"You will be like God" - The Fall of Man Once and Today

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Abstract

Reasons are given as to why the narrative of the fall of man in Genesis 3:1–24 refers to a real event. The fall of man presumably took place more than 600,000 years ago. Genesis 3:1–24 describes in a very vivid way how the devil seduces people to disobey God. A central point in the devil’s strategy is the promise "you will be like God". Wanting to be like God is hubris. The best medicine against hubris is the virtue of humility. Just as in Genesis 3:1–24, also today the devil wants to seduce people to disobey God to enslave and destroy them. Time and again, the devil manages to seduce people into evil under the guise of good with his promise "you will be like God". Concepts and behaviours that at first glance appear to be philanthropic and liberating can be very destructive. As examples of this, four thematic complexes are considered. In the first two issues (atomisation of society, propagation of gender ideology and homosexuality), people are increasingly uprooted and lose more and more of their identity. With abortion and euthanasia, people want to play God at the margins of life and relativise the clear imperative "you shall not murder" and replace it with their own criteria of good and evil. Transhumanism creates serious obstacles in the relationship with God.

Keywords: Devil, Euthanasia, Fall of man, Genesis, Sexuality, Transhumanism.

Abstrak

Ada beberapa alasan mengapa narasi kejatuhan manusia dalam Kejadian 3:1–24 merujuk pada peristiwa yang nyata. Kejatuhan manusia mungkin terjadi lebih dari 600,000 tahun yang lalu. Kejadian 3:1–24 menggambarkan dengan cara yang sangat jelas bagaimana iblis menggoda manusia untuk tidak menaati Allah. Poin utama dalam strategi iblis adalah janji "kamu akan menjadi seperti Allah". Ingin menjadi seperti Allah adalah keangkuhan. Obat terbaik untuk melawan keangkuhan adalah nilai kerendahan hati. Sama seperti dalam Kejadian 3:1–24, hari ini pun iblis ingin merayu manusia untuk tidak taat...
“You will be like God” - The Fall of Man Once and Today (Andreas May) 23


Kata-kata Kunci: Euthanasia, Iblis, Kejadian, Kejatuhan Manusia, Sekualitas, Transhumanisme.

Introduction

Christianity is called the religion of love. The truths of Christianity depict the following ideal: 1 God created us out of love. Our life, every human life, is precious, valuable and worth living. God loves each and every one of us human beings with eternal love. Every human being was created by God to respond freely to God’s love. The purpose and fulfilment of our lives is to love – to love God and to love our neighbour (Luke 10:27). Together we form a community whose head is Jesus Christ (see also Colossians 1:18). Every person is called to live in eternal intimate communion of love with God. 2

This ideal is beautiful, but the majority of people do not live this ideal at all or only in fragments. This world is in some ways broken and our lives do not correspond to the ideal. Instead, evil has a terrifying power. Although the power of evil is not as great as the power of God, evil has a great influence in us and around us. Even people like the apostle Paul, who followed Christ with an unrivalled determination, lamented: “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.” (Romans 7:19).

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1 Andreas May, *Viaje a la Ciudad Eterna – En la búsqueda del sentido de la vida* (Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2024 [in press]).

How did this come about? The Bible explains this in its first book with the narrative of the fall of man (Genesis 3, 1–24), which led to the first sin. In the following, we will first examine the question of whether the fall of man really happened. The second step is to take a closer look at the narrative of the fall of man, because this story contains an extraordinary amount of truth about man and the world in which we live. We will then examine what forms the devil’s deceitful promise – “you will be like God” – takes today. In doing so, four themes are considered that are of great importance in modern Western societies.

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Did the Fall of Man Really Happen?

If you talk about the fall of man nowadays, you can expect listeners to protest and say that it is just an invented story and never happened and therefore has no relevance for us. In the relevant literature, there is a colourful bouquet of opinions on this topic. While some reject the idea that the fall of man was a historical event, citing evolutionary research and palaeoanthropology, there are other authors who try to find out when the fall of man took place and whether only one human couple or many people had already lived at that time; and of course there are views that mediate between these extremes:

De Smedt and De Cruz, Cavanaugh and Smith and Madueme provide an overview of the different positions on the fall and evolution. Houck, Green and Morris, Johnson, Macdonald, Loke, Jaeger and

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Berry argue that the fall and evolution are compatible. Lamoureux rejects the fall of man as a historical event and replaces it with a Christian evolutionary psychology. Harlow, Etzelmüller, Lamoureux, Murphy and Janssen explain the sinfulness of humans as a result of the evolutionary process.

In the past, when nothing was known about evolution, a unique act of creation was assumed in which God created a perfect creation: “God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31). A creation without violence, suffering or death – a Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:8). The story of the fall of man offered a very vivid explanation of how the present state of the world – full of violence, suffering and death – came about. Furthermore, it was possible to quote the apostle Paul, who explicitly referred to the story of the fall of man when he wrote: “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned” (Romans 5:12).

Today, in the 21st century, we know that illness, suffering and death are unavoidable components of creation through evolution19. There has been illness, suffering and death throughout the history of the Earth. Why should we accept a fall into sin as an explanation for suffering and death if there was already suffering and death beforehand? Wouldn’t it be much easier to get by without a fall into sin? Seen in this way, the world would be in need of redemption because the world is still imperfect, because there is still illness, suffering and death. That sounds nice and simple, but it is not convincing.

