

## A Sermon on Original Sin

Sermon by Minister Angela Smith of COPE for May 10th, 2020 (and beyond)

This is a widely discussed topic and apparently a prime focus for some in faith-based communities. The story referenced is found in Genesis and is commonly referred to as the story of Adam and Eve (not Adam and Steve). Would Steve have gotten Adam to sin? That's a topic for another day and would be totally hypothetical because there are only 7 references to anyone named Stephen in the King James Bible and they are all in the Book of Acts. That's in the New Testament rather than the Old Testament of which Adam and Eve are a part. So, Stephen was martyred and it is a bit offensive to say Adam wasn't with Stephen in spirit at that moment unless you believe Adam permanently fell from grace and was not redeemed through good acts. God welcomes Adam's children and their tributes which suggests things were worked out. Stephen was a martyr and true disciple of Jesus Christ and it is offensive to sully his reputation with smears against the homosexual community.

Returning to Adam and Eve, there is arguably rich symbolism and those fond of double entendres like myself may understand the garden to be an actual orchard or a euphemism. The serpent may be an actual snake and if so signs of a healthy garden. Source: <https://learn.eartheasy.com/articles/these-3-snakes-are-your-gardens-best-friends/> Snakes kill rodents and insects that threaten the garden. They are in nature similar to plant watchdogs. But, as symbolic or a euphemism for temptation to vice, something completely different. For the purposes of this sermon, I'm looking at the "serpent" as a symbol only and as representative of temptation to vice.

God tells Adam and Eve the entire garden is theirs to enjoy with exception to the fruits of one tree. And, that which is forbidden becomes all the more tempting or generates curiosity according to some sources. See: <https://exploringyourmind.com/attractiveness-whats-forbidden/> But, the truth is if you understand why something is forbidden or trust the source that advised against it, you often avoid penalty or distress where the prohibition is reasonable. For example, was the fruit poisonous? If toxic or poisonous, that can reasonably be explained and if there are historic examples of adverse reactions you could reasonably determine that's best to be avoided and advise others so they too can be enlightened and avoid harm. Was it fermented after falling to the ground? Nonhuman animals do get inebriated that way. Sources: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-alcoholics-of-the-animal-world-81007700/> So, there may be many reasons God forbade eating from that tree. But, in failing to disclose the reasoning created an opportunity for Adam and Eve to arguably from the most virtuous perspective seek the Truth through experimentation. The question for Adam and Eve was arguably "Why?". And, for them prior to eating the fruit the answer seemed to be solely "Because I said so and it is my Garden". Now, in modern law, the United States of America recognizes property rights of individuals. In the case of Adam and Eve they were invited guests or welcome wards of God in God's Garden and welcome to all but one fruit bearing tree. Now, let's say that in the modern era it was a house and not a garden, God's house. And, God set out refreshments and ornaments, but, said you may have the refreshments but the ornaments are off-limits. What happens

in the modern era when someone steals ornaments or decor from a House of God or any house? source: <https://komonews.com/news/local/thief-steals-manger-display-from-newcastle-church> The police catch them and if the church is particularly forgiving, they don't press charges as in the case provided in the source. Others where the crime included destruction (not just absconding with) the items where there was \$3,000 in damage after beheading of 9 church statues and taking of the Baby Jesus were likely forgiven without absolution and penitence was found warranted even if imposed. Source: <https://abc13.com/2858736/> So, the original sin is theft.

[MEDITATIVE NOTE: What vices are represented in the story of Adam and Eve? If taking the double entendre and euphemisms into account, the vice of Lust is represented. Beyond that, God's generous abundant offerings are not enough and Adam and Eve steal more suggesting both Greed and Gluttony given they ate the fruit they stole. Are Adam and Eve Jealous or Envious? That seems undetermined. There is arguably some Vanity involved in assuming the right to anything they want even where the Heavenly Host has named something off-limits and that could equate to false pride, often Vanity and False Pride are considered the same. There isn't really any suggestion of Sloth unless you consider failure to abide by the wishes of God a dereliction in duty. And, just to cover the big seven deadliest vices/sins for good measure, God doesn't seem particularly Wrathful but rather disappointed. Adam and Eve's son Cain certainly appears Wrathful and Jealous so where his parents may not have exhibited every vice, their son appears to have picked up the arguable slack. And, as a callback to the Sermon on April 26th, 2020 titled "A Sermon on Exploring a Good Work Ethic", we see further why God was more pleased with Abel's offering because God already had an abundant Garden with orchard and therefore didn't need Cain's offering from some perspectives though graciously accepted. But, God didn't slay Cain, he just exiled him as he did Cain's parents.]

Now, God knows the theft occurred and is displeased at being so disrespected when already so generous and welcoming. But, God does not lash out in immediate anger or wrath, he inquires and Adam and Eve attempt to deceive God and hide their wrongdoing. So, they add insult to the existing injury to the Heavenly Host from some perspectives. God calls them on it because God already knows the Truth and advises they've worn out their welcome and must now leave. And, the Sword of Truth bars them from re-entry because they revealed themselves to not only be disrespectful thieves, but, liars too.

Do you think Adam and Steve would have the same result? Have you ever invited a gay couple to a social event? Did they bring their own refreshments? Did they bring gift(s) or party supplies to the host? Were they gracious and happy to be included? Did one of them have a narcissistic mother or neglectful father? Both? Did they compliment what was not theirs to take and ask where to get their own or did something go missing they were eyeing earlier during festivities? Don't over-generalize. And, leave martyrs out of your smears.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <http://www.churchofphilosophicalexploration.church/feedback.htm>. For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

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