

## Paradise Lost: Why Do Babies Die?

Ricardo Campos, Teaching Elder Grace Chapel, Orange, CA March 9, 2014

### I. Introduction

Things ever go wrong at work? Has someone ever broken your heart or treated you horribly? Why do people argue and fight, why are there wars? Have you ever felt like your life didn't matter? Have you ever wondered why you were born, ever wish you hadn't been born? And why do the innocent have to suffer, why do little babies have to die?

### II. What We Lost in the Garden of Eden: Paradise with God and Thereby Paradise with Each Other

**God wanted us to fully enjoy life and live it in complete harmony with each other**, the world of suffering and misery we now see is not the world or life God intended for us. God never wanted our bodies to break down, for there to be hunger, for there to be wars, nor for us to struggle in every relationship we have. From the very beginning God wanted us to thoroughly enjoy a life of meaning, purpose, and yes, pleasure. How do we know this? Look at the way He *formed* (Genesis 2:7) our bodies. He gave us five incredible senses: touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing, all of which enable us to enjoy life to the fullest. What else? He provided our food, but it wasn't just nourishment. The food He made looked and tasted great, Genesis 2:9 (cf. 3:6). He also gave us work to bring a sense of accomplishment and purpose to our lives, Genesis 2:15, 19. He personally made a companion for us to cure our loneliness, to have someone to love (and who would love us back), and to bring us physical pleasure, Genesis 2:18–25. This is the life God intended for us and He designed it to last forever! Genesis 2:9; 3:22.

**God wanted us to fully enjoy Him and to live with Him in complete harmony**, how do we know this? First, notice how He made us. He created us in His image, after His likeness, Genesis 1:26–27. God thinks, speaks, creates, works, lives (in community), and loves and so do we. Why did He make us like Him? Because He wanted to share His perfect love and community with us. But in order for us to relate to Him on this personal level, to live with Him surrounded by His love forever (Genesis 2:9; 3:22), we had to be like Him. That's why He made us to think as He thinks, to speak as He speaks, to create as He creates, to work as He works, to live as He lives, and to love as He loves. This is why He (as a father does with a son/daughter) taught us to be like Him: God worked and named His creation, Genesis 1, and He taught Adam to work and name creation, Genesis 2:15, 19. Second, God gave us a reminder of the love and community we enjoyed with Him, i.e., He gave Adam Eve. But before He created Eve, God showed Adam just how much he needed her, Genesis 2:19–20. Having recognized the need, God then put Adam to sleep. As God begins to make Eve we notice that He made Eve out of Adam's side instead of the ground. Why? God was teaching Adam the important lesson of oneness; He was showing him just how deep and personal love and community is and must be. And Adam understood the lesson; he even composed a poem about it, Genesis 2:23–24. Thus, the constant oneness between a husband and wife mirrors the oneness we have with God. In every way—from the way God made us and taught us to be like Him to the way He made our spouse who would be a constant reminder of our oneness with God—God was showing us and inviting us to be one with Him.

This is what God gave us in the beginning. His plan was for us to live in utter paradise with each other and everything around us. He wanted us to enjoy life to the fullest. But in order for us to express this love and community to each other, we had to be anchored in God's perfect love and community. Without our oneness with God, we could not express oneness to each other.

**We lost paradise with God...**, the most important paradise, the one that gave us access to the paradise with each other and the world around us, the one we could not live without, we shattered. We walked away from God's perfect love and community, our oneness with Him, and this opened the door to fear and shame. God had been nothing but a Loving Father to us—He gave us wonderful bodies, personally built our home, provided our nourishment, gave us someone to love, at every turn God showered us with His perfect love and community, Genesis 2:7–25. But when we decided to turn our backs on Him, everything broke beginning with our view of Him. Even though we had no reason to, we became terrified of God due to our newfound shame, Genesis 3:8, 10. From this moment on humanity learned to see themselves as shameful and therefore God as Someone who was angry with us because of our shame. He was no longer our Loving Father, but a God of vengeance who kept track of our sins even though they may've happened years ago. This is why a woman who had an abortion 14 years ago still carries her guilt. And when something terrible happens in her life, this is God punishing her for the abortion she had as a teen. Our relationship with God also became strained in another way: we now learned to blame Him for everything that went wrong in our lives, Genesis 3:12. This is why a man, whose dream was to become a millionaire, but is now married with three kids and a dead-end job which he hates, looks back at his life and says, "If only God hadn't put that woman in my life, I'd be a millionaire by now."

**...therefore, we lost paradise with each other and life**, God is the source of all life, John 1:3–4, and the moment we stepped out of the perfect love and community with Him, we stepped into fear, shame, and death. Therefore, we lost our oneness with each other and the world around us. Notice what happened to our relationships: previously Adam showed tremendous love and respect for his wife. He even composed a poem as a symbol of his love and oneness with her, Genesis 2:23. But after he walked away from God, he quickly blamed her for the shame and fear he now felt, Genesis 3:9–12. Eve followed Adam's lead and blamed the serpent who deceived her, Genesis 3:13. God confirms Eve's deception, 1 Timothy 2:14, but the damage from Adam's failure to lead and protect his wife was done. From this point on humanity learned to blame someone else for their sin. From this point on we learned utter and complete selfishness, which is behind every sin we commit against each other. Something else happened. Before when we looked at ourselves we saw nothing wrong with us; there was absolutely no reason to be ashamed of ourselves, Genesis, 2:25. But after we rejected God we no longer saw ourselves as the perfect creatures God made. We now saw something wrong with us, Genesis 3:7, 10. And because of this deep inner shame, we learned to be so self-conscious and so self-critical that nothing could take it away. There was nothing, not money, not fame, not status, not plastic surgery,... nothing could take our shame away. There weren't enough fig leaves to cover our shame, Genesis 3:7. But we also lost another paradise. Before we enjoyed perfect environment, there were no diseases, no death just life. And the labor of our hands did not bring frustration. But now we were surrounded by death and toil. Now, we had to work three times as hard and the results would include failure...we now had 'weeds in our gardens' and this struggle would go on until the day we died, Genesis 3:17–19.

It was not God's plan for babies to die. His design for us was paradise. We were not supposed to live with death and disease. We were not supposed to struggle endlessly in every relationship nor with unfulfilled hopes and dreams. What He offered us was paradise with Him and thereby with each other. Every aspect of our lives, work, love, entertainment, etc., would have been paradise.

### III. Conclusion

*Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."... Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."*