The following three points suggest that the fall of man really was a historical event. Firstly, we can observe that evil has great power in this world. Time and again I feel tempted to do evil and I experience a weakness in myself to resist these temptations. Paul describes it like this: “For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.” (Romans 7:19). Secondly, in Jesus Christ, God became man and died on the cross. Why did God take such dramatic steps? Thirdly, all Christian churches insist that the fall of man really took place at the beginning of human history.20

Now one could retort that the Catholic Church’s teaching on the fall of man contradicts all scientific observations, because the Church insists that the first humans were immortal before the Fall and became mortal through the Fall.21 But biology shows that all multicellular living beings must die, and only unicellular organisms are potentially

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20 See, for example: The Holy See, “Catechism of the Catholic Church,” section 390, accessed November 11, 2023, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/1_INDEX.HTM


immortal. This apparent contradiction is resolved by the fact that a human being has a biological body and a transcendent soul. A living being that has a biological body like a human but no soul is not yet a real human being. Christian doctrine states that the soul is God’s voluntary gift to every human being. It follows from this that the creation of man in the biblical sense refers to the moment when God gave the transcendent, eternal soul to the biological body of a human-like being for the first time. Now one can rightly ask: God made these beings human by giving them a supernatural, transcendent soul. Why then should God not also give these beings the supernatural gift of biological immortality? This makes it all the more sad, incomprehensible and frightening that these humans “of a few hours’ standing” also threw away their biological immortality with the fall into sin.

The question now arises as to when in the evolution of mankind, the fall of man could have taken place. The oldest fossil found of an unequivocal Homo sapiens is at least 233,000 years old. Suarez and Johnson place the Fall much later. Suarez writes: “Christian faith does not require that the first sin (which induced the state of original sin) was the misdeed of a single couple of persons, man and woman, from whom all mankind is genetically descended. Original sin could have happened at the dawn of civilisation, when Homo sapiens already exhibited a large

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26 Johnson, “Adam as Archetype”.

population size."27 Johnson assumes that the fall of man took place around 65,000–75,000 years ago.28

May has worked out that *Homo heidelbergensis* and all his descendants – i.e. *Homo sapiens*, the so-called “Denisovans” and *Homo neanderthalensis* – already possessed or possess a soul.29 It is therefore reasonable to assume that the humans who committed the Fall belonged to the species *Homo heidelbergensis* or perhaps even its ancestor, the even older species *Homo erectus ergaster*. Although Herce has a different line of reasoning, he comes to similar conclusions.30 Herce surmises that the Fall took place at the time of *Homo habilis* or *Homo erectus ergaster*. Despite all the uncertainties, we must assume that humans in the Judeo-Christian sense (i.e. with soul and fall of man) include not only the biological species *Homo sapiens*, but also its ancestor species *Homo heidelbergensis* and its sibling species, “Denisovans” and *Homo neanderthalensis*. This signifies that the fall of man probably took place more than 600,000 years ago.31

If we assume that the narrative of the fall of man in Genesis 3:1–24 recalls a time when the human population was extremely small, this could be an indication that the fall of man took place around 900,000 years ago – perhaps even in connection with the emergence of *Homo heidelbergensis*. From around 930,000 years ago to around 813,000 years ago, our ancestors went through a so-called “bottleneck” – that is, the human population had shrunk to a minimum close to extinction.32 This “bottleneck” is presumably closely linked to the evolution from *Homo erectus ergaster*, which had a fairly small brain, to *Homo heidelbergensis*, whose brain was almost as large as that of *Homo sapiens*.

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28 Johnson, “Adam as Archetype”.
29 Andreas May, “Since When have Humans had a Soul?,” *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 78, no. 2 (2022): a7311, https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i2.7311
31 Herce, “Religion, Science, and Culture”.
World System Model

The narrative of the fall of man begins with a strange sentence: “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made.” (Genesis 3:1). The rest of the story shows that this “serpent” is a very intelligent creature, as it managed to seduce people into breaking God’s commandments. It is obvious that this was not a serpent in the biological sense, but that the term “serpent” is merely an image for this intelligent creature. The Holy Scripture and the tradition of the Church identify this being with a fallen angel called Satan or the devil.33

Nowadays, the devil – like hell – is usually treated like a joke. But in truth, the devil is a fallen angel, a transcendent intelligent being who was created good by God but chose to be against God.34 This event, which was before the beginning of creation, is known as the “fall of the angels”. We hear an echo of this rebellion against God in the words that the devil said to Adam and Eve: “You will be like God” (Genesis 3:5).

Although many modern theologians believe neither in the fall of the angels nor in the existence of the devil, all Christian churches hold to them.35 For Loke36, Peckham37, Covan38, O’Halloran39 and May40, the fall

33 The Holy See, “Catechism of the Catholic Church,” section 391.
36 Loke, Evil, Sin, and Christian Theism.
38 Covan, “The Devil – the First Apophatic Theologian”.
of the angels is also a real and important event. A central argument in favour of the fall of the angels having actually taken place is the existence of non-human evil. For example, O’Halloran\(^{39}\) concludes from the existence of non-human evil that there was a deviation from God’s creation plan even before the creation of the world, because beings had voluntarily chosen evil.

Jesus mentions the devil several times in the New Testament.\(^{42}\) The devil “has been sinning from the beginning” (1 John 3:8) and is “the father of lies” (John 8:44). “The devil (dia-bolos) is the one who ‘throws himself across’ God’s plan and his work of salvation accomplished in Christ”.\(^{43}\) The devil hates God and therefore wants to enslave and destroy humanity as well as the whole of creation.

### The Devil’s Dialogue with Adam and Eve

Now, after clarifying that the devil is the one behind the serpent, we will take a closer look at the devil’s dialogue with Adam and Eve, because this dialogue is very typical of how the devil acts as a tempter; and the better one recognises this pattern, the easier it is to avoid being ensnared by the devil.

