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Fall of Humankind. I Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

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and Lucifer becoming jealous and wanting to enslave the human race.

Bibliography: ■ Cook, R., “Angels, Fiction and History in Berlin: Wim Wenders’ *Wings of Desire*,” *The Germanic Review* 66/1 (1991) 34. ■ Johnson, W., “Bedazzled: Doctor Faustus,” *Film Quarterly* 21/3 (1968) 56.

Peter Malone

See also → Angels and Angel-Like Beings; → Lucifer

Fall of Humankind

- I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- II. New Testament
- III. Judaism
- IV. Christianity
- V. Islam
- VI. Literature
- VII. Visual Arts
- VIII. Music
- IX. Film

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

According to a common Christian understanding, the narrative of the expulsion of the first human couple out of the garden of Eden (Gen 2–3) constitutes the “story of the fall of humankind.” By transgressing the divine commandment not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve caused the fall of all humanity into sin. This reading, which can already be found in the NT (Rom 7), does not, however, adequately render the multiple meanings of Gen 2–3. The story may be better interpreted as a reflection on human liberty and responsibility, as well as on the human condition in a broader sense. It explains why death is the destiny of humanity. Moreover, the narrative affirms that humans cannot live in the same space as the divine; humankind and God must remain separate from one another. At the same time, the story underlines that YHWH has given humans autonomy and the possibility to refuse to follow the divine law (Albertz; Römer). The origin of the motif of the expulsion of a primordial creature out of Eden may be found in Ezek 28. In this text, the king of Tyre is compared to a primordial man (in the difficult verse of 28 : 14, he appears to be identified as a cherub) who is cast out of the garden because of the multitude of his iniquities. The author of Gen 2–3 has probably taken up this motif from Ezek 28 (Van Seters). Most of so-called “fall stories” are concerned with the separation of the divine and human spheres. This is also the in Gen 6 : 1–4 where the sons of God (or the gods) who dwell in the heavenly realm take wives among earthly humans. In 6 : 4 the union of gods and humans results in the *nēpīlīm*, a word that is often translated as “giants,” although the root means “to fall.” There might be an allusion to a myth of “fallen beings” similar to Ezek 28 or 32 : 27 (Humbert). The parallel

account in 1En. 6–9 reflects a similar tradition of fallen angels.

Bibliography: ■ Albertz, R., “Ihr werdet sein wie Gott’ (Gen 3,5),” in *Was ist der Mensch... ?*, FS H.W. Wolff (ed. F. Crüsemann et al.; Munich 1992) 11–27. ■ Humbert, P., “Déméure et chute dans l’Ancien Testament,” in *Hommage à Wilhelm Vischer* (Montpellier 1960) 63–82. ■ Römer, T., “Quelle est la ‘vérité’ des récits bibliques sur l’origine du monde et de l’homme;” in *Et Dieu créa Darwin* (ed. P. Bornet et al.; Religion et modernités 7; Geneva 2011) 59–74. ■ Schmid, K./C. Riedweg (eds.), *Beyond Eden: The Biblical Story of Paradise (Genesis 2–3) and Its Reception History* (FAT 2/34; Tübingen 2008). ■ Van Seters, J., *Prologue to History: The Yahwist as Historian in Genesis* (Zurich 1992).

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II. New Testament

The Gospels presuppose from the outset that human beings are in need of a saving work of God. While the Gospels may assume this need originated with a fall at the beginning of human history on the basis of teachings predominant in the HB/OT and Judaism (Moore: 1.474–96), the Gospels make no explicit reference to such a fall. Sin flows from hearts that resist God’s revelation in Christ (Mark 6 : 52; 8 : 17, 21), from deep-rooted evil (Matt 7 : 17–19; 12 : 33), and from corrupt leaders such as the Pharisees (Matt 15 : 8–9). An allusion to the fall may be contained in Jesus’ reference to the devil as “a murderer from the beginning” and as the “father” of the Jews who oppose him (John 8 : 44).

While the assumption that sin originated through a fall appears to be prevalent through much of the NT, it is only Paul who is explicit on the point. In Rom 5 : 12–21, he contrasts Adam and Christ as the two central persons in redemptive history. It was through Adam that sin entered the world and came upon all humanity. The consequences of Adam’s sin are sin (5 : 19), death (5 : 12, 17), and condemnation for all (5 : 17, 18). Paul does not explain how exactly Adam’s sin led to all these consequences. In this regard, there is considerable controversy over the last phrase of 5 : 12 and whether it means that death spread to all people (a) *in whom* (i.e., Adam) all sinned, (b) *with the result that* all sinned, or (c) *because all sinned* (for a thorough discussion of these and other views, see Cranfield; Moo). In any case, Paul thinks people are less likely to do good than evil; through the fall, they are bent on evil from birth.

Similar notes are sounded in 1 Cor 15 : 21–22. As Paul sets out to proclaim the glory of the resurrection, he makes it apparent where the need for this resurrection first arose: Death has a singular origin, for it came through the action of the first human being, Adam.

While these are the most explicit references to the fall, 2 Cor 11 : 3 makes an allusion to Gen 2 when Paul refers to the serpent who deceived Eve by its cunning. First Timothy 2 : 14 makes a similar