

# One Unified Story

Text Genesis 2:25-3:24

## Introduction

If you've seen the news over the past week, you know that tragedy never seems to go out of style. Just last week there was a tragic shooting in a neighborhood grocery store in Buffalo, NY, in which ten people lost their lives, and three more were injured. These kinds of tragedies are all too common. We live in a world full of murder, theft, and adultery. We experience pandemics, earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes which bring devastation to entire towns. Our loved ones suffer from heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. We don't have to look very hard to see that something is deeply wrong with the world we live in.

**Two questions help us understand our world. What happened? Where are we going?** To answer these questions, we turn to the bookends of the Bible with an eye on the working out of a single, unified story that spans thousands of years in the making. **Four headings will be our guide through Genesis 2:25-3:24: Catastrophe, Consequence, Covering, and Consummation.**

## Catastrophe

In six days, God made the world, creating a masterpiece to reflect his image on the sixth day.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." (ESV)

**Man is a cultivator placed in the garden to rule over the whole earth.** We see in v29, God gave them every good thing to consume and enjoy.

We arrive in chapter 2 with a retelling of the same historical events with a slightly different theological emphasis at the beginning of this section.

God formed the man from the dirt and placed him in the garden along with two trees: the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Notice that the tree of life is listed first in 2:9. That's the one that Adam is supposed to eat.

Genesis 2:16–17 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, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (ESV)

**You shall die die.** There is no superlative in Hebrew, so you repeat words for emphasis. This also points to the fact that death as judgment for sin is twofold.

Until this point, everything was good, until God sees Adam alone. In 2:18 God says,

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” (ESV)

The Lord God takes the rib from the man and creates the woman. Here we find the beginning of our text as Adam is singing joyfully over the wife that God has given to him.

*Read the text*

**They were both naked and unashamed**

**Nakedness creates bookends on this first subsection of the narrative.** The first time we see it, the man and his wife are in a state of pure, innocent bliss. They were together and happy. They shared perfect communion with God and each other. Everything, except the one tree, was for their enjoyment, according to God’s command.

Remember 1:26 – their job is to cultivate flourishing across the whole world as God’s image bearers, beginning with the garden. **There was no pain, no disease, and no shame.** God created a good world, and the best of it belonged to the man and his wife.

The second time their nakedness appears in the text is a much different circumstance.

**The crafty serpent**

Something important to know about biblical interpretation is that Hebrew historical prose is full of wordplay. The ancient hebrews loved few things more than a good pun. Moses introduces us to a new character in this series of factual, historical events using word play. **We see in 2:25-3:1 that the Man and his wife were both Arom...Now the serpent was more Arum than any other beast.** This word means naked, wise, prudent, and crafty or cunning. You might say that the humans were *smooth* compared to the animals. You might also say that the serpent was *smooth*, or crafty, if you were to try to capture the essence of this pun.

This is a real snake. It’s true that snakes represent sin and evil in ancient mythology, but the Bible places this serpent into the animal kingdom. It’s right there in the text, **the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field.** Here’s another interesting observation. Snakes don’t normally talk. That’s a massive indicator that something is about to happen.

## The created serpent

We should note that the snake is a created being. This tells us two important truths. **1. Satan is not God's Equal. 2. God did not create sin.**

Though Satan fancies himself a better god than God, he is not. Talk about a manifestation of pride. This is why humility is critical for the christian. Satan's MO is pride. Satan is under God's sovereign rule and authority, just like every other created being.

Consider the example of Job. Satan is prowling the earth looking for a victim when God suggests to him Job his servant. Satan tells God that it's pointless because God always protects him. This is God's response.

Job 1:12 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. (ESV)

Notice that God is restraining Satan.

These questions designed to tempt the woman do not come from God. They originate within the serpent. This tells us something vital about God. **God is not the author of temptation.**

What are the sources of temptation? Turn to James 1:13-17. **God tempts no one.** Why? He is eternally good and never changes. Rather, it is our fleshly desires that birth sin. Additionally

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (ESV)

**Source of temptation are fleshly desire and spiritual evil.** These two things are precisely what we see in Genesis 3.

## Temptation

**How did sin happen?** There's a process.

1. **Question the clarity of the word.**
2. **Challenge the authority of the word**
3. **Openly contradict the word**

Satan and eve are working together in their rebellion against God. It begins with questioning, "did God really say?.." At that moment, eve should have shut down the conversation. Instead, she mis-

quotes the word back to Satan, adding to it the prohibition to touch. As soon as she mishandled the word, the serpent knew he had the woman in his snare, and he closed the net on the trap. “No, you will not surely die.” He’s insinuating that God is a liar.

