

Keith Miller
Northwest Church
January 30, 2005

The Fall: Why We Need Redemption

Genesis 3

Introduction:

Last week we saw the purpose of creation, we saw how God created all things out of nothing, and we saw how God saved the best of His creative works for last: the creation of man. Today we will spend most of our time looking at Genesis 3: the fall of man.

Adam is given the job to manage Eden. He is given every tree to eat from except the one and only one: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Notice that God does not say to Adam that he can only eat from a few of the trees in the garden, no listen to Genesis 2:16, "***And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, '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.'***" Why does God forbid Adam to eat the fruit? Because, God wants to preserve life for Adam, "***in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.***"

God did not command Adam not to eat from that one tree because God is some kind of kill-joy. He doesn't tell Adam not to eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because He wants to spoil Adam's fun; God commands Adam not to eat from that one and only tree because God wants to withhold death from Adam!

It is kind of like the rules RoiMaw and I have established for Nathan...

- No playing in the middle of Federal Avenue
- No playing with knives
- No drinking from the toilet

Why would we create restricting rules for Nathan? Because we want to preserve his life just like God wanted to preserve Adam and Eve's life.

Now why would God set up a tree in the middle of the Garden of Eden and command Adam not to eat from it? Because it was put in place to remind Adam and Eve that even though they had maximum freedom and dominion in God's earth, they only enjoyed that freedom and dominion as a result of God's gift. As one theologian suggested, "*The tree functioned as a restraint on Adam and Eve, and reminded them that they were not God and that they were responsible to Him.*"¹

¹ James Montgomery Boice. *Genesis vol. 1*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998; p. 165.

As we move on in Genesis 2, we learn that Adam does exactly what he was called to do, manage the garden by naming the animals. After Adam names the animals, God causes Adam to fall asleep and forms a helper suitable for him.

God doesn't create a subservient creature, the woman is not some kind of after thought, she is a person created in the image of God for the purpose of helping Adam. The woman is not formed from Adam's foot or his hand, she is formed from his side.

God fashions the woman from Adam's rib and after Adam wakes up he says, "*This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*" Both Adam and Eve become ONE flesh, one unit!

What we need to understand here is that marriage was specifically designed to illustrate the relationship of God and His people. Adam and Eve were not only married in a covenantal union to each other, but first they were married to God in a covenantal relationship. Adam and Eve were married to God by design!

Paul, in Ephesians 5:31-32, makes this astounding statement, "*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*"

In other words, marriage was intentionally designed to point to God's redemptive plan in Christ!

So now we come to chapter three and it is here we discover why things are so messed up in our world today. The first person we are immediately introduced to is...

The Great Deceiver (3:1-5)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden,³ but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.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."

The Serpent is the devil (Lucifer). He is real and he is very, very dangerous. You may be asking, "How in the world did he get down here to this little tree?"

The Bible tells us that Satan was once the highest created angel. Before he declared war on God, he had the title, "guardian cherub" (Ezekiel 28:14). One day pride filled his heart to the extent he really believed he could overthrow God from His throne; this is what Satan said in his heart,

***How you are fallen from heaven,
O Day Star, son of Dawn!
How you are cut down to the ground,
you who laid the nations low!
You said in your heart,***

***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 in the north.
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.
(Isaiah 14:12-15)***

The Bible tells us that when Lucifer rebelled, he took one-third of all the angels with him, ***Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon. And the dragon and his angels fought back, ⁸ but he was defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. ⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world - he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. (Revelations 12:7-9)***

The Bible also tells us that all the angels that rebelled received their impending judgment: condemnation in the lake of fire which was specifically designed by God for them. For the angles there is no redemption, no second chances.

And so, this is how Satan arrives on the scene in Genesis 3. He knows his doom is sure, he has a deep hatred for God, and he has a deep hatred for mankind. He wants to take as many of God's creatures to hell with him as he possibly can, and under the sovereign authority of God, Satan is given the opportunity to tempt Adam and Eve to Sin in the form of a serpent.

So what does he do? He approaches Eve and tempts her to eat from the tree God told Adam not to eat from. Satan tempts Eve getting her to question what it was that God actually said, ***“Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”***

Notice how Satan turns God's positive invitation to eat from every tree except that one in the middle of the garden to a negative prohibition: ***“Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”***

God gave all of creation for Adam and Eve to enjoy with the exception of the fruit of one tree. God even explained the reason why Adam was not to eat from that one tree, for if he eats from it he will die!

