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## The Story of the Fall: Genesis 3

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When God created Adam and his wife, he put them in a beautiful garden called Eden. It was “God’s Garden,” (Ezekiel 28:13), without sin, and as the name suggests a place “enriched” or “made abundant,” where Adam could live in perfect communion with God.

Adam had everything he needed in the garden; every tree was beautiful to look at and good for food. In the middle of the garden were two trees (Genesis 2:9); one was the tree of life, from which he was allowed to eat. The other was the tree “of the knowledge of good and evil.” This tree was also good to look at and good for food, but it was forbidden. To eat from this tree, God told Adam, would be to eat death (Genesis 2:18). With this instruction, God put Adam and his wife in a place where they would have to choose to worship God and reject sin, or to choose Satan and reject God. Adam chose to reject God.

At the time we meet Adam and Eve in the Garden, Satan had already fallen and taken a third of the angels with him (Revelation 12:4). Not satisfied with his revolt in heaven, Satan turned his

attention to earth. If Satan succeeded in bringing down Adam, the fountain head of humanity, he would destroy the entire human race and ruin the whole creation (Romans 8:22).

Now we turn our attention to the story of the fall in Genesis 3.

### **Satan's Temptation (verses 1-5)**

In his attack on humanity, Satan chose a snake, already known for its shrewd and cunning ways. Satan engaged the woman in conversation undermining the goodness of God, casting doubt on the word of God, and convincing the woman, not only that there would be no consequences for eating, but that she would in fact be like God to know good and evil. He walked our first parents into a position where sin was not only convenient, but attractive and necessary.

## **Adam's Fall (verses 6-8)**

It's interesting that God was silent while Satan worked out his plan with Adam and the woman. God has a bigger plan. But Adam was also silent as he stood alongside his wife. He had no plan, and he was responsible to keep the garden safe and to protect his wife. Adam, however, became convinced of Satan's evil plan and rebelled against God in full knowledge of what he was doing (1 Timothy 2:14).

The record of Scripture very simply says that the woman ate of the tree and then gave to her husband, and he ate. He discovered, however, that sin bound him in a crippling sense of guilt. The guilt intensifies for Adam and his wife, not only in the acknowledgement of their nakedness (verse 6) but to the haunting sound of God in the garden

(verse 8). Something had changed, not in the outward appearance of the garden or in their bodies, but in their own heart and mind. They had died spiritually.

Still, God did not approach them until they had attempted to cover their nakedness with aprons of fig leaves. They discovered how insufficient their own efforts were. In fact, they discovered that not all the trees of the garden could hide them from the all-seeing eye of God.

### **God's Response (verses 9-19)**

From verse nine we read of God's response to this act of war. Dealing with Adam and his wife as image-bearers, God gave them the opportunity to think through what had happened to them by a series of probing questions (verses 9-13). The fig leaves could not hide Adam

from his intense sense of guilt. Nor could the trees in the garden, as God called to him personally, with the question “where are you?” This was a searching question. God was not searching for Adam, for God knew where Adam was. The question forces Adam to search himself and to reason through how he found himself in this situation with God (Isaiah 1:18).

In the end, Satan was cursed with absolute destruction. He will lick the dust (verses 14-15, compare Psalm 72:9, Isaiah 49:23). For humanity, God showed mercy and promised to send a Saviour, the Seed of the woman, who would defeat Satan and destroy death. They will, however, bear the consequences for their sin, and the earth will also groan under the weight of sin (verses 16-19, compare Romans 8:18-22).

## **The First Believers (verses 20-24)**

The last section finished with the declaration that Adam would return to dust (verse 19). Remarkably, however, despite this promise of death, Adam has a sense of hope in the Gospel. Three events followed that point to the hope of life in Christ.

**First**, Adam immediately named his wife, “The mother of all living” (verse 20). By giving his wife this name, Adam first declared his faith in the Gospel promise, that the Seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent. But Adam was also rebuilding his home. His wife, previously unprotected by Adam, had just been deceived. Adam now shows that he will care for his wife and lead the home in worship.

**Second**, God clothed Adam and Eve in coats of skin (verse 21). God showed Adam that his own attempts to recover from the fall were insufficient. He needs God to intervene. Furthermore, the use of animal skins is important. By killing an animal as a substitute, God pointed Adam and Eve to the sacrifice of Christ, who would be their substitute, and by whose death their sin would be covered.

