

GENESIS 3:1-24

THE FALL OF MAN AND WOMAN

When we left off last week at the end of Genesis Chapter 2, God had finished creating the world. "God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). There is no sin, no death, no corruption, no pollution. It's a perfect world! The man and woman whom God had created live in harmony with God and His creation in a garden paradise called Eden. We learn as we get into Chapter 3 that the man and woman have names – Adam and Eve. God blesses them with everything they need. God's one command, His only rule for them: "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17). There's no reason at all why Adam and Eve should disobey God and eat from the one tree, none at all. They have it made. They have a wonderful, peaceful, good, and care free life. But then we come to Ch 3. We all know the story. It's the story of the fall of man and woman. By the end of this chapter everything will change.

READ Genesis 3:1

A first-time reader will ask, "who is this serpent?" We haven't seen him before. It's a new character. We're told that this serpent is "more crafty," wiser, more intelligent than any other animal. OK you Bible scholars, who is this serpent? **Satan**. How do we know that? Because later the Bible tells us. "As the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray [from following Christ]." (2 Corinthians 11:3). Then in Revelation it refers to "that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan" (Revelation 20:2). So, we can be fairly certain that the serpent we see here in Genesis Chapter 3 is Satan, the devil himself. This serpent is no ordinary serpent. It IS a real serpent, but it's being possessed by Satan. It is his instrument.

We know from the serpent's conversation with Eve that he's evil. Let me point out something quite interesting. Back in Chapter 2, of the 14 times God is mentioned He referred to 11 times as "LORD God," Yahweh,

the formal covenant name for God. This name recognizes Him as the Sovereign Creator and Ruler. He is referred to as LORD God here in this verse.

READ Genesis 3:2-5

Did you notice it? Eve omits the word LORD when referring to God. By the way, the serpent did the same thing in v 1. This indicates that they have a distorted view of God. Neither Eve nor the serpent view God as the Sovereign Lord. As LORD God, He is not subject to human judgment, to our assessment. We, the created ones, have no right to question our Creator. But that's exactly what Satan does. He questions God, specifically, His good character and he questions God's word. By the way, all temptation starts with the idea that we have the right to evaluate what God said. We don't. If God says something it's true whether we like it, whether we believe it or not.

The first question in the Bible is asked by the serpent, by Satan, v 1, "Did God actually say..." and then Satan misquotes God. Actually, God had said the exact opposite in Genesis 2:16, "You may surely eat of EVERY tree of the garden [except one]." This is Satan's method of operation. He is a liar. Jesus calls Satan the "father of lies" in John 8:44. Satan lies in order to mislead us. He wants to cast doubt on God's character. Doubt leads to distrust which leads to disobedience.

Initially Eve corrects Satan's misquoting of God. Apparently at some point Adam had told Eve what God's one rule was. And Eve quotes it to the serpent in v 2-3. Yes, she adds that God had told them they couldn't even touch the tree. God never actually said that. And Eve leaves out the word "surely" eat of the fruit, "every" tree of the garden and "surely" die. So while Eve doesn't quote exactly what God said, she understands His one command. That's important. Satan also knows what God had commanded, but he responds to Eve with a blatant lie, v 4, "You will not surely die." The liar of all liars calls a good, holy and sovereign God a liar. Satan is basically telling Eve that there's no judgment, no consequence at all for disobeying

God. That lie persists right up until today. Most people believe that after they die they will either be reincarnated, go into soul sleep, to the happy hunting grounds, party with all their rowdy friends around the jukebox or just cease to exist. But they refute that there is really a place called "Hell" where God will eternally punish those who rebel against Him. Most people reject the clear teaching of scripture. You rarely hear sermons about Hell. People reason that "A loving God would never send anyone to Hell!"

In v 5, the serpent questions God's motives. "God's holding out on you. He knows if you eat of that tree you'll be like Him knowing good and evil. He's restricting you because He doesn't want any rivals." If you study Satan's exile from heaven (in Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28, and Revelation 12) you will see that at one time Satan wanted to be equal with God. "I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God, I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." (Isaiah 14:12-14) This evil desire is what got Satan cast down from heaven along with the angels who followed him. So it should come as no surprise that Satan's appeal to Eve is, "Don't you want to be like God? Wouldn't that be awesome? But no, God is mean and restrictive and doesn't want what's best for you. He doesn't want you to be like Him!" Satan tries to convince Eve that he, the devil is the one who has her best interests at heart, not God. In reality Satan is a liar who "disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14). In reality he is "like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (2 Peter 5:8).

Satan tells Eve a half truth, v 5, "you will be like God knowing good and evil." We find out after God pronounces judgment on Adam and Eve for their sin, v 22, "Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil...'" So we know the result of eating the fruit is that they will in fact know good and evil. They already know good but didn't consciously recognize it as good because there was no absence of good to compare it to. And while obtaining a knowledge of evil becomes a reality after their sin, Adam and Eve's knowledge of evil and

God's knowledge of evil are NOT the same. You see, God knows evil in the same way a surgeon knows cancer. He sees it, recognizes it as cancer in order to treat it or remove it. On the other hand, we humans know evil like the cancer patient. We know it experientially. It resides in us and it is killing us!

