

Lesson 4

Genesis Chapter 3

Adam & Eve - The First Covenant between God and Man

As we leave the sensuous bliss of the Garden of Eden at the end of chapter 2 we can't help but wonder how all the loose ends will be tied up. After all, there has been no mention of the unseen world (angels) or how these angels could possibly turn away from God, or why or how their conflict with God would possibly involve humans. To answer some of the questions we need to take a side trip to the book of Revelations to get some of these answers.

Discuss the following questions before reading Chapter 3

Why couldn't Adam be happy alone, even if God never made Eve, since all He really needed for happiness was his life with the Creator of everything?

Did Adam see and talk face to face with God?

After God created anything He declared it GOOD. Why did God feel that "It is not good for Adam to be alone?"

Why did God have to create a mate for Adam from a part of his body? Why not just let Adam pick a mate from any other creature God brought before him? (Adam was made in God's image, (a soul) Eve must also be made in His image (a soul))

What is the significance of creating Adam a mate "that is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh"? (This is the focal point of this covenant. By making Eve, God calls Adam to a higher calling than to just "keep (guard) the Garden, He is calling Adam to love, and experience, even imperfectly, God's love for others. Calling Adam to love makes him more than a creature, It makes Adam a part of God's family).

Adam & Eve - The Fall From Grace

Read Genesis Chapter 3

1. **Why did God allow Adam and Eve to be tempted (tested) by the serpent? Who is this serpent anyway? How do we know that this serpent is "Lucifer" or "Satan", and why does He hate Adam and Eve so much? What was the test? What happened in the test? What were the consequences?**

Read Revelation 12: 7-9.

Satan is Lucifer. Lucifer means daystar. He is a seraphic angel, one of only seven. His turning away from God is the result of enormous pride. While there is much conjecture as to why he would challenge God, we can see that his pride would make him think that he is far superior to man. Obviously Satan would view man as the weak link in God. If he could destroy man, he could strike a powerful blow against God. But what is the best way to destroy him? Physically? No, God would only resurrect him. How, then?

The next question that is begging to be asked is "why would God allow this intimidating dragon to enter the Garden of Eden?" God, as the omnipotent creator, could surely keep Satan from entering the garden if He wanted to. The answer of course is that God wants His creation to choose Him. God gives us wonderful things, but they are just a foretaste of the better things waiting for us when we go to heaven. It would not be a true test if God asked us to give up things that we did not love.

The first consequence of the disobedience in the Garden is that something inside Adam and Eve radically changes. The text says their "eyes were opened." We know they had open eyes before they ate the forbidden fruit, so what can this mean? We are told right away-"they knew they were naked." They were able to see that something was very wrong with them. They could perceive that they were no longer able to be at peace in their nakedness. Not wanting to be fully revealed that way, they make coverings for themselves. Had their

bodies changed? No, their bodies remained the same, but their disobedience took away their innocence, leaving shame in its place.

Newly aware of their weakness and vulnerability and ashamed before one another, Adam and Eve's relationship with God now is damaged as well. They could no longer face their Creator and Father openly. They hid from Him among the trees. Had God changed? No, He is the same God, but their disobedience fills them with fear, making them want to flee from communion with Him in the Garden.

God knows everything that has happened. He asks them for an accounting of their behavior. He wants them to put into words what they have done. He does this for their sakes, not His. It will allow them to have enough self knowledge to recognize how far they have departed from the life God had designed for them. He wants to hear what they have to say about it, as the good Father that He is. A Father Who asks His children for an explanation of their rebellion acknowledges that who they are and why they do what they do is important to Him. His primary concern is for them. He gives them an opportunity to cast themselves on His mercy. And mercy always means hope!

Adam's primary concern is himself. He is ashamed of his nakedness and afraid of God, now that he has disobeyed. He no longer sees God as his all-loving and good Father. Something deep inside him has changed: trust and love have been replaced with fear and shame.

Adam passes the buck to Eve-and actually to God, by saying the woman whom thou gavest to be with me gave him the fruit. He is defensive, denying that any of the fault is his. As he did when the serpent tempted them, he leaves Eve all on her own. Eve, in turn, passes the blame to the serpent, whom she says "beguiled" her. Can this be the same pair we saw in Genesis 2, perfect companions and co-workers in God's creation?