**Third**, in an act of divine grace, God forced Adam and Eve out of the garden, so that they would not eat of the tree of life (verses 22-24). If Adam had eaten of the tree of life at that point, he would have lived forever under the power of sin. Adam is not allowed to the tree of life now, he has no right to it, and God will preserve him from it. Only after he has trusted in Christ (verse 15) and endured the thorns and thistles (verses



17-19), will Adam be given access to the tree of life (Revelation 2:7). Then he would have both “life and immortality” (2 Timothy 1:10).

## **Preparing to Preach on Genesis 3**

One of the keys to good preaching is good preparation. Here are some suggestions for preachers getting ready to preach from Genesis 3.

### **1. Read the story over and over**

Genesis 3 is a story, and you need to know the story well in order to preach it well. It would be good to read it through at least 5 times as part of your sermon preparation. This will help you get the flow of the story, identify themes and repeated words or ideas. It will also help when you come to read the passage in public (especially if you have been reading it aloud).

### **2. Practice telling the story**

Tell the story to your children, your wife, or a friend. This will help you to see if you know the story well enough to tell it

without notes. It will also show if your children are bored or excited by how you are telling it. This is good preparation for preaching to a congregation. Key points and highlights in the story will come to light by telling the story in this way.

### **3. Outline the story**

Preparing an outline is a great way to organize your thoughts. It will also help you think about how to use your time: if you have four points to make in 30 minutes, each point should take you about 5-7 minutes. An outline will also help you address the needs of different people in the congregation. In Genesis 3, one point could be mostly for husbands, and another mostly for wives.

#### **4. Make notes**

Prepare a page with two columns. One side will be for notes about the text, and the other will be for ideas about your sermon. Use the example on page 12.

#### **5. Ask the right questions**

Look for the list of questions on next page.

#### **6. Compare your thoughts with others**

In this magazine, there are several studies of Genesis 3. These may help you get some ideas for preaching.

#### **7. Pray**

Pray for God to give you insight into the text, and into the needs of your audience. (Ephesians 1:18-19)

# **Preacher's Workshop**

## **Questions**

Here are some questions you should ask as you prepare your sermon. They will help you focus on the most important matters. You might choose to mention these questions in your sermon, or you might not. Some suggested answers are provided.

### **1. What does the story teach about God?**

The story in Genesis 3 teaches that God is sovereign even over Satan, and that he is merciful even to sinners.

### **2. What does the story teach us about ourselves?**

This story teaches that we tend to believe the evil's lies and rebel against the Lord. It also teaches that we are aware of our sin.

### **3. What does the story teach about Christ?**

This story teaches that he would be born of a woman, to give freedom to fallen sinners, to defeat Satan, and to destroy death.

### **4. What does this story tell us to do?**

This story tells us to grieve over our sin, to resist the Devil, to trust God's promise of salvation, and to hope for heaven when the curse will be undone.

### **Applications**

Application is an important part of every sermon. Show your hearers how the Bible's teaching affects them personally. Show them what God wants them to do and how God wants them to change. It is best to apply your sermon

specifically to different kinds of people. Here is an example:

### **The Lost**

Genesis 3 shows God's wrath against your sin: you will die. It also shows God's mercy to sinners: if you believe on the Lord Jesus, you will have eternal life.

### **The Lazy**

Genesis 3 shows that you must be careful to watch for the danger of temptation: Satan will sneak in unexpectedly. Husbands should diligently guard their families.

### **The Weak**

Genesis 3 shows that even the strongest Christian can fall, and that even the worst sin can be restored by God's grace.

## **The Wandering**

Genesis 3 shows the terrible consequences of leaving God's promises and commandments. Rebellion leads to death.

This story also shows how tempting it is to be friends with evildoers, and that this friendship leads to warfare with God (James 4:4).



## **Points for Preachers**

### **Who do you trust?**

1. Trusting Satan (verses 1-7)
2. Trusting Ourselves (verses 8-13)
3. Trusting God (verses 14-20)

### **A War of Words**

1. Satan's words and man's response (verses 1-7)
2. Man's words and God's response (verses 8-13)
3. God's words and man's response (verses 14-20)

### **Men and Women**

#### **1. God made the world with order.**

Humans have rule over animals (Psalm 8). Men are to lead their wives (1 Corinthians 11:8-9, 1 Timothy 2:11-12). Creatures are under God's rule (Revelation 4:11).

**2. Satan overturned God's order.** An animal (the snake) ruled humans, the woman ruled her husband, and creatures tried to rule over God.

**3. God reimposed his order in punishment.** The snake would be crushed under a human heel, the woman punished with pain in childbirth and tension in marriage, the man with pain in protecting and providing.

**4. God restores his order in grace:** Christ changes husbands and wives to love, lead and submit (Ephesians 5:22-33)