
The Fall: The Entrance of Sin

Genesis 3

What do we do when the Bible sounds like Aesop's fables? Behold, here is a talking snake! We accept the account as true because it is in the Word. This is no fable; this is fact. This is not a children's story about silliness; it is the horrific beginning of sin.

Let's stay connected to the flow here by looking at how Moses develops the theme of sin.

Chapter 3 – Fall: The Entrance of Sin

Chapter 4 – Brothers: The Escalation of Sin

Chapters 5-6 – Corruption: The Spread of Sin

Chapter 7-8 – Flood: The Judgment on Sin

Israel and all of us are to learn what Paul teaches in Romans 1; man will reject God and embrace sin in ever increasing expressions of depravity with God handing them over to the corruption and the consequences of their sin.

It will begin in Genesis 3 when Adam, the head of the human race, disobeys God and plunges the whole human race into depravity and death.

The Commencement of Sin

(v.1-7)

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."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.

The shift from the innocence of the Adam and Eve to the crafty serpent marks an ominous turn in the story. It is carried by the sound of the similarities of the Hebrew words for "naked" and for "crafty". Adam and Eve are vulnerable, and Satan is vile.

The Person of the Tempter

(v.1)

The serpent is introduced with attributes that are more than animal. This is a particular serpent. Here is deceit and evil craftiness as the embodiment of evil. Here is someone in the snake. The serpent, not just as a part of the animal creation, but as a part of the rebellious and fallen heavenly hosts, is an ever-growing menace through the Scriptures. So while a talking snake sounds fairytale like, it tells us two very important things.

There is more going on here than just an animal tempting Eve. There is a malevolent intelligence, an evil presence who uses the snake as his tool. The serpent here is not to be equated with modern, crawling reptiles. What we see today is the product of the curse. The clear implication here is that the serpent had legs, a dragon beautiful and superbly intelligent. Eve does not see the serpent as either strange or sinister.

Satan never appears as he is. He is always parading as something or someone else. He even pretends to be an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) when he is in fact a fallen cherub and full of darkness and deceit (Ezekiel 28:14, 16).

Here is the introduction of competing voices. God's Word and counsel have been the sole guide for Adam and Eve. Their world is not only made by God, but their understanding of that world is entirely shaped by God. Since one of the persons of the Godhead is Word, Satan attacks humans by perverting and twisting what was to be their life and substitutes his own dark lies. This is what we face today. Even though we have the grand clarity and sufficiency of the Word of God, we can be overwhelmed with a cacophony of compelling, but corrupt counsel.

The Presentation of the Temptation

(v.2-6)

In these verses, Moses establishes a clear understanding of how sin functions. Notice that Satan tempts Eve through the way God has made her soul to function. There is no sin nature driving this or being appealed to. This is temptation aimed squarely at her heart, at how it believes and wants.

Through Lies Directed at the Heart Beliefs

(v.2-5)

The temptation is first presented directly through lies aimed at the part of Eve's soul which knows and believes. