

genesis

God's Book of Beginnings

Chapter 3

^{3.1} Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” ² The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” ⁴ “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 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 and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” ¹¹ And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” ¹² The man said, “The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” ¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” ¹⁶ To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” ¹⁷ To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. ²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. ²² And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” ²³ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

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The Fall of Man

The Temptation, the Deception, the Fall

3:1 The serpent (*nāḥāš*: snake [lit]), identified later as “the devil, or Satan” (Revelation 12:9, 20:2), (who fell from grace in heaven (Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:12b-17)), presented himself as a counterfeit “angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14) and began deceiving Eve (1 Timothy 2:14, Revelation 12:9) by inquiring about her understanding of God’s command (his approach was to shed doubt on God’s Word).

As mentioned previously, God declared the first law, which set up a test of obedience (Genesis 2:16-17). There were two challenges to the test: (1) the temptation that existed because the centrally-located tree was the only thing in Eden forbidden by God and (2) the deception of Eve (2 Corinthians 11:3) by the serpent, who challenged whether or not God had actually declared the fruit as forbidden.

2-3 The woman responded with confidence by repeating God’s command to Adam (Genesis 2:16-17), who had passed it on to Eve. However, Eve began a slide into compromise by adding a bit to God’s Word: “...you must not touch it...” (Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, Proverbs 30:6, Revelation 22:18-19).

Another possibility is that the addition to God’s command may not have been Eve’s idea, but could have been added by Adam as a kind of Pharisaical attempt to protect Eve (Matthew 23:2-4, Mark 7:1-13).

4-5 Satan recognized Eve’s compromising tendency (by modifying God’s Word), and then, being the “father of lies” (John 8:44), spoke a direct lie to her by denying God’s statement about the punishment of death. He continued by telling her instead of dying, she would be more like God (Satan’s lies always promise great benefits (Luke 4:5-7)). Satan was suggesting that it was God who was deceiving Adam & Eve in order to keep them ignorant and subservient. Satan’s ploy for them to think they could be more God-like was actually his downfall (Isaiah 14:14).

6 It did not take long for Eve’s desires (stimulated by Satan’s deception) to overcome her knowledge of the will of God and her desire to please Him. Consequently, Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Despite not being deceived (1 Timothy 2:13-14), Adam also ate some of the fruit.

Adam was made to be the spiritual leader in a marriage (1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:22-24, 1 Peter 3:1-6), while Eve was made as a “suitable helper” for Adam (Genesis 2:18). So, by leaving Adam’s protection and assuming his headship, Eve was vulnerable and fell as a result of her being deceived by Satan. This illustrated the importance of her staying under the protective leadership of Adam, her husband. Adam fell, not because of deception, but as a direct result of his rebellion against God’s decree.

Notice the 3 common frailties leading to sin: (1) lust of the flesh (“good for food”), (2) lust of the eyes (“pleasing to the eye”), (3) pride of life (“desirable for gaining wisdom”) (1 John 2:16).

(1) Jesus willingly gave His life for people (John 10:17-18), (2) Jesus was made sin for people in order for them to be saved (“become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21) (1 Peter 2:24), (3) Adam was a “pattern” of Jesus (Romans 5:14), (4) Adam was not deceived (as mentioned above); therefore, he willingly sinned by eating the fruit. Consequently, could it be that Adam did this act out of his deep love for his wife Eve, knowing that his action would provide a means of salvation for his bride?

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- 7** What Adam & Eve gained was not wisdom ^{Proverbs 9:10}, but an awareness of evilness and sin. Thus their innocence was shattered ^{Genesis 2:25}, which was replaced by guilt and shame ^{v.8-10}. This was the first example that clothing is a universal expression of human modesty.

Accountability to God: the Cost of Choice

- 8-9** In a continuance of their shame ^{v.7}, Adam & Eve hid themselves from God in the garden. The "LORD God called to the man" (Adam, who God had appointed to be the spiritual "head of the wife" ^{Ephesians 5:22-24}): "Where are you?". God was not expressing His ignorance of their location (an impossibility ^{Psalms 139:1-12}), but forcing the man to explain why they were hiding.

Three thoughts: (1) sin always separates man from God: temporarily for believers and permanently for nonbelievers (2) sin/fear damages relationships, both between God & man ^{Isaiah 59:2, Matthew 5:23-24} **& between humans** ^{Nehemiah 9:2a, Luke 6:22} **and (3) God's love always seeks first** ^{Romans 5:6-8, 1 John 4:17-19}.

The phrase "LORD God" appears in several parts of the OT, but mostly found in Genesis 2 & 3. This two word phrase is translated from the Hebrew: "yhw h 'elohim", signifying 'Sovereign God'.