But what does Satan do? He attempts to paint God as being one who has restricted the good things of His creation from Adam and Eve. What Satan does is cast doubt in the minds of Adam and Eve that God is good to them.

So how does Eve answer the Serpent's question? She replies with a mostly correct answer, ***“We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die’” (Genesis 3:3).***

Here we have the first legalist. God didn't tell Adam if he touched the fruit he would die, He only told him if he ate the fruit he would die. What winds up being perverted here by both the serpent and the woman is the Word of God.

Adam was responsible for making sure his wife had a clear understanding of God's word and much to Adam's shame, she did not. So what does Satan do? He moves in for the kill with an outright lie, ***"You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil"*** (Genesis 3:5).

What Satan essentially tells BOTH Adam (Adam is right next to Eve during this whole time) and Eve is that God is not a good God. God is not good because He has withheld the fruit from the one tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

This would be the equivalent of someone telling my son that, "Daddy and Mommy do not love you because they told you..."

- No playing in the middle of Federal Avenue
- No playing with knives
- No drinking from the toilet

"Don't you see Nathan, Mommy and Daddy are restricting your freedom! Daddy and Mommy are not good to you."

So what is Eve to do? She makes the most logical choice in her mind, which introduces us to our next point...

The Great Divorce (3:6-8)

⁶ *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.* ⁷ *Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.* ⁸ *And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.* ⁹ *But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"* ¹⁰ *And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."* ¹¹ *He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?"* ¹² *The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."* ¹³ *Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

Eve took the fruit and ate it. Why does she take the fruit? Eve ate the fruit because she ***"saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise"*** (Genesis 3:6; also see 1 John 2:15-16²).

² "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 in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world."

What we need to understand here is that the woman fell because she had come to believe that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would make her wise. And when Eve gave the fruit to Adam to eat, I think she really was trying to better her husband. But even though Eve was deceived by the Great Deceiver, Eve sinned. She sinned because she really believed that the Serpent was more trustworthy than the Word of God.

Eve sinned as a result of being deceived, but when Adam took the fruit and ate, Adam willingly and cognitively sinned out of pure rebellion. Listen to 1 Timothy 2:14, ***“Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”***

In other words, Eve did not fall for the same reason Adam did. Eve sinned in that she took on the role of headship over her husband (thinking she was doing him a favor), ate forbidden fruit, and then gave it to her husband to eat.

There was no misunderstanding on Adam’s part, he knew the full implications of what he was about to do before he took a bite. Adam stood face to face with God when God told him that, ***“if he ate of it, he would die.”***

This is why the Bible never places the blame of the fall on women, instead, the indictment is on men, ***“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).

In his commentary on Romans, Donald Grey Barnhouse suggests that Adam’s choice ***...was an act of rebellion, the equivalent of a declaration of independence.... Adam, in effect, said, ‘I am tired of having everything north, south, east, and west of this tree. I will be independent. I will run my own affairs.’ It was not a request that God share the throne of government with man; it was an ultimatum to Him to abdicate and leave full control to man.***³

I think when Adam heard the Serpent’s promise, ***“You will not surely die. For your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil,”*** his eyes went wide with envy: You mean I can be like God? Give me some of that fruit! And what Adam in essence did, was declare his desire to divorce the God of creation, but not only divorce, war.

Adam said in his heart,

***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 in the north.
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High.
(Isaiah 14)***

³ Donald Grey Barnhouse, “God’s River,” *Romans vol. II*, (Grand Rapids, MI: 1982)

The reason Adam didn't step in and save his wife from sin like he should have, and the reason why he took the fruit was because he wanted to be like God. And when he took that fruit and ate from it, the curse of sin infected both he and his wife as well as every single descendent in Adam's family tree we call humanity.

In Romans 5:12-14, we read,

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-¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come....¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

In other words, Adam was plagued with a fatal disease called sin which has been passed down from generation to generation.