The devil begins the dialogue with a seemingly harmless question: “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat from any tree in the garden’?” (Genesis 3:1). The question is only seemingly harmless, because it begins with a half-truth: God has only forbidden eating from one single tree. This is how we recognise the tempter: the sentence contains an untruth. A dialogue that begins with untruths cannot bring much good. And in this case, it is not just an untruth, but a deliberately poisoned untruth. With this oh-so-innocent question, the devil suggests that God is a lousy tyrant who doesn’t grant us a single joy. This sentence contains the deadly poison of mistrust, fired at the unsuspecting Eve. Eve defends God: “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden...” (Genesis 3:3). But the devil has achieved what he wanted: for a

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\(^{39}\) O’Halloran, “Cosmic Alienation and the Origin of Evil”.
\(^{40}\) May, “Significance of Freedom in God's Plan”.
\(^{41}\) O’Halloran, “Cosmic Alienation and the Origin of Evil”.
\(^{42}\) José Antonio Sayés, Señor y Cristo: Curso de Cristología (Madrid: Palabra, 2005), 92–95.
\(^{43}\) The Holy See, “Catechism of the Catholic Church,” section 2851.
moment, Eve not only listens to the voice of God, but also to the voice of the tempter. The words of mistrust sent out by the devil resonate in Eve’s heart. Could it be that God is not good? Could it be that he is withholding something from us that could make us happy?

Instead of responding to the devil, Eve should have immediately blocked when the tempter tried to start a dialogue with her. And when she felt the mistrust of God stirring within her, she should have immediately fought against it, put her trust in God explicitly and made an act of faith in God.

While Eve is still talking and defending God, the poison of mistrust has influenced her so much that the devil can tell and promise her all sorts of things. And that’s what the devil does now. After opening the way with a half-truth at the beginning, now comes the full-blown lie: “You will not die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3, 4–5). What the devil says is in clear contrast to what God says. But it is too late: the devil’s false promises have convinced Eve and Adam and they transgress God’s commandment.

When Adam and Eve wake up from their pipe dreams of power, happiness and glory, they realise that they have only lost and that they are now poor and miserable: “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (Genesis 3:7). Like anyone who falls for the devil and his promises, they realise that in the end they are the ones who are deceived. No matter what the devil may promise, it can only be a short high at best; and after that inevitably comes death, sorrow and despair; for the devil can only give death, sorrow and despair, since he has cut himself off from God, the only source of life, love and happiness.

The devil was created by God as a good angel. The purpose of his existence – just like the purpose of our existence – was to live in communion with God, to enjoy God and to serve him. That would have made him happy. But the devil decided against it. Since then, his existence has been pointless. He leads a miserable, meaningless existence full of despair in the darkness and cold, because he has voluntarily and irrevocably excluded himself from the light and warmth of God. And at the return of Jesus Christ at the “Last Judgement”, the devil will experience his final defeat (Revelation 20:10).44

The only thing the devil can do now is to annoy and harm God as much as possible. Since the devil is much weaker than God, he cannot harm him directly. But since he knows that the human beings are God’s great love, he wants to snatch human souls away from God. To do this, he seduces them into sin with lies. Sins are unavoidable, but if they are very serious, then people become enslaved by their sins and bound to the devil; and this makes them unhappy and destroys them.

The devil wants to annoy, harm, make people unhappy, enslave and destroy them as much as he can. Because hurting us is the only way he can hurt God. That is why the devil will never, under any circumstances, treat a person well. Even if he should give a person success, power, pleasure or whatever, this is only temporary, so that this person remains a tool of evil. But when this person has become useless to the devil, he will destroy and/or enslave him. The devil knows no gratitude; the devil only knows hatred, lies, destruction and enslavement!

You will be like God

The devil hates God and therefore wants to enslave and destroy humanity as well as the whole of creation. We know that the devil will finally be defeated at the end of time. The Revelation of John describes the battle and God’s victory over the devil in images. “...by his definitive defeat all creation will be ‘freed from the corruption of sin and death.”45

Until the devil is finally defeated, we must suffer under him and fight with him. To do this, of course, we constantly need the help of the Holy Spirit; that is why the Lord’s Prayer concludes with the petition “but deliver us from evil”.46

The devil is the “father of lies” (John 8:44), who wants to sow confusion, disinformation, deception and fear everywhere. Deception, confusion, temptation and lies are the devil’s favourite activities; and he loves to turn people’s good intentions into evil deeds. This often makes it difficult to clearly recognise where the devil is at work and where he is not. I also have the impression that the devil motivates very different people and groups of people to engage in seemingly positive behaviour that is actually very harmful to people and humanity. In the following,

45 The Holy See, “Catechism of the Catholic Church,” section 2852.
46 May, Viaje a la Ciudad Eterna.
four topics are given as examples. The behaviour of these very different people and groups of people can then appear to be coordinated, as if there were a global conspiracy. I don’t want to reprove these people because they believe they are doing the right thing and that what they want is best for people...

To sharpen your eye for the devil’s activities, you need to understand his seduction strategy. Above, Genesis 3:1–7 was used to explain the devil’s seduction strategy. The devil’s big offer is always the same: “You will be like God” (Genesis 3:5). Wanting to be like God is hubris, because we humans are creatures: transient, limited and flawed. God is our Creator: imperishable, unlimited and flawless. Humans are creatures that were created by God in such a way that they need God’s love and the love and support of other people to live. Hubris closes one’s eyes to this truth and one begins to look only at oneself. The best medicine against hubris is the virtue of humility.47 True humility does not consist of thinking of oneself as small, stupid, ugly and incapable. True humility consists of looking to God and trusting in him. As long as you only look at yourself and your own abilities and possibilities, you are proud; either you have a positive pride, so that you overestimate yourself, or you have a negative pride, so that you underestimate yourself. An appropriate judgement of yourself and your abilities and possibilities is only possible from God’s view of you. That is why the humble person does not look at himself/herself, but at God; and he/she hopes (and expects) nothing from himself/herself, but everything from God.