James 1:14-15 says, "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death." And that's what happens next.

READ Genesis 3:6

We can see parallels here with the warnings of 1 John 2:15-16: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life--is not from the Father but is from the world.

"The tree was good for food" – this is the "desires of the flesh."

"It was a delight to the eyes" – this is the "desires of the eyes."

"Was to be desired to make one wise" – this is the "pride of life."

Eve wants for herself the things of the world which God had placed off limits more than she wants to please God. Now, Adam's participation in this sin is strange. V 6 states that he is "with her" but must have been unaware of the serpent's tempting of Eve. First Timothy 2:14 says, "and Adam was not deceived but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor." So the million dollar question is this: if Adam was not deceived by the serpent, then why did he eat the forbidden fruit? We're not told. We can only speculate. Perhaps Eve came to Adam after she had sinned and told him, "I did this, I ate the fruit and it was good and I didn't die! It's OK to eat it after all – here, have some!" We don't know for sure. All we know is that "she also gave some to her husband... and he ate." So, it's all Eve's fault, right? No. The New Testament teaches otherwise. Adam is the one held

accountable as the spiritual leader and head of that relationship. Eve was deceived, but Adam joined in for reasons unknown. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Romans 5:12). So the Bible tells us that it was thru Adam that sin entered the world and death, both spiritual and physical, to all people. The good news is that the last Adam, Jesus, can save many. Death came to all thru Adam's sin (disobedience); Life is available to anyone who calls upon the name of Jesus because of what He did for us, His death, His resurrection (obedience).

READ Genesis 3:7

A rather anticlimactic result. Both Adam and Eve now know good and evil. Their eyes have been opened. They're aware of their own wickedness. As a result they are embarrassed. They feel guilt. They fear what God will do to them. They now have wicked desires and evil thoughts. Their innocence is lost. And so they appropriately try to cover their nakedness. John MacArthur said, "You can try to cover yourselves with your own fig leaves, but you need God to make a sacrifice to cover you properly." Of course, this is a reference to v 21 and what God will do later. Well, we all know what happens next...

READ Genesis 3:8-19

V 8, a normal event (fellowship w/ God), but now Adam and Eve hide from God.

V 9, an all-knowing God knows exactly where they are!

V 10, knowing they can't hide from God, Adam gives himself up.

V 11, the first interrogation; God knows what happened and He wants a confession.

V 12, human nature being what it is they start pointing the finger at each other – it's someone else's fault. Adam blames Eve. Worse yet, "that woman you gave me" shows that Adam blames God.

V 13, Eve turns around and blames the serpent.

V 14, God doesn't even bother to question the serpent because He knows Satan is incapable of telling the truth. God goes straight to judgment.

V 15, a KEY verse in the Bible story. "Enmity" between Satan's offspring (those who believe his lies and follow him) and the woman's offspring (those who believe God and follow Him). A constant struggle between good and evil, between God and Satan. God promises that one of Eve's descendants will bruise Satan's head, defeat him. So, right here in the middle of all this judgment, there is a message of hope.

V 16-19, there are long-term consequences for what Adam and Eve did. Instead of a good, easy life like they had in Eden, everyday life will be filled with pain, struggle and hard work.

God says that mankind will NOT continue to live forever as before. Instead, they will return to the dust of the ground, a reference to physical death. God renders the judgment of death on Adam and Eve and on all living things because they ate the fruit God had expressly forbidden them to eat. God is true to His word. Adam and Eve have violated God's one rule and the result is that they will die. But this is not the end of the story. Instead of striking them dead right then and there – remember, God had warned them, "for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Instead, God shows mercy. God allows the Adam and Eve to keep on living, at least for a while longer. He is not finished with them yet. Eve's offspring will eventually put an end to Satan and avenge what was done in the garden of Eden.

READ Genesis 3:20

Adam names his wife Eve, which means "life" because she "was the mother of all the living." The rest of humanity will be direct descendants of Adam and Eve.

READ Genesis 3:21-24

God banishes Adam and Eve from their garden paradise. They are never allowed to return to the place they once called their home. Their lives continue, but it is paradise lost. No longer do they have access to the tree of life (will not again until Revelation Chapter 20). Their relationship with God has been severely strained, but not completely severed. God again shows His goodness by taking an animal, killing it (the first recorded death in the Bible), removing its skin and clothing Adam and Eve. The death of an innocent animal to cover the shame produced by Adam and Eve's sinful actions. Why does God do this? Because God loves them. He cares for them, despite what they've done. So it is that we see Adam and Eve leave Eden, not naked and ashamed, but clothed and with some hope.

No sooner do you have the fall of man, his spiritual death, his moral decline set into motion, than you have the promise of a Messiah who will save us, fallen humanity from our his sins. Ultimately, we know from Romans Chapter 5 and other places in the New Testament that this coming Messiah, this Savior will be Jesus. Here we are in the Christmas season celebrating the birth of Jesus – the One who came from heaven to earth to save us.