

# Jesus, the Bible and You in 7 Steps - Fall

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Date: 25 January 2026

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Hi, everybody. Good to see you all. It might look a little bit weird. I've got my laptop! here because my notes actually aren't appearing on my iPad, but that's okay. I've got a mic! here so that's okay. I should print off my notes like Johan does. If you'd like to turn to Genesis 3, we'll be looking at that. So if you just make sure that's open in front of you. And here's something we don't need persuading of. The world that we live in, well, it's broken.

It's broken. And 5.59 tomorrow, pick up the remote and watch the six o'clock news. What will you see? Wars, selfishness, greed, fire, flood, famine, sickness, disease, death. You don't need the BBC though to tell your aunts. We've all heard just now that innocent people at All Hallows School passed away. It's absolutely tragic. But then just a day later, a pupil at Ash Manor School had their life snuffed out as well. It is absolutely awful, isn't it?

When I heard this news, you know what I said? I just said out loud, I cannot make sense of this. I just said out loud, I cannot make sense of this. I don't get it. And we know if we're in touch with each other here, we're not immune from the broken world coming into the church.

In the church, mental health issues, physical health issues in the church, disappointments in the church, stress in the church, grief for beloved church members passing away in close succession. There's something wrong, isn't there?

Now, there's two ways to view this. Firstly, it's kind of not that bad. You know, it can be fixed with education or science, you know, or maybe just kind of just get rid of the bad apples. Really? We're more educated than ever. Science has advanced. We're still broken, aren't we? Or maybe we just say it is completely unfixable. Is that it? We know it's broken. The world is broken. So we ask the question, where did it all go wrong? Now, the last few weeks, we've been looking at the whole story of the Bible over seven weeks, seven steps, Jesus, the Bible and you. And it started with God. Here are the seven steps. It started with God. And last week, we looked at his good creation. And it wasn't wrong to start with. We need to get that very clear. It wasn't wrong to start with. But now, it is broken. And today, we see a familiar story that tells us why. The fall. And we need to keep hearing this, even though it is a familiar story. Probably lots of you are thinking, oh, I kind of know what he's going to say. We need to keep hearing this because we need to keep coming to terms with the true depth of our problem, the true depth. Because when we do that, we can more clearly see the depths of love that our Saviour went to save us. Where did it all go wrong? Big point. Human rebellion.

[ 4 : 2 2 ] Keep your Bibles open at Genesis 3. We're not going to have time to look at everything. Just the big things. We'll come back to those other things another day, hopefully. And we know the story. The crafty serpent, who Satan, the devil himself, the personification of sin and evil, all that's wrong, well, he slithers up to Eve. And he plants that seed of doubt, doesn't he? Did God really say? Did God really say to that tree? That's one.

Just taking a bit of fruit? You're not going to die? Lies. God, in his abundant goodness, says, eat of every tree. Every tree, one limit. Just not that one. Just not that one. Every single one. Just not that one. I know what's best. But Satan causes Eve to doubt God's goodness.

He's being stingy, isn't he? He's being stingy. And it looks so good. It looks so good, that tree. The fruit. Look down with me. The hinge of the whole of history and the whole of the Bible. Look at this verse. Look down. Verse 6. When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some of it and ate it. She also gave some to her husband. Her husband, who was supposed to be guarding, who had the word, who had the command. He was responsible. And he was with her and he ate. They were duped that God wasn't good enough. So they rebelled against the eternal God. Now this tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it's not just about kind of knowing morality. Of course, they kind of

knew what was right and wrong. They got told it.

It's becoming the arbiter of morality. In English, you decide. You decide. It's being like God. That is what it means to be like God. That's what Satan tempted them with. That's what they wanted.

They wanted to call the shots. This is sin. This is sin. It isn't just taking a bit of fruit then, is it? It's not just a kind of breaking a rule. It's the dethroning of God, as some have said.

[ 7 : 08 ] Sin tricks us. It makes you think it's harmless. It downplays the consequences, but it's the worst possible thing you could do. It is cosmic treason. Now some of the kids will know this over in their groups, but it is really helpful. Sin, S-I-N, shove off God. I'm in charge. No to your rules.

And when you think about it, there's nothing more heinous than telling the eternal God to shove off and rebel. So it requires just punishment. Human rebellion made it all go wrong.