Adam and Eve wanted to be like God and distinguish between good and evil. This sin has a frightening topicality. Today we humans have so many possibilities that we didn’t have in the past. The advances in medicine are good examples, but if you want, you can also look at other areas (genetics, nuclear physics, chemistry…). In medicine, we can artificially prolong life and so the questions arise as to when to preserve life and when to let it die. We can artificially procreate human life, and so the questions arise as to whether what we do is in keeping with human dignity and what we should do to ensure that a person has a child. We can recognise diseases and malformations at an early stage, and so the question arises as to whether and under what circumstances a

47 May, Viaje a la Ciudad Eterna; Marta Medina Balguerías, Atraídos por lo humilde (Madrid: PPC, 2018).
developing or dying human life may be killed. None of these things were possible in the past: life, health and children were gifts from God, and we could only receive them gratefully or bear their absence patiently. We did not have to make difficult decisions, as all important things were decided by God’s providence. Now we have many more possibilities and therefore have to make many decisions that overwhelm us. These many new possibilities do not make us happier or freer; on the contrary, these new possibilities place a burden on our shoulders that we cannot bear. Therefore, today’s medical progress produces something similar to the story of the fall of man: We want to be like God, and have to realise that we have become poor, naked and miserable...

“...you will be like God...” Although there is an unmistakable warning right at the beginning of the Bible that waking up from this dream will be terrible and miserable, this diabolical promise “you will be like God” has repeatedly seduced people into evil under the guise of good. That is understandable, because this is where the devil reveals his own innermost longing: he did not want to serve God, his Creator, but wanted to be like God himself. This is why the devil and other angels rebelled against God, which led to the fall of these angels.48

“...you will be like God...” This was and is a great longing in man: to know more, to be able to do more, to have more power... And closely linked to this, a longing for freedom..., a longing for freedom from God and his rules; because time and again, like Eve in Genesis 3:2–4, we allow ourselves to be persuaded that God is withholding something great from us, that we will live more freely and happily if we free ourselves from God’s rules. And time and again, we inevitably wake up naked and miserable.

Below, various topics are addressed in which the people who support and promote these issues claim that they make people happier. These are issues that are very important in countries such as the USA, Germany and Spain. I cannot judge from my own experience how

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important they are in Indonesia, but the article by Xian\(^49\) is a clear indication that these processes are also effective in Indonesia.

Seen close up, the diabolical promise “you will be like God” appears again and again in the background, more or less clearly recognisable. A central argument as to why these topics are supposed to make people happier is that they would become freer as a result. But in all of these themes, people do not become happier, or they are only happier for a short time; and the freedom they are promised either leads to greater slavery or is bought at a price that is disproportionately high.

The promise of freedom, which appears so frequently and is so important in these various themes, is an echo of the conversation between Eve and the devil in Genesis 3:2–4, where the devil persuades Eve that God is withholding something great from her, that she will live more freely and happily if she frees herself from God’s rules. In reality, it is the other way round: God wants to free us and the devil wants to enslave us. In other places\(^50\), I explain in detail how much God cares about leading us to the greatest possible freedom, the “freedom of the children of God”.

The Atomisation of Society

The first theme is the atomisation of society. In pre-modern societies, the extended family played a central role. Of course, in an extended family, personal freedom is restricted by mutual social control. However, because the extended family sees itself as a community of solidarity, people help and support each other; the numerous challenges of life – from bringing up children and material hardship to illness and old age – are tackled together by the solidarity of the extended family.

In modern industrial society, the individual is required to specialise more and more (professionally) and to be more and more flexible in terms of location. In the past, moving to a distant location for work was rare; today it is the most normal thing in the world. To compensate for this, individuals are offered a better income and the opportunity for self-realisation at work. Furthermore, the disappearance


\(^{50}\) May, “Significance of Freedom in God’s Plan”. May, Viaje a la Ciudad Eterna.
of mutual social control by the extended family is presented as liberation.

The greater specialisation and greater spatial flexibility demanded of the individual triggered an atomisation of Western societies. At the time of my childhood in Germany, the process of atomisation was already so far advanced that the extended family no longer played a role and instead the biological nuclear family consisting of father, mother and joint children was the dominant family model. Today, the atomisation of society has progressed considerably further and an ever-larger proportion of society’s elementary communities are no longer biological nuclear families, but single parents with children, patchwork families or family-like constructs such as homosexual couples (with or without children). In addition, the number of people living alone, the so-called “singles”, has increased dramatically. While being single used to be a transitional state, today it is increasingly becoming a permanent state.

This atomisation of society was and is promoted and presented as positive and it was and is claimed that this allows more freedom and self-realisation. But if you look at the reality, more and more people feel overwhelmed and/or lonely and the percentages of depression, mental illness and suicide have risen dramatically. These increases are not in the least surprising, as the numerous challenges of life – from bringing up children and material hardship to illness and old age – have not diminished, but they are no longer carried collectively by the extended family; instead, the burden is spread over fewer shoulders, making it more oppressive for the individual.