Cornelius Plantinga, in his book, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*, wrote that "*sin is a plague that spreads by contagion or even by quasigenetic reproduction. It's a polluted river that keeps branching and rebranching into tributaries. It's a whole family of fertile and contentious parents, children, and grandchildren.*"⁴

Sin, like a terminal disease, finds its way into the womb of every woman, for we read in the Bible, "***Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me***" (Psalm 51:5).

So after Adam took the fruit, what happened next? Did Adam get what he wanted; was the grass as green on the other side as he perceived it to be? No; look at verse 7, "***Then the eyes of both were opened, and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin cloths.***"

What was once a sacred and enjoyable union was perverted by sin. Before the fall, Adam and Eve walked in the Garden naked and unashamed before each other and before God, but after the fall they were naked and ashamed; this is the way it has been all throughout human history – fig-leaves.

So what does Adam and Eve do after they realize that they really messed up big-time? They try to cover their shame with fig-leaves. But that was not all they did, because what we learn in the next verse is that when "***they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day***" Adam and Eve hid themselves from God. Now isn't that so stupid? Adam and Eve thought they could hide themselves from the all-powerful, all-knowing God of creation (there is a cost with sin).

⁴17.

Cornelius Plantinga, Jr., *Not the Way it's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1995) 53.

What we learn in Genesis 3 is that sin is irrational. There is no rational with sin. Adam and Eve hid from God in their shame and sin. This is the human condition; people have no desire for God. The Bible tells us that, ***“None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God” (Romans 3:10-11).***

Human history is a history of humans running from God! There is a disposition in every single human being that wants nothing to do with God. In fact, if we have learned anything from history, we have learned that ***“we cannot find God for the same reason that a thief can’t find a police officer.”***⁵

So who looks for who? Does Adam come looking for God?

The Great Deliverer (verses 9-21)

God comes looking for Adam, Adam and Eve don’t come looking for Him. God then asks Adam a series of questions not because God is looking for answers, He already knows all the answers; God asks Adam a series of questions so that Adam might repent and turn back to God.

How does Adam answer God? Does he repent and beg God for His mercy? No, Adam plays the blame game: ***“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.”*** And so God then asks the Woman why she gave the fruit to Adam, she plays the blame game, ***“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”***

Now both Adam and Eve told God the truth, but failed to acknowledge the real reason why they ate from the tree. The answer they should have given to God is that they wanted to be like God.

What does God do? Does he let Adam and Eve off the hook? No. There are consequences for sin: For Eve, all women will have a real painful experience in bearing children, and the desire of every woman would be to usurp her husband’s divinely appointed headship.

Adam will have to work himself to the grave, and both Adam and Eve are no longer permitted to take from the tree of life, so they are removed from the Garden to experience one of the curses of Sin: death.

But there is hope in Genesis 3 and it is found in verse 15, ***“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”*** This is the first promise of a messiah! The Serpent (Lucifer) will inflict a wound to a descendant of Adam which would be the Messiah (on the cross), but He (the Messiah) would inflict a mortal wound to the serpent by crushing his head.

Even though Adam, as a representative of the whole human race, declared a divorce from God, God seeks after Adam and promises a Messiah to come that Eve would be the mother of. Theologians call Genesis 3:15 the *protoevangelion* (the first Gospel). Who preached the first Gospel? Did Adam or Eve, no, God did.

⁵ Michael Horton. *Putting Amazing Back into Grace*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994; p. 55.

But this is not the end of the story, not only did God promise a solution to the problem Adam and Eve caused for all of humanity, but He also provides a solution for Adam and Eve's sin problem.

Adam and Eve had committed spiritual adultery with the idea of being a god; God had every right to issue a divorce and sentence Adam and Eve to Hell, but He didn't.

Look what happens in verses 20-21,

“The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.”

Adam, out of faith in God's promise that a descendent would come from his wife's seed, names the woman Eve which means Mother of the Living. I think it is here that Adam is repentant and in response to Adam's faith, God replaces Adam and Eve's fig-leaf clothing with animal skins.

The Bible tells us that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22). God sheds the blood of an animal to provide a temporary sin covering for Adam and Eve's sin and then clothes them in the skins of the animals. This is a foreshadowing of what God would do through His Son to provide a permanent sin covering.

© Keith Miller (2005).

You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided that you do NOT alter the wording in any way, you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, and you do not make more than 1,000 physical copies.