### **How does sin happen?**

As we move through the text, we see the woman practically walking through 1 John 2:16.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father, is from the world. (ESV)

**1. The tree was good for food—the lust of the flesh.**

**2. It was a delight to the eyes—the lust of the eyes.**

**3. It was desirable to make one wise—the pride of life.**

It satisfied hunger. Likewise, it was beautiful to look at. Could it truly make her wise? Wiser than whom?

Moses is writing this down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit for the nation of Israel. Complaining Israel. Spiritually adulterous Israel. He’s telling them, “pay attention. This is what’s at the root of your sin.” Are we not the same? Are we as fallen human beings not equally consumed by our lust for money, sex, and power? Are we not equally filled with pride? “If I were running the universe, I would... fill in the blank.”

We spend our lives chasing fleeting pleasures. “Does God want you to be unhappy? Did God say you can’t have nice things? You work really hard for that paycheck.” These thoughts enter our mind, and we do the same as Eve. We open the door to dialoguing with the devil. “Of course not.” We think to ourselves as we are trying to justify why our idol isn’t really sinful, as though it were up to us to decide God’s standards for him.

It was when the woman began to distort the word of God, that Satan knew he was winning. So he proceeded to contradict the word directly. “Yes, God calls homosexuality an abomination. Why do you care? He just doesn’t love you for who you are.” “Of course the Bible says do not murder, but it’s a bad time to have a baby right now.” “God warns about loving the world, but if he really cared about you, then he would give you whatever you want.” “Looking at a woman lustfully is adultery according to Jesus, but it’s just a look. What’s it really going to hurt?” It’s the authority and the sufficiency of scripture that is under attack.

How did Jesus respond to the temptation in Matthew 4? He didn’t even entertain a conversation with the devil. ” **You shall not put the Lord your God to the test... Be gone, Satan!..** When you are

aware that you're coming under temptation, you are to shut it down immediately. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you, says the book of James.

## Treason

### **Eating the fruit was a rejection of God's Lordship**

Satan wins the dialogue. The woman ate the fruit and gave some to her husband, They walked with God. They enjoyed communion with him. They were placed on the earth for ruling over it as His representative. When the man doesn't intervene, they commit cosmic treason together in an attempt to dethrone God the creator and their Heavenly Father from His dominion.

**The choice: personal communion with the eternal, unchanging, all powerful, life giving, good, all wise, ever present God who loved them and cared for them—or a piece of fruit.** This is the same choice that is before us as we wrestle through temptation. It's God in all his glory or a piece of fruit.

They chose the fruit. Their innocence is gone, and the world would never be the same.

## Consequence

**The consequences of sin are always worse than we could ever imagine.** Immediately we see spiritual death which is separation from God and hereditary shame come on the scene. God comes walking through the garden as the evening breeze sets in, which the tense indicates is a habitual action. This should be a comfort, but instead it's a dreadful sound. "Quick hide! Here he comes" the man shouts to the woman. What are they doing? Making a covering of fig leaves because they're naked. Adam shouldn't even know the word naked.

**Can the man and woman really hide from God?** Of course not; He's omniscient and omnipresent. He's never not been there wherever they try to go. Let that be a lesson to us when we are tempted to sin against our maker. They're ashamed and don't know how to avoid the consequences for their treason yet.

My dog buckshot does this. When he's missing, we start seeking evidence of something destroyed. Occasionally, he's under the bed, sometimes under my desk, but always just out of sight when he's done something bad. When we find the evidence because he hasn't figured out how to clean it up himself, he comes creeping slowly down the hall with his head hung low. He knows a timeout is coming. Is that not familiar?

If only we could think clearly about temptation, we might see the consequences that sin has on our lives, both physically and spiritually. We would run the other way before we grieve the Holy Spirit. We would refuse to pick up that phone, or to get in that car, or even click that button. Sin kills.

## Parent—Child dynamic

They clearly deserved instant death for trying to dethrone God. Even so, God was gracious. He begins asking questions, the same way you do with a small child who knows they've done wrong. God already knew the answers, but it was time to fess up.

**How do they respond? By playing the blame game.**

The man says the woman is to blame. The woman says the snake is to blame. Kids don't do that, do they? Your children are as fallen and in need of the gospel as you are.

Do you understand **the first step in reconciling with God is to be honest about your sin**? Do you realize that your sin is your fault? Satan tempted Adam and Eve, but God holds all three of them accountable.