In various aspects – from child rearing and material hardship to illness and old age – the state has taken the place of the extended family. In terms of health insurance and pensions, this is certainly very useful and necessary, as the negative example of the USA clearly shows. Scepticism and concerns are appropriate when it comes to child rearing, because in many nations the state is encroaching in this area. Children are easier to mould and manipulate than adults, which is why there is always a great temptation to want to influence children. For example, there are repeated attempts by the ruling political powers to influence children’s political attitudes. But in my opinion, this danger is not the greatest danger because, on the one hand, it is typical of totalitarian systems and, on the other, it is much more obvious than the second form of manipulation.
The second form of manipulation is that the concepts of the prevailing pedagogical fashions are applied in schools. I like to believe that the educators want the best for the children; but I dare to doubt that all these pedagogical concepts are really the best for the children. For example, in all Western countries, sex education starts earlier and earlier and is becoming more and more explicit. In Germany, the first beginnings are made in primary school. Later on, the lessons become more and more explicit. For example, that my twelve-year-old daughter had to put a condom over a wooden penis in sex education was a scandal for me. Sex education lessons are always about biological and technical aspects, but love, respect and responsibility only play a marginal role, and the virtue of chastity is apparently completely unknown. And today’s largely fragmented families naturally have no resources to compensate for the deficits and manipulations of school lessons.

In summary, the progressive atomisation of society means that the many challenges of life are increasingly born by the individual rather than the family. This puts more and more strain on the individual. In addition, dependence on the state is growing more and more. This makes the individual much more susceptible to being manipulated and/or instrumentalised by the state and/or influential interest groups.

The processes and circumstances that have led and continue to lead to the progressive atomisation of society have always claimed to lead to greater freedom and self-realisation of the individual; however, as has been shown, they lead to the opposite: ever greater dependence and manipulability.

In addition, there is another, very negative consequence of the progressive atomisation of society: the integration of people into an extended family gave them roots and an identity. This rootedness and identity is increasingly being lost due to the progressive atomisation of society. The less rootedness and identity an individual has, the easier it can be manipulated, instrumentalised and enslaved.

This shows that the progressive atomisation of society is something truly diabolical, because the underlying processes and circumstances appear with the claim to give the individual greater freedom and self-realisation, and many of the people who promote these processes and circumstances also believe this. But the result is very negative: ever greater dependence, manipulability, rootlessness and loss of identity.
This uprooting and loss of identity is further reinforced by the propagation of gender ideology and homosexuality.

The ever-increasing attacks on marriage and family in Western societies are also contributing to this uprooting. These attacks on marriage and family can have very different forms and causes. Many of the forms and causes are closely linked to the atomisation of society: For example, the geographical flexibility expected at work today is a burden on marriage and family. And many other consequences of the atomisation of society also put a great strain on marriages and families. However, the attacks also come from completely different directions, such as the easy accessibility of pornography and the general sexualisation of society.

The Propagation of Gender Ideology and Homosexuality

Above it was pointed out that the progressive atomisation of society leads to a progressive uprooting and loss of identity of the individual. This uprooting and loss of identity is reinforced by two processes that have been gaining importance in social discourse like an avalanche since the 1980s: Gender ideology and homosexuality.

A key point of gender ideology is that there are two independent concepts: on the one hand, the biologically defined “sex” and on the other, the socially constructed “gender.” This leads to the demand that, in order to make people happy, they must be given the opportunity to shape their lives and bodies in a way that corresponds to the “gender” to which they feel they belong. At first glance, this sounds very philanthropic, which is one of the reasons why gender ideology is so influential today. The first doubts about the meaningfulness of gender ideology arise when you consider the practical consequences of this ideology, such as having to let a biological man who feels like a gender woman go to the ladies’ toilet, or recommending a “sex change” to a young person who cannot identify with their biological sex.

The enormously increased presence of the topic of homosexuality in society today is not about abolishing the criminal prosecution of homosexuals, as this has been achieved in Western societies a long time

ago. In the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, homosexual acts between adult men have been unpunishable since 1969. Today it is about more, namely the complete equality of homosexuality with heterosexuality in every respect: marriage, adoption, mass media and appreciation in society. But if homosexuality really had exactly the same value as heterosexuality, it would be logical to teach children not only about heterosexuality and heterosexual practices, but also about homosexuality and homosexual practices. This is exactly what interested groups in various countries are trying to do: An educational comic is then published in some school, in which homosexual acts are thematised in catchy pictures alongside heterosexual acts. Then “drag queens” give a performance in a kindergarten. In a school (or kindergarten), girls and boys swap clothes with each other so that the children can see how easy it is to change gender...

All this openness and freedom turns into the opposite if you don’t go with the flow, if you have doubts about gender ideology, if you don’t want your own children to be subjected to this ideologisation of sexuality, or if you don’t want your own child to undergo a “sex change”. The repression becomes even stronger when people with homosexual tendencies are helped to regain their heterosexual identity. Yes, I am talking about people with homosexual tendencies who seek help of their own free will in order to become heterosexual because they want to become heterosexual. The most obvious thing would be for those therapists to be celebrated as heroes in society, because they want to help people regain and develop their true sexual identity. Far from it, because more and more countries are explicitly banning all therapies designed to help homosexual people become heterosexual. And the therapists who do this are harshly persecuted and discriminated against. The few therapists who do this anyway have to do so in the strictest secrecy, because no one is allowed to know that they are providing help to people who explicitly ask for it...

From the point of view of nature, homosexuality makes no sense, because homosexual actions cannot produce offspring. Despite numerous studies, there is still no scientific evidence to support the
claim that homosexuality is innate. The research by Ganna et al. also did not find a single homosexuality gene, but only observed five different genes that have a measurable influence on the expression of homosexual behaviour. In contrast, there are numerous studies that show that homosexuality is to a large extent acquired. It is also worth mentioning that homosexuals and transsexuals report childhood sexual abuse at 3 to 8 times more of the rate of heterosexuals.

