



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

August 27, 2023

Was Eve the hero of the story?

Gospel According to "Children of Eden"

Scripture: Genesis 3

When I was a young father I remember older clergy colleagues joking, "I was never sure about Original Sin until I had my own kid." I understood the joke. I was aware of the defiance, the "no" that just seemed to come out of nowhere. There is an element of watching a child grow up that seems to support this idea. Every parent at some point wonders, "What is wrong with this child? Why don't they just listen?"

Every parent has been exasperated by unnecessary defiance. Every parent has had their boundaries pushed, their patience tested, and their limits taxed. Crayons are pretty on paper, why not the wall? That high table seems like a great place to climb. The wearing of shoes are suddenly refused.

"I want to do it myself" comes the defiant refrain as the late Dad needs to button the child's coat. A task that could take a second if done properly now becomes a major source of frustration. And what seems like suddenly, a perfectly innocent baby is just another disobedient child. Clearly, Original Sin has taken over.

Yet is this really sin, or is it the birth of something better and more powerful in a child? Is it a sin for a child to push boundaries? Is defiance against a parent really a sin against God? Is it a sin for a child to want to "do it myself?" Or is it frustrating to parents who are slaves to time, status, and social acceptance?

Sin is a small word with a lot of baggage. It can mean many things. For many, sin is simply defiance of God. A sin is a mistake or moral failing. To some, a sin is failing to see the image of God in others (and yourself). Many theologians have said that the greatest sin of man is pride or the pursuit of power. This feels reasonable, and it certainly is a way to interpret Adam and Eve's first sin. Feminist theologians have realized that "Yes, the greatest sin of man is pride, but the greatest sin of women is lack thereof." The problem for women has been that they allowed others too much power. They denied their own agency, power, and fortitude.

More literally, a sin is "missing the mark." That is where

the etymology comes from. It is an archery term. If God's love is the target for every action. Then a sin is when we miss that mark.

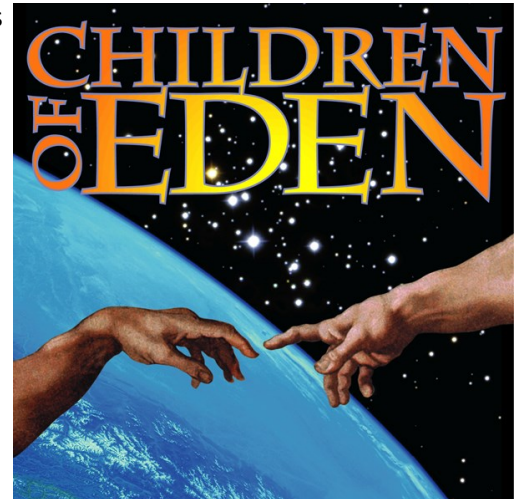
I love the show *Children of Eden* because it re-examines this idea of sin. Classical Christianity has described the eating of the Tree of Knowledge as the first sin. It is The Fall that ruined God's perfect paradise.

Was it a sin, or was it the birth of something better and more powerful in humanity? Yes, Eden was perfect, but what if there was something beyond perfect?

This is the question that nags at Eve as she bites. What if there is something else out there... beyond? What if there is creativity? What if there is achievement? What if there is learning, growth, and triumph? The fruit gave the knowledge of Good AND Evil.

The child pushing boundaries is not sinning. They are growing. A child holds a reflection up to a parent to reveal their own sin, their own frustrations. We have created systems that makes crayons on a wall, being late, or wearing weird clothes "wrong." But none of these things are truly sinful. Children need to do things themselves. They need to be allowed to fall. That is the only way they learn how to get up.

Eve isn't the villain in *Children of Eden*, she was just the one who allowed the spark of creation to grow inside her. I don't think Genesis 3 describes a fall. It describes a rebirth. It is the maturing of humanity that allows us to move beyond perfect and into exploration. Yes, there is pain and suffering when we want to do it ourselves. Maybe that is the real reason Jesus came, to show us we don't have to do it ourselves any more.



Children of Eden (1991) is the second show by Stephen Schwartz we have shared. He also wrote *Godspell*, *Pippin*, *Wicked*, and many others.