

Original Sin ▪ Genesis 3:1-13

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Over 20 years ago I was taking some classes at a community college and had to give a speech in one of them. I could choose any topic. I chose: *Who Is Jesus Christ?*

I wanted people to know what I believed and was eager to witness.

In 2023, if I were in the same place today, I think I would go with a different topic:

What's wrong with our world?

—Everyone has an opinion: politics; economy; media; social media; mental health.

—It's a subject that comes up all the time.

Gen. 3 lays the foundation of what is wrong with our world.

- If I had to list the 10 most important chapters of the Bible, Gen. 3 would make the list. (Gen 1-3 would also.)

In these 13 verses we get an explanation of what is wrong with the world through Original Sin.

› *Original Sin explains clearly what is wrong with the world.*

There are 4 main parts of the narrative:

—Tempter

—Temptation

—Transgression

—Trial

THE TEMPTER (1a)

- The Serpent stands as the main villain in human history.

Just like Darth Vader is woven into the rest of the Star Wars movies, so is the Serpent in the Biblical story.

- The Bible is silent on a lot of things: how could he talk? What did the serpent originally look like?

We know a couple of clear things.

—This is Satan (Rev. 20:2)

Revelation 20:2 ESV

And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,

—He is crafty (2 Cor. 11:3)

› *A fixation of our enemy is not good, but a familiarity is essential.*

Familiarity with how he works. His business is temptation - temptation through deception.

—Satan is a Deceiver

Revelation 12:9 (ESV)

that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—

This should cause us to be alert and on guard.

We have a common enemy of our souls who works in the business at deception.

He is skilled at it.

It's his ancient craft.

Before moving on, we may wonder why?

Why did Satan creep into Eden?

- › *Our enemy hates one thing: God's glory. So he is happy to see everything that clouds and distorts that.*

We can get a peek into his motives from the account in:

Matthew 4:9 ESV

And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

The Tempter wants to come between you and your worship of God.

He wants to hinder, block, and destroy true worship.

THE TEMPTATION (1b-6a)

The focus for the rest of our time is on our First Parents.

| The older we get, we tend to find ourselves becoming more like our parents

As we read this passage we should ask, *What ways am I like this?*

| In a sense, studying Gen. 3 is like getting a look at our enemy's playbook.

Our enemy is subtle and crafty, but very predictable.

—First, through raising doubt. (1b)

It begins with, "Did God actually say...?"

| Questions can be asked to get more information; or they can be used to raise doubts.

"Did God really say?" is a doubt-raising question.

- Eve’s reaction is troubling: she adds an extra element to the command.
- I don’t know why Eve added this extra element, but it’s not good. It’s not the right way to handle the Word.

—Second, through deceptive contradiction (v4-5)

- This comes through an outright lie - “you will not die”. Now it’s true that Eve does not automatically die. Adam will live to 930 years.

But the Serpent does flatly contradict what God clearly said.

—Thirdly, questioning God’s character(v5)

The way that Satan portrays God is that he is oppressive, withholding,

—Finally, acting on desire (6b)

- The words used for desire and delight will be used later to describe the sin of coveting (Dt. 5:21)

Coveting=wanting something so bad that you are willing to forsake contentment in God to get it.

› *Coveting must be fought at the desire level before it becomes sin.*

James 1:14–15 ESV

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.

The same Enemy, uses the same tactics: distorts truth, sows doubt of God’s goodness—hoping we are lured away in our desires.

- It’s important to see how the actual command is dealt with. It’s questioned by Satan, misquoted by Eve, denied by Satan...and finally *not defended by Adam.*

What should Adam and Eve have done?

“Their best restraint was the thought...that God is just and that to be loved by him is the consummation of a happy life.” (Calvin)

In other words they should have just kept their minds on two things :

- God’s commands are always perfectly just.
- The love of God is the source of their true happiness

Temptation whispers: “There is something other than being loved by God out there that can make you happy.”

Friends—we do well to learn from our first parent’s mistakes.

THE TRANSGRESSION (6b-7)

When they were much younger and we lived in another neighborhood, my kids one day came home with probably a bushel of apples that they were holding in their shirt.

The problem was we had no apple tree. They had taken the apples from a neighbor—without permission.

IF we think that the action of Adam and Eve were on that scale, we don’t have a clue about the holiness of God.

- › *This is not about the fruit, but about the Law of God. It’s about the Kings Edict.*

Everything good that Adam and Eve enjoyed have come from the goodness of God and the power of His Word. Will they trust and honor?

- Now when it comes to the root of sin, there are two schools of thought.
 - Augustine: Pride was the root of sin. Temptation was to “be like God”.
 - Calvin: Unbelief. They chose to believe/serve the word of the Serpent.
- It may be a mix of both.

Yet it will only be Faith - faith alone that unites us back to God.

Here we get what's wrong with the world in 3 Words. "Took and Ate".

The result: Our first parents, and all their children become naturally born enslaved to the serpent.

Naturally bent towards unbelief.

THE TRIAL (8-13)

The final part of this narrative has the elements of a trial.

You have interrogation, and a verdict issued in the remaining verses.

Paradise becomes the first courtroom.

- First, he calls Adam to account first (v9). Adam has leadership and headship.

Romans 5:12 ESV

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—

- It's not just what Adam did in Eden...it's what he did not do.

-We have also seen how Adam was given a kingly role, as well as a priestly role in the garden.

-One other role he had: Prophet.

He was given God's Word (2:16) and should have quickly defended the Command instead of doing nothing!

As we look at our first parents in the trial, we see ourselves.

- First, the loss of innocence and attempt to cover. (v7)

Their exposure is a loss of innocence.

The fig leaves are a flimsy and futile attempt to cover their shame...*something God sees straight through.*

Hebrews 4:12–13 ESV

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Hiding (v8)

- Their attempt to hide from the Judge is also futile

Psalm 139:7–8 ESV

Where shall I go from your Spirit?
Or where shall I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!

We can't escape.

Psalm 139:2 ESV

You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from afar.

We can't even hide our thoughts from God!

Evading (10)

- When questioned, Adam does not admit guilt; he simply states how he feels...afraid.

Adam does not naturally confess or seek to repent.

› *We are born and act just like our first father.*

Blaming (11-13)

- Adam goes from being a poet making up sonnets about his wife, to throwing her under the bus.
- And in a sense, accuses God of giving him this gift.

It would take a long time in history before an image-bearing Son would come, love his bride...and be willing to bear her guilt out of love.

That's the next essential part of the story.

But for now, it's so utterly dark.

The best way I can describe this chapter is like when you are in a room, and the lights flicker a few times before they abruptly go out...and the room is pitch black.

The world has been in darkness.

"She took and ate".

It's fitting that this text, those last words, fall on a Lord's Supper Sunday.

Even though so much is wrong with the world, we have hope.

She took ... and ate: so simple the act, so hard its undoing. God will taste poverty and death before 'take and eat' become verbs of salvation. [Taken from *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary - Man's Fall and Expulsion (3:1-24)*]

We need to know what's wrong with the world, and us...

Once we do, we really are in a place by the help of the Spirit to understand and love who Jesus is, and what he has done to redeem, restore, and renew his fallen creation.

The merciful coming of Jesus Christ has transformed "take and eat" into hopeful words of salvation, healing, and eternal life.