Cohen, who used to be homosexual himself, is of the opinion “that anyone who feels homosexual inclinations is latently heterosexual and that homosexuality is a disorder in psychosexual development.” Nicolosi’s many years of experience fully confirm this: Dr. Joseph J. Nicolosi, who has been helping homosexual people who want to become heterosexual for many years, is of the opinion that homosexuality is not innate, but that the origin of same-sex attraction “lies in emotional needs that were not met by the client”. An important cause of same-sex attraction is “the lack of early attunement with the parents”.

If the observable facts are so clearly in favour of the theory that it is natural and normal for humans to be attracted to the opposite sex, and that attraction to the same sex is essentially the result of a disorder in psychosexual development, why is there so much pressure from homosexual advocates for society to view homosexuality as natural, normal and completely equivalent to heterosexuality? Why is there a

58 Nicolosi, Vergüenza y pérdida del apego, 28.
witch hunt against all people who help homosexuals who want to become heterosexual? For me, one possible explanation comes from what Nicolosi writes about those people who ask him for help to become heterosexual: “For these men, the journey begins with the inner conviction that homosexuality is not naively something that is ‘wrong’, but that – in a broader dimension – homosexuality is simply not true. Most of the men cannot explain it any better; but in their own words they express the conviction that gay sex does not ‘work’ – that it never satisfies their inner longings, and that it does not reflect who they really are as gendered beings.” 59 Could it be that many more homosexuals feel deep down that homosexuality is not their true sexual identity, but do not have the courage to honestly explore these doubts, instead demanding from society an affirmation and appreciation of their homosexuality that they cannot give themselves?

Both issues, gender ideology and homosexuality, are about a radical liberation of the human being: The liberation of man from being defined by his biological sex. Here it appears again, the devil’s promise “you will be like God”, with which he repeatedly seduces people into evil under the guise of good. The promise of liberation is so tempting for those affected: Liberated from the constraints and limitations of my biological sex, I am free to decide who I am, how I live and who or what I love… This sounds so much like philanthropy and charity and the liberation of enslaved people that gender ideology has quickly found advocates and supporters everywhere who support and promote the gender ideology project with a clear conscience. And it is even more tempting for those who perform the so-called “sex change” on a person: They are almost like God, they are allowed to correct the mistakes that God made in his creation; because obviously here God has put a woman into the body of a man or vice versa…

As with every promise of the devil, the bitter awakening comes all too soon. On a biological level, the dictatorship of the sex chromosomes is simply too strong: the sex chromosomes not only determine our primary and secondary sexual characteristics, the sex chromosomes also determine or influence much more, such as our way of thinking or our behaviour. A so-called “sex change” is nothing more than a mutilation of a healthy human body, because the newly operated sexual organs can

59 Nicolosi, Vergüenza y pérdida del apego, 18.
neither procreate children nor feel an orgasm. And the person affected has to take artificial hormones for the rest of their life.

But even for those people who only define their gender differently from their body and do not subject their body to hormone treatment or even surgery, even for those people the gender ideology brings more disadvantages than advantages in the long term. To understand this, we need to realise why the socially constructed “gender” exists in the first place.

We humans are social beings, which means that we live in communities. For a community to function, it must be possible to predict to a certain extent how a new member of this community will behave. This is why there are roles and expectations of these roles in every society. As it is necessary for the stability of the community that persons fulfil the expectations placed on their roles, social pressure is exerted and persons who do not fulfil the role expectations placed on them in a serious way are either marginalised or excluded altogether. A central point for the definition of social roles is biological sex – on the one hand, because the vast majority of people feel attracted to the opposite sex and want to have sexual contact with it; on the other hand, because it is only through the interaction of the two biological sexes that new persons are created and the community is maintained. What I am describing here is so fundamental that it can be observed in every human community. In every community there are social roles that are determined by biological sex.

In the context of gender ideology, these social roles, which are determined by biological sex, are only seen from the perspective of restriction, of deprivation of freedom. But that is only half the truth. Yes, every social role necessarily restricts a person’s freedom, because a person who does not fulfil a role expectation is unpredictable for the community and the other members do not know how they can deal with them and what they can expect from them. The social role is very important for society, but even more so for the individual person. We humans are social beings, which also means that we want to live in a community. We want to find and keep our place in the community. We want to be accepted and loved by the other members of the community. We want to contribute to the community. To do all this, we need to know what is expected of us and what is not, what we are allowed to do and what we are not allowed to do, and so on. And it is precisely this
information that we receive through our social role. Our social role gives us security and identity. It gives us security, because through our social role we know what we have to do and what we should not do in order to continue to be part of this community. It gives us security because it provides us with a framework for our future development. Our social role creates identity because it provides practical, tangible and verifiable answers to our question “Who am I?”

With this in mind, if we ask for whom gender ideology can be attractive, we are left with people who either 1) feel a tension or even a contradiction between their biological sex and the social role associated with it, or 2) have fundamental doubts about who they are and what their role in this life is. For these people, gender ideology can provide temporary relief, along the lines of: “I don’t feel comfortable as a man, so I define myself as a woman.” But in the long term, tensions and difficulties will arise. The significance of biological sex for social roles is too great. What every person wants, namely to find their place in society and be accepted and loved, is not made easier in the long term by choosing a gender that does not correspond to their biological sex, but more difficult. As a logical consequence, rejection and/or psychological suffering is pre-programmed for all people who choose a “gender” that does not correspond to their biological sex. These people have opted for the apparent choices of gender ideology to alleviate their personal suffering; unfortunately, they will all too often realise that these choices increase their suffering in the long run, as they create tensions with their social environment and make reconciliation with themselves, their bodies and their sexuality more difficult.