There is no evidence of remorse or grief over their disobedience---no crying out for forgiveness. With their new eyesight, they cannot even see how offensive their behavior is to their Father. It isn't that they are unaware of what they've done. They are unaware of what it means.

As a direct result of their disobedience, Adam and Eve see everything in their world differently.

First, they see themselves as naked, which causes shame.
Second, they see God as one to fear and avoid at all costs.
Third, they lose sight of each other as helpers and companions.

They are fearful and defensive. Although their bodies are alive, something inside of them has died. It is an internal death, affecting every aspect of their lives. The Church calls this original sin. Their human nature has been weakened: "not totally corrupted.[but] wounded in the natural powers proper to it; subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death; and inclined to sin-an inclination to evil that is called 'concupiscence' (CCC 405).

Perhaps the most devastating consequence is that they are blind to this inclination to sin. The new eyesight promised by the serpent has left them unable to see what they have become. What a tragic irony this is! Hear the words of Jesus: "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If, then, the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" (Matt. 6:22-23)

2. **Why were only 2 trees named in the Garden? What is the significance of the "Tree of Life"? Role play with two students as Adam and Eve (Teacher as Satan) the testing in the Garden. Show how Satan was not just tempting Adam & Eve, He was threatening them with death if they did not do his wishes. (The Hero of this battle was Eve, she at least engaged Satan, Adam on the other hand was scared speechless. He allowed this Dragon to intimidate his wife without defending her, and ate from the Tree of knowledge without saying anything. Adam was quick to put the blame on Eve, however, when asked by God.)**
3. **What is God's "Plan B" for man? The protoevangelion, or promise of hope, is God's good news that He will reconcile man back to Himself. Because of Adam's failure, this reconciliation will be effected through "The Woman", Adam's failure in the garden will be reversed, or undone, by the New Adam, in the Garden of Gethsemane.**

Satan is the actual villain here. He is God's true enemy. This is not to deny the humans' responsibility, but the first order of business is to address this one who seems to have gained such power over them. They will not be safe as long as he can wield that power.

By God's curse, the serpent is destined to be the most wretched creature on earth--cursed "above all cattle" and "all wild animals." He will be the lowest form of life, a status that will be evident even in how he moves from place to place ("upon your belly"), eating dust. [Does this imply that the serpent in the temptation scene appeared upright, more like a dragon, but was condemned to slither in a posture of complete defeat and humiliation?] The meaning is clear: Satan has gone from a position of pride and power to one of lowliness and impotence. His demise is lightning-quick. This sudden and irrevocable fall of Satan is a common theme in Scripture, as is clear from the other readings.

Yes, a battle already existed in the rebellion of Satan against God. The difference now is that God is going to extend the battle to include the human beings. **Initially, the humans had been targets of the devil's wrath against God. But now God is going to enlist the humans on His side.** Could the serpent have possibly imagined this incredible twist? It is the first great reversal in the story of man. From this point on, reversal will be the underlying theme of our human history. Pause now to think carefully about this. However we come to understand ourselves and our world, we must get this one truth firmly in place--God does His work through reversals.

The serpent aimed his attack on Eve. It was through her act of disobedience that the first bite was taken. **It is appropriate that God's punishment on the serpent should begin with "the woman."**

The "woman" cannot be Eve because whoever this woman is, she is engaged in a battle against the serpent, the devil. Eve has already succumbed to his power. This "woman" will be God's co-worker in bringing the enemy to defeat; she will be outside of his power.

Remember the contempt for the humans that filled the serpent, infusing that deadly conversation he began with Eve? The devil despised Adam and Eve. They must have looked like such dupes to him. He decided he would strike out at God by striking out at them. He made patsies of them in short order. They appeared to be weak links in the chain. So, when God announces that the serpent, as his punishment, will face a battle with human creatures, the woman and her seed, in which he will be defeated, it is a crushing, mortal blow to his pride and arrogance. We need to linger long enough to let it really sink in. Whatever the devil attempted to rob from humanity--our life, our dignity, our exalted position in God's family--is more than made up for in the punishment meted out to him. God will vanquish His enemy through human beings!

That, of course, means that in the midst of the worst thing that could possibly have happened to man and woman, God makes a promise. That promise is so full of hope for them that it swells and bursts into a vision of glory bright enough to make us want to shield our eyes from it. Who is this God, Who loves His creatures so much to allow them to participate this way in His plan to defeat evil? How could such faithless beings matter so much to Him?