- 10-11** Adam responded with an honest statement that reflected a difference in who he was. He spoke for the first time about fear and shame; however, his statements lack confession. The LORD God first questioned Adam on how he could know these things, and then asked Adam a direct question about his obedience/disobedience to the LORD's only command. **Adam's reluctance to admit his sin is the first example of a behavior prevalent throughout time. Repenting leads to forgiveness, but human pride resists repentance, resulting in judgement.**
- 12** In the first act of man's resistance to take responsibility for his actions, Adam not only placed responsibility for what he did onto Eve, but he even dared to implicitly blame God.
- 13** Turning to Eve, the LORD questioned her as to what she had "done". Eve responded by placing blame on Satan, but truthfully admitted to eating only after being deceived ^{Romans 7:11}. However, simply admitting her sin did not eliminate the consequences of her actions ^{Acts 2:38}.
- 14** In speaking to the physical serpent, it seems the LORD implied a curse on all created animals, but it is obvious God's curse on the snake was extreme. Prior to the fall, the snake may have had legs, because God's curse stated that the snake was destined to "crawl on [their] belly" and will always "eat dust". The lowest animals feed on dust ^{Isaiah 65:25, Micah 7:17}.
- 15** In this key prophetic verse, the LORD addressed the spiritual serpent (Satan). He spoke of war between the woman (Israel ^{Revelation 12:1-6}) & Satan, and between Israel's offspring (Jesus and His followers ^{Galatians 3:26-29}) & Satan's offspring (lost people ^{John 8:44}, with the ultimate one being the Antichrist ^{Revelation 13:1-10}). Satan has been able to "strike (Jesus') heel" (causing Jesus to suffer ^{Luke 17:25, Acts 3:18}), but He will "crush (Satan's) head" ^{Romans 16:20} (completely destroying the devil ^{Revelation 20:10} and all of his work ^{Hebrews 2:14-15, 1 John 3:8}).
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- 16** The LORD's curse upon women included pain in childbirth, as a reminder of her giving birth to sin by eating the forbidden fruit ^{1 Timothy 2:13-14}. However, at the same time, childbirth is her way to maintain an intimate connection with God ^{1 Timothy 2:15}. In spite of the spark of attraction that women have for men and their completion as women being found in the union with a man (the divine design ^{Ephesians 5:22-31}), earthly marriages will be accompanied by disharmony between husbands & wives, because they both struggle with self-will ^{Genesis 4:7}.
- 17-19** God gave Adam a much longer chastisement, because of his accountability to God in his defined role as the leader in the husband-wife relationship ^{Ephesians 5:22-24}. Due to Adam's disobedience of eating the forbidden fruit ^{v.6b} following his wife's independent act of eating it first ^{v.1-6a}, the ground was cursed, forcing man to invest greater effort in growing the food mankind needs to survive. At the moment of his sin, Adam and all humans to follow became subject to hard work, to living a life that includes suffering ^{Job 5:7}, and to physical death.

The Aftermath

20 Adam appropriately named his wife, "Eve" (*ḥawwâ*: life), because (while God formed her and Adam ^{1 Timothy 2:13}) she was/is the original mother of all humans after Adam and Eve ^{Genesis 4:1}.

21 The LORD made suitable coverings for Adam & Eve, which represented covering their sin: garments of skin (made by the shedding of blood ^{Leviticus 17:11, Hebrews 9:22}). Man's attempts at covering his own sin are always inadequate, as indicated by Adam & Eve's earlier attempt ^{v.7}.

Note the similarity between the killing of an animal here to produce the temporary covering for Adam & Eve and the later killing of animals for the temporary covering for the Jews ^{Hebrews 10:1-4}.

22-23 In an example of His compassion, the LORD stated man had become like "us" (another indication of the triune God ^{Genesis 1:26}). While God's knowledge of "good and evil" is from His holy omniscience ^{Habakkuk 1:12-13}, man's knowledge is from experience ^{v.1-7}. The "LORD God banished" Adam from the Garden to keep him away from the tree of life. This was the result of God's not wanting man to live forever in his cursed condition, and a great blessing to man for the ultimate release (through death) from a cursed (and unredeemable) body ^{Romans 7:24}.

The first step in God's plan for man's deliverance was to block the way back to the *tree of life*, which was the result of Adam & Eve no longer being morally/spiritually fit to live in the presence of God. And, eating from the tree would create a worse outcome than physical death: eternal spiritual death.

24 Following the expulsion of man from the Garden, the LORD assigned cherubim with a flaming sword ^{Psalms 104:4} to guard the east entrance, so that no human could return to the tree of life.

Two cherubim also guarded the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies ^{Exodus 25:18-22, Hebrews 9:5}.

It's unclear why the east side of the Garden is mentioned, but it has been suggested that because, much later, the LORD will approach/enter the Millennial (Ezekiel's) Temple from the east ^{Ezekiel 43:1-5}.

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