There is coming a judgment! We will stand before our maker to give an account according to **Romans 14:1-12**. Jesus in **Matthew 12:36** says we will not only give account for our action, but even for our careless words. To be reconciled to the judge requires humble confession and ownership of your sin. Are you ready to stand before him?

## The world is broken

Notice the way that the Moses structures the questioning and punishment. Man, woman, serpent, serpent, woman, man. This is intentional. It leads us to focus on serpent's judgment. Understanding that the serpent's judgment is the focus of the section, let's examine them in the order of man, woman, and serpent.

Why does God call on the man first? Adam had the responsibility to rule. This means he was to intervene on behalf of his wife. That's not what he did. Standing by passively, he sinned just as much as she did. **As a governing representative, Adam was our federal head.** Think of it this way. In the United States, we are a federal republic. We elect people to make decisions on our behalf with our interests in mind. Voddie Baucham used the illustration of when they declare war, I am also at war.

Turn to Romans 5:12-19. The doctrine of **Original Sin**.

Paul tells us:

- 1. Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin.**
- 2. Because one man sinned, all men sinned.**
- 3. Many died through one man's trespass.**

#### 4. Death reigned through that one man.

#### 5. One trespass led to condemnation for all men.

Do you see how because Adam was guilty, we are guilty? This raises the question of how many sins do you personally have to commit to deserve hell? The answer: zero. This is the doctrine of original sin. We are born sinners because our father Adam chose to try to dethrone God, and then we add to Adam's guilt with our sins.

There is nothing you can do to make yourself right with God apart from his grace. We must reflect this in our evangelism. The gospel is not about emotional fulfillment; it's about crushing the power of sin, death, and the grave, and the one who came as a second Adam to bring reconciliation with God.

**Adam's crime was surrendering the rule of himself and his posterity to Satan.** Satan now has become the ruler of this world according to John 12:31 and 14:30, and 2 Corinthians 4:4 calls him the god of this world.

**The punishment, which fits the crime, he is to rule over a hostile creation.** Read Gen 3:18-19. Now it will be intense labor just to survive. Suddenly, he has to worry about finding food. Now, dehydration is a serious factor which makes the heart rate increase significantly with even the slightest activity. It's like being stranded on a desert island, oh, and by the way, a lot of creation now wants to kill him. The thorns and thistles were just the tip of the iceberg. **Romans 8:19-24**

The whole world was subjected to futility by Adam. Even our bodies are groaning for redemption. That includes violence, hatred, sickness, poverty, birth defects, oppressive governments, and natural disasters. Creation screams, "It's not supposed to be like this!" To top it all off, now we see physical death, where the man returns to the dust.

#### The Woman's Punishment v16

As the woman was given to the man as a helper, for companionship, and to fulfill the mandate to be fruitful and multiply and take dominion it's clear that **the woman's punishment for the treasonous surrendering of Adam's rule is that her role in exercising dominion is subjected to utter pain and futility, the same way that Adam's role is.**

She was to help her husband by supplying farmhands. Now that has become the most painful experience known to mankind. Additionally, this is a mark of the sinfulness of her offspring from this point forward.

Even the goodness of her marriage was subjected to futility. There was no longer peace in the household. She was made to be a helper for her husband, the kind that he would die without, and now she would have a fierce struggle just to be under his leadership. We see this exact phrase again in Genesis



4:7 when God tells cain, ” **Sin is crouching at the door. It’s desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.** This makes Ephesians 5 make a lot of sense, doesn’t it? I would submit to you that the husband loving his wife and the wife submitting to and respecting her husband has a lot do with the specific struggles brought on by the fall rather than by simply how each gender receives love.

## The Serpent’s Punishment

We now reach the crux of the chiasm. The emphasis of this interrogation/punishment narrative is the on the crushing of the serpent. This is the first promise of the gospel that we see in the scripture.

**To put enmity between two people means that they’re trying to kill each other.** This enmity is between the woman’s offspring (plural) and the serpent. Ultimately, the singular he will be the one to crush the serpent’s head.

This is Jesus with the serpent striking his heels as the hammer strikes the nail that pierced his ankle. You can imagine the anticipation of the adversary At this moment. It seemed that he would finally win the war against God and claim the throne that he judged to be rightly his.

Jesus was spat upon, beaten, and had the flesh ripped from his body with the cat of nine tails. When you could no longer tell if he was male or female, they put a purple robe on him and let the blood begin to clot, then ripped it off. They drove a crown of thorns into his skull. As he was suspended there naked and ashamed, nailed to that cross as the second Adam gasping for breath, he bore the wrath of God. He cried out “it is finished!” and then he gave up his spirit.