Let's start with human relationships. Look down at verse 16. Verse 16. To the woman, he said, I will make your pains in childbearing very severe. With painful labour, you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will try and rule over you. At war. Vying for position. I think this applies to all human relationships.

They're marriage. Not a perfect complementary relationship. They are at war. Friendships. Family feuds. International relationships. Humanity is at war. Secondly, creation went wrong.

Creation went wrong. Verse 17. Cursed is the ground because of you. Verse 18. The ground will produce thorns and thorns and thistles for you. But despite creation being really good, it's now broken. There's thorns and thistles. There's out-of-control hurricanes, earthquakes, fire, flood, and famine, like we said. But also every little microbe that causes sickness and cancer and pain.

[ 9 : 09 ] And thirdly, or death, verse 19. For dust you are, and to dust you will return. We're dust.

Frail, imperfect bodies that get physically ill and mentally ill. It doesn't matter how much medicine you take. How much, your five-a-day you have. How many Pilates sessions you go to.

Everyone in this room, unless Jesus returns, are going to get those words that I just read out at your funeral. We're all in God's waiting room, aren't we?

Biggest punishment of them all. A broken relationship with God. Verse 24. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Edom, cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the Tree of Life.

Now we're all by nature exiled from God. If you walk away from life, what do you get?

[ 10 : 29 ] You get death. Yes, the physical death, of course, but the spiritual death of walking away from the source of life. They did die that day.

Where did it all go wrong? Well, human rebellion made it all go wrong. Now I just want to spend the rest of our time just sitting on all this.

Seeing the significance. Because we really need to get clear on the true cause. It wasn't an accident like a Big Bang. It wasn't nature. It wasn't climate change.

It wasn't bad luck. It was human rebellion. But more than that, all humanity's rebellion. If you've not heard this before, this might sound a bit strange.

But in the Bible, Adam is kind of like our representative. He's like our ambassador. So when he sins, it's like we sins.

[ 11 : 31 ] If you support a football team, when they lose, you say, we lost, we lost. When Adam lost, we lost.

In Adam, the whole of humanity was in the garden guilty for the first sin as much as he was. Now, maybe you think that kind of sounds a little bit unfair.

But just have a think about this, right? He's actually a really good ambassador for us, isn't he? He's a really good representative of us. We know better than him. I'm no better than him.

Our own sin confirms that guilt that we're given. We sin from our hands to our hearts. It's in all of us, all the time, every day.

Humanity rebels. Humanity rebels. And look, that's not to say there's a kind of direct link between our specific sins and our specific sufferings.

[ 12 : 34 ] Or kind of like, you know, you did it or you did it, you know. We all sinned in Adam. So we're all guilty. It's very sobering, isn't it?

Of course we are victims of other people's sin. Of course we are. Of course there are kind of more direct causes of sin in the world. But at the root of it all, the fallen world is humanity's sin problem.

And that should cause us to see our own sinfulness for what it is, our wrong. It should cause us to see the ugliness.

The ugliness of it all. It should cause us to long for a solution that will not just be a sticking plaster over the world's issues. But a solution that actually deals with sin.

Do you long for that solution? We should be at a stage where we are starting to feel that. The true cause.

[ 13 : 41 ] Now the depth of the problem. Now some of us will remember the date 26th of April 1986. I definitely don't remember that date.

There was a town on that date that was full of life. Because one scientist's failure would change the lives of millions forever.

Now that town was the town of Chernobyl. Chernobyl disaster was a nuclear explosion. It completely destroyed the nuclear plant. But it was the fallout of the nuclear fallout which was actually the worst thing.

Every building. Every seesaw. And every play park. Every plant that grew radically corrupted by all that radiation. And now it's just a death zone.

A death zone. You can't just hang out at Chernobyl, okay? And it's strange because even now, well that's a picture, quite a recent picture. There's still kind of architectural integrity and beauty there.

[ 14 : 47 ] And flowers and plants growing. But that radiation has seeped into every corner. Under every rock, under every little nook and cranny.

It's there. And it's a death zone. And that's exactly what our world is like. Still good. Still testifies to a good creator.

But sin has seeped into every area. And now everywhere is a death zone. Kind of includes us. Our very natures are bent towards sin and corruption. Not as bad as we could be. But radically corrupted.