The details we have in the story thus far hardly explain it. We are forced to recognize that behind the words and action that we can see in Genesis is an unseen love that is fathomless, mysterious, unconquerable, and capable of unimaginable displays of power and constancy. What can it all mean??

Wrap up the story of Adam and Eve by summarizing what happens next. Give an Overview of the remainder of the Old Testament. Make the point that the entire Bible (both Old and New Testaments) is simply the story of God's attempt to reconcile Man back to Himself.

Think of how far we've traveled in our study of the first three chapters of Genesis. Remember the glory of hearing God say, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" in Gen. 1:26? And now, we hear "you are dust, and to dust you shall return". (3:19). We watch in silence as God drives man out of the Garden. We know that God is not finished with the humans. But, at this point, we have more questions than answers.

We recognize that in the punishments God gives to Adam and Eve, He allows them to suffer. This He does as any good father does, as a temporary harshness aimed at rehabilitation. Woman will face pain and suffering in marriage and childbirth. These are places in her life where she should experience her greatest joy, for it is in these that she will fulfill her divine vocation. The suffering is meant to remind her that something has gone

dreadfully wrong in human existence. It will present her with many occasions to cry out to God for help, returning her to her proper place in creation as a child dependent on her Father. Adam likewise will sweat and toil to do the job God has given him. Subduing the earth will be a fight. And off in the distance is the inevitability of death. There will be no time for the charade of autonomy and defiance.

Yet even in the sad details of defeat and loss, God takes charge. He allows the man to name his wife, showing that even though they have fallen into spiritual chaos, He is willing to let them continue, as best they can, the life He had ordained for them. He will not suffer His creatures to be naked and defenseless. He clothes them with durable garments, which they will surely need as they are forced to leave the sanctuary of the Garden. The Tree of Life remains, but these creatures are prevented from returning to eat its healing leaves.

The humans leave the Garden not just with new clothes but with hope. They must wait for a woman and her seed to appear so that their mortal enemy can be silenced. And they might well wonder whether they or their descendants will someday be allowed to return to the Garden. Only God knows.

Notes on the Temptation and Fall

WHY DID ADAM SIN?

Adam succumbed to PRIDE and DISOBEDIENCE because of his FEAR of suffering and his unwillingness to DIE, even for the love of his FATHER and BRIDE.

REVIEW OF THE FACTS

- I. Adams duty to guard the garden implies a potential intruder.
2. The mortal danger facing Adam refers to a SPIRITUAL DEATH beyond the physical, so the threat of death attached to the forbidden fruit was more than what met the eye.
3. The "TREE OF LIFE" was Adam's INSURANCE against the potential loss of potential life, although it appears to signify something more than "Immortality", since Adam already had that. (In typology = Eucharist)
4. When Eve came forth from Adam's side, God called him to an even greater duty than work, that is, to love his bride.
5. We know that Satan wanted Adam and Eve dead, and that he preferred spiritual death to physical death.
6. Spiritual death could not be inflicted by the Serpent against their will.
7. Adam and Eve dreaded death, otherwise the threat against their eating would have been meaningless.
8. We know that the God did not intend the garden to be their final state, Heavenly glory was. Earthly paradise was only meant to serve as a foretaste and foreshadowing of Heaven.
9. God had placed Adam on probation (to not eat the fruit), requiring some degree of self-denial as the condition or entering heaven.
10. Adam's test involved more than simple self denial. IT CALLED FOR HIM TO ENGAGE SATAN IN SPIRITUAL COMBAT, BECAUSE IF ADAM DID NOT EAT THE FRUIT, SATAN WOULD NOT HAVE SIMPLY GIVEN UP.
11. Adam, left to his own resources would have been no match against Satan's malice and seraphic power.
12. ADAM DID NOT CRY OUT TO GOD FOR HELP! Adam succumbed to pride and fell back on his own resources and thereby straight to sin.
13. GOD, the father would not have forsaken his son in his hour of need, if only Adam had co- operated with grace and called upon God for help. Either God would have empowered Adam with sufficient grace to destroy the serpent, or he would have accepted Adam's sacrificial offering of himself as a holy oblation, saving him from death and corruption and rewarding him with eternal glory in heaven.

Adam's sin was a failure of nerve, to not decide is to decide.