Could it be that Satan won? They removed his body and laid him in a tomb. For three days he lied there with his flesh beginning to rot.

Early on Sunday Morning that first Lord’s day, his heart began beating, and his lungs filled with air. His eyes were open wide in the newness of life after heaving dealt the crushing blow to the serpent’s head. He’s alive! It was not possible for the grave to hold him. Do you believe in the resurrection of Christ? It’s the only hope you have.

Come to Jesus, all who labor and are heavy laden. He will give you rest. Take his yoke upon you and learn from, for he is gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls!

Colossians 2:13–15 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (ESV)



The first Adam brought death. By using Satan's own weapon against him, which is death, the second Adam brings eternal life. Walk away from your sins! Follow him and live!

## Covering

The man and woman deserved execution. Instead, God gave them a promise. **They believed God's promise and exchanged their fig leaves for a covering.**

There was death in the garden that day. An animal was killed to cover Adam and Eve's sin and shame. **This provides the foundation for the sacrificial system that Jesus fulfilled in his life, death, and resurrection.**

Hebrews 9:22b without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

So many try to sew together fig leaves to hide their own sin and the shame of what they've done and what other have done to them. He's all seeing. You can't hide those things from him. Just like Adam and Eve, you cannot cover your own sins. You will not find a scale in the courtroom of God on judgment day.

The scriptures tell us plainly

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (ESV)

Are you trying to come to God through your works? You cannot save yourself. No baptism or Lord's supper can atone for you or wash away original sin. No amount of charity or evangelism can make up for your rebellion. No abstinence from alcohol, movies, and playing cards will save you. You need the righteousness of Christ as your covering.

Throughout scripture, righteousness is portrayed as a robe. There is a powerful illustration of this in **Zechariah 3:1-5.**

Do you understand that your eternal destiny is not based on what you've done this last week, but rather on Christ and him crucified? **Have you put on Christ?**

## Cast-Out

V22 **The man and the woman are driven from the garden to keep them from eating the tree of life.** This would fix them as unredeemable for all eternity. Notice, Adam and Eve are the ones who go away, not paradise. There is a rift between God and man and a need for reconciliation, but this is not

the final word. **There is hope in a future descendant of the woman who would bring redemption to mankind.**

Adam and Eve leave the garden and have two sons. One kills the other, so it can't be them. Then comes Seth. Years go by and we see Noah. There is a recreation with the flood, but Noah gets drunk, so it's not him. Years go by and arrive at Abraham, who tries to force God's promise through the slave woman. Moses walked very closely with God, even interceding for his people, but then he strikes the rock in anger.

David is a man after God's own heart who is promised the establishment of his throne forever, but then he and his son Solomon sin with women.

It doesn't take long for Israel to split and be overrun by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Medopersians, Greeks, and finally the romans with little glimmers of hope sprinkled throughout the prophets. There is one coming who will fulfill God's promises and set everything right. After 400 years of prophetic silence, a child is born in a manger in Bethlehem who keeps all of God's commands perfectly, and the very ones he came to save crucified him on a cross.

Jesus is described as the Seed of the woman, the Son of Adam, the Son of Abraham, from the tribe of Judah, who has come to do battle with the serpent defeating Satan, sin, and death once and for all.

After Christ ascends to heaven to take his seat at the right hand of God, the New Testament church begins to grow. They receive the spirit at pentecost. Though the head of the serpent has been cut off, its body continues to wriggle as the severed nerves unload their energy. The saints begin to be martyred and divisions creep into the church.

After decades of gospel ministry and suffering for Christ, the last remaining apostle receives a vision of the glory of Jesus Christ as the lamb who was slain and reigns victoriously, and gives to all those who are united with him in his death and resurrection the right to partake of the tree of life.

He said he's coming back.

Read **1 Corinthians 15:21-26.**

## Conclusion

Adam and Eve brought sin into the world through the greatest act of treason anyone has ever committed. As a result, their descendants inherited a sin nature. They broke the world and creation was cursed. Yet, God was gracious. He covered Adam and Eve's sin and promised to bring redemption through the woman's seed. Though he banished them from the tree of life, they walked away with hope. Over the next few thousand years, we see the working out of the Messiah's coming. The entire Bible points us to Jesus as our Messiah who covers our sins. He reigns victoriously over Satan, sin,

and death. As we finish this morning, I want to fix our gaze upon what is to come. Turn to **Revelation Chapter 22**.