

## Logic Games: Doctrine of the Fall

A popular teaching these days is that the Doctrine of the Fall is not biblical. I doubt anyone really knows where the silly teaching started, but a major drive behind it is the Jehovah's Witnesses cult.

Granted, the term "the Fall" is not used as such in Scripture. Instead, we have the story in Eden where Adam and Eve disobeyed God and lost access to the Tree of Life and were driven out of the Garden. Among the many New Testament references is Paul's teaching that, prior to eating the Forbidden Fruit, humans didn't face mortality. But after that, death became a fact of our existence. Further, it's clear from the Genesis narrative that Adam and Eve lost the clarity of moral vision. They began hiding from God; the only thing that really changed was their perception. God knew they had sinned, but came to be with them anyway. Taken together we have a clear statement from Scripture that something happened in the Garden that forever changed our human existence. We don't live in Eden any more. Paul further says that Creation itself is subjected to the strictures of the curse of disobedience. The teaching is there; calling it "the Fall" is simply a matter of terminology.

A popular counter to this teaching presumes to offer a logical argument. The fancy term is *syllogism*, referring to a formal logical argument. It goes like this:

Two conditions are offered: (1) God knew or did not know what would happen after Creation, and (2) God controlled events or did not control them. Thus we have four choices:

1. He knew and controlled events
2. He knew and could not control events
3. He didn't know, but still controlled the outcome
4. He didn't know and couldn't control it

The proposed solution is obviously (1) with the resulting inference that what we have today is exactly what God planned and there was no "Fall." This is loaded with logical errors even Aristotle would recognize.

First, this is not an exercise in pure logic. It references a presumed historical event with historical characters. Therefore, it is actually a legal-historical argument. As such, it presumes a certain moral judgment that excludes several very logical possibilities. It assumes that if God could act, He must do so. It should be obvious to anyone that perhaps He chose not to act for His own

inscrutable reasons.

Which brings us to the second, overwhelming massive logical error that makes the whole thing absurd: This is a collection of cascading categorical errors. We can enumerate at four errors immediately.

1. God is not a mere historical figure. You cannot use logical forms, either pure or legal-historical, to reason about Him, what He may or may not have known, and His choices.
2. There were no humans around to witness Creation, so it is not subject to any such logical analysis.
3. Prior to being driven out of the Garden, human awareness was radically different from what it is now, so the change from eating of the Tree of Life to not eating of it takes place prior to current human awareness. The entire context is exempt from historical analysis.
4. The nature of this disobedience to God was to place human reason above revelation in moral understanding. The whole business of eating the Forbidden Fruit was usurping God's revelation on what constitutes proper moral decisions. Human reasoning about such things is the fundamental error for having such a messed up world.

So we have false dichotomies, multiple errors of category, and the whole exercise is a blasphemous attempt to keep reason above revelation. On top of all this is the extraordinary ignorance about Moses, who wrote this Eden narrative for us. He was the first of genuine Hebrew scholars we can point to for a certainty, with a very high education as the adopted son of Egyptian royalty and Midianite nobility (Jethro). It is ludicrous to suggest he would have written an account meant to convey historical precision as we view it today.

In other words, you are supposed to read between the lines and glean out the moral content, because logical clarity as we think of it was not even a concern for *anybody* Moses knew. It was written by an ancient Hebrew mystic in the Hebrew tongue, which is fundamentally mystical in nature. To attempt using modern syllogism or historical-legal arguments and proofs on this text is beyond absurd; it requires a special kind of intellectual dishonesty.

It's vaguely possible someone presenting this argument against the Doctrine of the Fall honestly believes it, but it's not likely their intentions are honorable. They adopt this sort of thinking because they intend to use it for causing trouble. This is the sort of crap used by trolls to stir up strife, as it becomes the basis for semantic and rhetorical manipulation. They'll do their best to perform all sorts of semantic acrobatics as you expect to see in the most egregious courtroom

lawyering in dramatic presentations on TV and in the movies, where style is everything and substance means almost nothing. When someone presents this garbage, treat them as a troll.

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