We're born like it. You know, you don't have to teach. You have to teach a toddler a lot of things. But you don't have to teach them to say no. From birth.

[ 15 : 46 ] Our hearts are broken. Masha Thale was a machine that read your mind. Would it mostly see... That's pretty good. It wouldn't for me.

And I think we all know. It's the same for all of us. The depth of our problem is enormous. It's irreversible. We can't just fix it.

With an AI code to kind of sort out all the sickness. And give some super medicine. Or some super education. So we're a little bit nicer to each other. Or a perfect political system.

We can't just get rid of the bad apples. Maybe we're all kind of bad apples. The corruption of the curse.

It runs deep, doesn't it? It runs deep. Do you remember what Dorothy said to Toto? We're not in Candace anymore. We're not in the Garden of Eden anymore.

[ 16 : 52 ] I think we need that foundation. I think sometimes we still kind of think we do live there. You know, what will that look like? Well, I think if you still think you're in Eden, when you think you're married, you probably think your marriage is going to be that fairytale ending.

Argument for it free. Or maybe you think you're getting married will just kind of fix everything. Look, it is a wonderful gift from God. It's an amazing God-given gift.

But outside of Eden, it's not perfect. It will never be perfect. We're going to argue. We're going to fall out. It's never going to fulfill you. It's this, right?

Creation is good. But we're not in Eden. Same with work. Work is good. You can make positive change in the world. We won't make ultimate change.

There's a Christian view that says, in all the kind of good that we do, we can kind of rebuild the kingdom. We can kind of rebuild Eden here. I think we need to be clear that that is not the case.

[ 18 : 00 ] You can't rebuild something that you're not even in anymore. Creation is good. But we're not in Eden. Maybe you still think you live in Eden because you expect everything to be quite rosy.

And look, it is right to feel the horror and the evil, the wrongs in the world. But do sin and suffering kind of catch you out like it shouldn't really be happening to you?

It isn't natural, but it's normal. I think what I've been struck by with lots of us in this church is people here actually not pretending that we're in Eden.

There's been more than a few people just the last few weeks have come up to me, I've asked them how they are, and they've burst out crying. Being honest. Maybe not doing that well.

And I just love that in a way. In a way. I think the fool gives us that theological backing. Who knew theology can be this helpful? It's okay not to be okay.

[ 19 : 15 ] We're not pretending when we do that. That's a good thing. Creation is good. But we're not in Eden.

How do you feel? I make you feel a little bit negative. I feel a tiny bit negative right now, to be honest. I don't really like being negative up here.

I think I have got to preach this passage, what it says though. It's kind of negative, isn't it? Creation is good, but we're not in Eden. And maybe you're kind of thinking, well, yeah, well, is that all we've got?

I mean, that's the kind of impression that I might have given you. This is the bit I've been looking forward to all week. Look, this is where the wonderful hope in this passage dawns.

The Bible says creation groans. Remember Johan's Christmas talk. It feels like it's always winter.

[ 20 : 24 ] But creation groans for redemption. Winter yearns for the flowers of spring. Creation is good.

We're not in Eden. But doesn't it make us long for a saviour? Doesn't it make us long for a saviour? Look down with me.

Genesis 3, verse 15. He's talking to Satan in the garden.

This is God. And he says this. I will put enmity between you, Satan, and the woman, and between your offspring and hers, and he will crush your head, Satan, and you will strike his heel.

It's on the screen there. I made it a little bit easier for you. Look, right at the moment of humanity's collapse, right after sin entered the world, right as the curse falls on creation, what does God do?

[ 21 : 28 ] He takes the initiative to promise rescue. The whole Bible is set up after this point. Look, is God going to make good on this? I mean, who's that person going to be to fulfil?

And actually, if you read it, most of it, well, no one does. No one lives a good enough life to defeat sin. We're all still sinners.

No one has the power to reverse the curse, but there is one man who promises, who's promised to crush Satan's head. The singular he, see that in the verse? All the way in Genesis.

Who will deliver that fatal blow? That person's the Lord Jesus. That person is the Lord Jesus. That is the biggest spoiler in the world when you read in Genesis, right?

Right at the beginning. I don't care. I'm going to tell you. It's all about Jesus. When he came to earth, he delivered that knockout blow to the personification of evil and sin itself.