Gender ideology lures people into self-rejection by justifying seeking a “gender” that differs from my biological sex; because if I accept this “gender”, I must reject my biological sex. With this in mind, it is not surprising that “non-heterosexual and transgender subpopulations have higher rates of mental health problems” than the population average.60

Especially when a person is young, but not only then, they ask themselves fundamental questions such as who they are, what they should do with their lives, what is expected of them and what they should expect from life. Asking these questions is very important, because this is how we discover and consolidate our identity more and

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60 Mayer and McHugh, “Sexuality and Gender”, 59.
more and reassure ourselves of our roots or deepen our roots. Our biological sex and our “gender” naturally play a central role in answering these questions. If our biological sex and our “gender” no longer match, this leads to our answers to these fundamental questions becoming contradictory, ambiguous or doubtful. Our biological sex, which could and should be such a clear and certain point of orientation, becomes a point of doubt. In this way, gender ideology leads to the uprooting and loss of identity of the individual, continuing the diabolical work of destruction that the progressive atomisation of society has begun.

At a superficial glance, gender ideology sounds so much like philanthropy and charity and the liberation of enslaved people that it has penetrated deep into the Christian churches. However, gender ideology is in sharp contradiction to the Christian view of humanity, because gender ideology is the systematic denial of oneself as God’s masterpiece! If one were to accept that one is a masterpiece of God, one would also accept one’s biological sex as a gift from God and accept the possibilities and tasks resulting from one’s biological sex; and then one would not need to deny one’s biological sex and look for a different “gender”.

God intended human sexuality not only to produce offspring, but has a much greater, much more beautiful and much more fulfilling plan for human sexuality. Jesus hints at this plan in his justification of the

61 For example, the synodal path (“Der Synodale Weg”) in the German Catholic Church is firmly in favour of gender ideology. In the Orthodox churches, too, approval of gender ideology and same-sex marriage is increasing, although the vast majority are still clearly against it. Bradshaw explains the theological and historical background of why the Orthodox Church believes that homosexuality is against human nature.

62 By the way, the fact that there are two biological sexes in humans is so fundamental that Jesus Christ chose one of the two sexes — namely the male — when he became human. And he also fulfilled the role expectations that were placed on a Jewish man. He only broke through these role expectations at very specific points, for example when he spoke to the Samaritan woman (John 4:5–27).
indissolubility of marriage. He goes right back to the beginning and quotes from the second creation narrative: “and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5). In brief words, Jesus reminds us of the great project that God has with every married couple: Something new is to emerge from the two spouses, a new unity that represents God’s eternal love in a very special and unique way. On the one hand, marriage should represent the eternal love of God for human beings in general and for his people in particular.\textsuperscript{63} Furthermore, Christian marriage is called to be an image of the love that the three persons of God have for one another\textsuperscript{64} and to be an image of the love of Jesus Christ for his Church (Ephesians 5: 31-32). This great project is only possible in a monogamous marriage between a man and a woman. This project is not possible in the following forms of sexuality: polygamy, divorce with remarriage, promiscuity, homosexuality, or constant infidelity in marriage.

There is only one other form of living sexuality in a great project of God: celibacy, in which God becomes my life partner, in which I marry God (Matthew 19:12). In all other forms of sexuality – especially homosexuality and many forms of sexuality that are linked to gender ideology – people do not live their sexuality in its true greatness, beauty and meaning. This can also be seen, for example, in the fact that all these forms of sexuality are much more about egoistic pleasure than loving self-giving.

\textbf{Abortion and Euthanasia}

The two topics of abortion and euthanasia have more in common than it might seem at first glance. Both issues manifest the diabolical promise “you will be like God, knowing good and evil”, but they are not


primarily about freedom, although they are about acts of liberation. In both cases, it is about liberation from people who are a nuisance to us, who stand in the way of our plans and our comfort. And in both cases, Western societies are redefining the clear imperative “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13). Western societies do not dare to attack healthy adults and born children, because that would be murdering people. But at the margins of life, there we dare to play God and relativise the unambiguous imperative “You shall not murder” and replace it with our own criteria of good and evil.

Science gives an unambiguous and clear answer to the question “When does a human life begin?”: At the moment of fertilisation of a human egg with a human sperm, a new human being is created with a unique, unrepeatable combination of genetic material that is found in every single body cell until the death of this person. And shortly after fertilisation, the embryo also shows externally that it is a human being. Anyone who has any doubts or curiosity can find documentaries in many places that show how quickly a fertilised egg becomes an embryo that is recognisable as a human being. Nevertheless, there are repeatedly comments and statements from politicians and other people we listen to in public who claim that this embryo is not yet a human being. Perhaps for these people, someone only begins to be a human being when they can fill in a ballot paper. If an adult in a Western society today claims that the embryo in the womb of the mother is not yet a human being, he/she is either a liar or of an inexcusable, self-willed ignorance.

Nevertheless, when it comes to abortion, things go from bad to worse. Whereas in the late 20th century, abortion usually required a special justification – such as rape, deformity of the child or danger to the mother’s health – nowadays the right to abortion is increasingly seen as a natural right of women and thus demanded.

The subject of “euthanasia” was taboo in Germany in my youth, as the Nazis had killed on a large scale everything that was not worth living in their eyes, including many mentally handicapped people. Nowadays,

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the killing of terminally ill people and/or people who want to die is a social issue in many Western societies. For example, the topic of assisted suicide is a political issue in Germany. When I hear the argument that the people concerned voluntarily decide to die, I ask myself whether this statement is an expression of naivety or cynicism. If a person is repeatedly told by those around them that they are nothing more than a burden and that it would be better if they died quickly, how much freedom does the person concerned still have? Or the case where the person concerned is no longer able or allowed to decide for himself, but his relatives make the decision for him.

