Eve's demise was the "prototypical tragedy." Leland Ryken provides the details: an initial problem, an erroneous decision based upon folly and disobedience, resulting in self-induced affliction, unwanted epiphany, and ultimately exile. As a result, chapter three resonates with bitter irony as Adam and Eve experienced an inversion of the "rags to riches" story. The following list contrasts the drastic alterations that came about from Adam and Eve's sin, a true reversal of creation.

serve and guard the temple  
two trees in paradise  
abundance and productivity  
contentment and *shalom*  
security and well-being  
stewardship of creation  
knowledge and wisdom  
homeland with God

disarray and turmoil east of Eden  
thorns and thistles outside  
sweat and frustration  
dissatisfaction and discontent  
anxiety and danger  
exploitation, abuse, and excess  
folly and illusion  
expulsion and exile

The drastic changes unleashed by Adam and Eve brought about chaos and turmoil in every sphere of existence. The 17<sup>th</sup> century Czech Reformer, Jan Amos Komenský, explained in vivid fashion what the reversal implied for Adam and Eve in everyday experience, even in their own marriage (Gen 3:16). Indeed, these realities became increasingly apparent in the developments recorded in Genesis 4-11.

For what is in relation to people as it ought to be? What stands in its proper place? Nothing. Everything is upside down, everything has gone wrong, for all the order, all the government, all the noble features are scattered ... Instead of unity, there are discords, quarrels, and rages, secret malice as well as open hostility, fights and wars. Instead of righteousness, there are injustice, robberies, thefts; everyone greedily amasses only for himself or herself. Instead of purity, there is lechery, both internal and external; there is adultery, infidelity, misconduct, and lewdness, both in the mind and in speech. Instead of truthfulness, there are lies and gossip everywhere. Instead of humbleness, there is arrogance and pride, preening and boasting; one rising against the other. Woe to you, miserable generation, how deeply you have sunk into wretchedness!

According the Bible, this is world we live in – "under the sun" according the Solomon (Eccl 1:3) or as Paul says, "the present evil age" (Gal 1:4).