[ 22 : 27 ] That victory, that victory over sin and Satan, it's real now. It will be complete on the final day.

A new world to come with no curse. A new Eden. We'll sit on that a bit later in the series, okay? But even now, right now, evil and sin, they lie flat on the canvas.

In Jesus, we have that victory over sin and Satan and death now when we trust in him. You might feel crushed by the broken world.

We're not in the new Eden yet. You might feel crushed by your own sin. We're not in the new Eden yet. But Jesus has acted to crush sin on your behalf.

The victory is forgiveness and life and hope. Now, nothing, death, life or Satan or famine or nakedness or sword, all the bad things from the fall can separate you from the love of God.

[ 23 : 34 ] But the way he defeats sin was by suffering for us and with us. I think this answers, it helps to answer one of life's biggest questions, right?

Why is a good God allowing evil? And look, really, no one knows the exact reasons. I can try to give you some after the talk if you would like to hear, but I don't think anyone actually knows.

But Jesus shows us that our God is good because he doesn't just look from above kind of callously to sort of detach from everything, from our suffering.

Oh, I don't care, whatever. He cares because he came into the suffering with us. I just really love that account of Jesus' friend.

Jesus' friend, Lazarus, dead in the tomb. And the shortest verse in the whole Bible is so packed with significance, isn't it? You know it? Jesus wept.

[ 24 : 33 ] Two words which show us just how much God cares. God, in the person of Jesus, he wept.

He came into the suffering. No other God does that. Jesus gets it. Jesus weeps with you.

But that's just a preview of the final cut of the cross, isn't it? He, Jesus, will crush Satan's head but you, Satan, will strike Jesus' heel.

Don't worry if you haven't seen this film but it's a superhero movie. He's a goodie and in the end obviously he defeats the baddie. Right?

He just clicks his fingers like that. So if you've seen it, it's quite a good good part in the story. But all the best stories, well they go one step further, don't they? The baddie is obliterated but in the process the goodie is struck.

[ 25 : 45 ] He suffers. And the reason we love these stories is because they're a shadow of the best one of all, aren't they? The almighty son of God could just click his fingers to defeat sin.

That's how much power he's got. But in the process Jesus suffers with us and for us. He suffers with us and for us. Jesus was struck on that cross. He was struck on that cross.

The nail was hammered into Jesus' hands. Look at the verse. His heel, his feet, the victory of sin and evil and the curse is won at the cost of suffering for people like us.

And that is the wonder, isn't it? For people like us, we told God to shove off. I'm in charge, no to your rules but despite all that, all that sin, all that devastation, Jesus comes down for us.

You hear those stories of criminals in court just about to get sentenced and criminals who've done maybe really terrible things but then the mother who's had their son's life taken from them or something like that or the father they're in ruins or they walk up to them at the end and they say, I forgive you.

[ 27 : 00 ] And the criminal in their mind or out loud will say, I did all that and you forgave me? The depth of our plight make us say, humanity did all that and you forgave me?

I did all that and you went to those lengths at the cost of yourself to forgive me? I deserve the final result of the curse. You took the punishment of the curse on yourself and you forgave me?

I don't think this is really a go and do passage. Okay? This passage invites us, every one of us, to stand back and marvel at the saviour.

How much do you think God loves you? How good do you think God actually is? Do you think he's on your side? In this broken world, I think we ask that all the time.

Does he love me? Is he good? Is he on my side? How do you know? Well, look at the chasm you're in.

[ 28 : 14 ] Look at your own sin. Look at Jesus. If you want to see how far the love of God will take you up, you have to see how far the love of God came down.

And he came all the way down to our depths to take on the curse. There's no one more loving and more merciful than the Lord Jesus.

As we'll sing in a moment, our sins, they are many. His mercy is always more. Always more.

Let's pray together. Lord, we need to be honest about our situation.

We can't pretend. We're not in Eden. But we love you for giving us so many good gifts. But we know that things are broken and we are sinners.

[ 29 : 25 ] We are deep down. Thank you so much, Heavenly Father, for sending your son, Jesus. to save us, to come down.

Thank you for your great, great love shown in the Lord Jesus. Lord, may we worship you. May we love you even more and be drawn to you.

We pray that in Jesus' name. Amen.