Let us also bear in mind that in Western societies – and especially in the mass media – there is an extreme cult of youth and that our mentality is very strongly orientated towards avoiding suffering and pain. A life with pain or permanent suffering is very quickly categorised as “not worth living”. However, the last period of life can be of enormous importance for a person. In this last period of life, the person can and must say goodbye to this world and prepare for their final journey. There are often very important and difficult tasks ahead: reconciling, letting go, organising one’s life for the last time and learning to trust in the invisible God...

The strong efforts worldwide to legalise abortion and euthanasia or even to establish them as a “right” show that the unconditional protection and value of human life are no longer fully guaranteed in Western societies. At the moment, it is only at the margins of life that people dare to play God and replace the unambiguous imperative “You shall not murder” with their own criteria of good and evil; but soon the onset of the barbarism of “life not worth living” could also jeopardise the lives of people who are dear to us.

But abortion and euthanasia are already leaving serious wounds in many people; and I am not only thinking of the unborn children and old people who are killed. I am also thinking of the many women who have had abortions and later realised with horror that they had not removed a growth or a clump of cells from their womb, but had killed their own child. Many of these women were severely traumatised by the abortion.

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66 Xian, “The Euthanasia Debate”, 70.
Transhumanism

The term “transhumanism” covers a colourful mixture of opinions, people and movements that want to improve humans through technology or even take them to a new, higher level of evolution. The ways and methods proposed to achieve this goal vary widely and range from genetic manipulation, technology implanted in the human body and brain-computer interfaces to uploading human consciousness into digital memories. The desired goals of transhumanists are obvious: the expansion of human capabilities—especially the human brain—and a longer, healthier, perhaps even eternal life.

At first glance, the panorama looks interesting and desirable; but on closer inspection, the devilishness of the whole transhumanist project becomes apparent. The following four points illustrate this:

1. Humans are no longer something special and untouchable; instead, they become disposable and objectified. Humans are perfecting their own bodies. His genome is to be manipulated and technology is to be implanted in his body which—unlike a pacemaker—is not necessary for survival.

2. Man becomes his own creator. We no longer accept God as our Creator and we no longer accept ourselves as we were created by God; instead, we tinker with ourselves. The same attitude appears here as with gender ideology: We no longer see ourselves and our bodies as

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God’s masterpieces, but as work in progress or in need of improvement,\textsuperscript{70} which we can change and “improve” according to our own ideas.

3. Both the expansion of human capabilities and the prolongation of life or the uploading of human consciousness into digital memories are designed to make us even more attached to this material life in immanence.\textsuperscript{71} Transcendence is not in the consciousness of transhumanists, because their gaze is focussed exclusively on this world of matter and energy.\textsuperscript{72}

4. With the transhumanist project, hubris can very quickly set in, namely that we begin to believe that we no longer need God at all.

Each of these four points is a serious obstacle in our relationship with God. But without God, or even against God, we cannot build anything really good. So, we will end up like Adam and Eve with the whole transhumanist project: today we hear the devilish promise “you will be like God”, but soon we will have to realise that we are naked…

**Conclusion**

The story of the fall of man in Genesis 3:1–24 is not just a nice narrative, but refers to a real event. The people who committed the fall of man probably belonged to the species *Homo heidelbergensis* or perhaps even its ancestor, the even older species *Homo erectus ergaster*. The fall of man therefore probably took place more than 600,000 years ago.

The story in Genesis 3:1–24 not only explains why evil has so much power in our world and why our relationship with God and our fellow human beings is so disturbed. It also describes in a very vivid way how the devil seduces people to disobey God. A central point in the devil’s strategy is the promise “you will be like God”. Adam and Eve believed this promise and later realised “that they were naked.” (Genesis 3:7).

Just as in Genesis 3:1–24, also today the devil wants to seduce people to disobey God to enslave and destroy them. And just as in Genesis 3:5, the devil also promises today: “you will be like God”. As in the book of Genesis, the devil does not fulfil the promise, but only brings people misery, suffering and death.

\textsuperscript{70} Abbate, “Transhumanismo y Gnosis,” 204.


Nevertheless, the devil, the “father of lies” (John 8:44), who sows confusion and disinformation everywhere, manages to seduce people to evil time and again with his promise “you will be like God” under the guise of good. In this way, very different people and groups of people are motivated to engage in seemingly positive behaviour. In reality, this behaviour is very harmful to people and humanity. In this article, I have given four examples of this behaviour: the atomisation of society, the propagation of gender ideology and homosexuality, abortion and euthanasia, transhumanism.

In the first two issues (the atomisation of society, the propagation of gender ideology and homosexuality), people are increasingly uprooted and lose more and more of their identity. With abortion and euthanasia, people want to play God at the margins of life and relativise the clear imperative “You shall not murder” and replace it with their own criteria of good and evil. Transhumanism creates serious obstacles in the relationship with God.

It can therefore be seen that the devil unabatedly continues his endeavours to enslave and destroy people. Concepts and behaviours that at first glance appear to be philanthropic and liberating can be very destructive. A look at the narrative of the fall of man in Genesis 3:1–24, an orientation towards the Ten Commandments and a study of the New Testament help us to recognise this destructiveness.

It is remarkable that the bait the devil throws at us is always the deceitful promise “you will be like God”. Wanting to be like God is hubris. The best medicine against hubris is humility. True humility consists of looking to God and trusting in him. A model of true humility is Mary, the Mother of God, who begins her hymn of praise with the following words: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.” (Luke 1, 46–48).

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