



The Story Of Salvation
NCTM Tuesday Night Studies 2010
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The Fall

Notes on Genesis by Grant Thorpe—A Reading Guide.¹

3:1-24

Chapter two has set the scene for this encounter: a garden of rich provisions, of invitation to eternal life (the Man was not told that he could *not* eat from this tree), of a wonderful partner to whom he was bonded in covenant love and with whom he would share the task God had given to him.

Every part of this creation is contested by the contrary word of the Serpent and rejected in what the man and woman will do.

- Satan suggests that the LORD is not generous but mean.
- He says that the LORD is unreasonable to restrict knowledge of good and evil to himself.
- He denies that God will carry out his threat of death. He calls God a liar and by his lie, leads the man and woman into death.
- The partner God gave to the man is deceived and becomes a partner of the Serpent rather than of her husband.
- The man who had received the word of God listens, instead, to the creature God had formed from him, and, through her, to the created Serpent whom he had named and over whom he had authority. He knows exactly what he is doing. He wants to be ‘as God’.
- The world that was abundant and had expressed God’s faithful love is now regarded as something in itself - good to see and to eat and to make one wise. The man and woman are operating without the Father (1 John 2:16).
- They have sought to live outside of the life assured by God’s command, and they die, that is, they are dead to God.
- The Presence of God is no longer sweet but terrifying. They don’t want God to find them, and they are ashamed of the loss of glory they now feel.
- Their relationship with each other is shattered by the man’s need to accuse his wife in order to excuse himself, and the woman can no longer be real because she denies that her being deceived is blameworthy.

Remarkably, although everything is now different, God has not changed, and, because he is faithful to his creation, life will proceed.

- Their life is still ordered by God’s word.

¹ [Permission granted by Grant Thorpe to hand out these notes.](#)

- Their task remains, though with the addition of pain, and hard labour and competitive relationships (implied in the words 'desire' and 'rule' in v.16).
- They are dead to God but with a promise that what the Serpent has done will be overcome through a child to be born to the woman.
- They may live by faith in this promise.

Later on, we read that Samuel came to know the Lord when he heard the voice of God (1 Sam.3:7). We may suggest that while death had come, the couple could still live by hearing the word of God.

Adam, it seems, receives this promise because he calls his wife Eve, suggesting that she will be a 'life-giver'.

The couple are clothed by God so that they will not have to live with the shame of what they have done. From this point, the human race has never needed to live with the shame of their fallen humanity – if they would understand and be grateful for what God has done. Signs of forgiveness and justification will remain in Israel's history until their fulfillment in the covering provided for us by Christ's righteousness.

Physical death will now come to them, and this will remain until a Second Adam has overcome death. But even the threat of death is so they may 'get a heart of wisdom' (Psa. 90:9-12). God will now guard the inheritance that they failed to guard (1 Pet. 1:4).

4:1-26

The story of 'the heavens and the earth' passes quickly to the next generation. What becomes of this human family to whom so much has been given? They now live with pain and curse and death, but not with shame, if they would understand their clothes aright, and not without hope. What joy, then, when sons were born, the 'seed' promised to the woman'!

The character of these men is not revealed so much by their occupations as by their worship. Cain brings what he has, but Abel his 'first fruits'. To Israel later on, this would signify gratefulness. There may be a hint also that blood must be spilt to rightly acknowledge what is deserved by sinners who approach God. Whatever, it is clear that God who looks at the heart received the worship of Abel, but not that of Cain.

The writer of *Hebrews* says that Abel's offering was 'by faith' (Heb. 11:4), which must mean faith in God's promise. Cain, on the other hand, was 'of the evil one (1 John 3:12), believing the false word of the Serpent and resenting the privations of his hard life. Cain's 'fallen face' suggests the shame he still feels, the hatred he has for God and the anger against the one whose deeds are a witness to God's goodness (his brother's deeds were good – 1 John). He becomes like the one he listens to and murders his brother.

Cain's murder of his brother need never have happened. The Lord reasoned with him. Sin is reckoned to be external to Cain, a crouching predator to be mastered. But Cain is not listening to God and he does the will of his false master.

God's reasoning with Cain continues, but there can never be mercy without justice. His brother's blood cries out to be avenged, so, the very ground that received Abel's blood will bring added hardship to Cain's life. But what hurts Cain most is the hatred he now expects to receive from his fellow man. He thinks that other people are like him and that they will be

vindictive towards him. Again, the God who is slow to anger protects Cain from human reprisals. Vengeance belongs to God, and the sanctions he announces against those who may hurt Cain are more severe than for the murderer! Would that the world would see how gracious God is!

The family of Cain proceeds as it began, in arrogance and irreverence. It develops an impressive culture, but underneath it all is always a seething aggression against any who threatened this. There was no Sabbath rest for this family. Seven generations later, Lamech threatens to outdo God's measure of kindness seventy times with his malice.

The promise of a seed to destroy the Serpent could not be thwarted by all this bitterness. A son is appointed (the word 'appointed' sounds like Seth in Hebrew) to replace Abel. Seth also has a son, and, in this setting of future generations being assured, true worship of God is established. Calling on the name of the Lord in thankfulness and entreaty is the true activity for all human beings. He alone has made all things and he alone can give grace and hope to enable humanity to live as the image of God.

5:1-24

The next family narrative is the story of Adam, through his son Seth. He is the seed appointed by God to proclaim the hope in which humanity must live. The repetition of 'when' through the passage (vv. 1, 3, 6, etc.) suggests a continuous story rather than separate events, a story beginning with the high hope of God creating man in his likeness, male and female, and blessing them, and ending with not one person who reflected that likeness.

Adam has a son in his image and likeness, that is, in the likeness of God. No 'fall' has been able to diminish the regal quality and calling of God's creation (c.f. 9:6-7). The succeeding generations are listed, but now, with the constant reminder of death as each generation comes to an end.

On the other hand, these families, by successive births, have the promise of a coming seed proclaimed to them, and two stories carry more detail concerning this hope. If the seventh generation through Cain produced Lamech, the seventh through Seth produces Enoch, who 'walked with God'. (There may be a contrast here with Adam, with whom God sought to walk but who hid himself.) To walk with God would be to walk in his commands, as Israel was later commanded, so that God could walk with them (Lev. 26:3-12; [2 Cor. 6:16](#)). Jude calls Enoch a prophet (Jude 14) meaning that he had some understanding of God's covenant relationship with creation, lived in that hope and spoke of it to others. God 'takes' this man, that is, he is takes him directly into his presence without death. Such an event is joined by the translation of Elijah (2 Kings 2:11) in being a witness to the final overthrow of death, and of the Serpent.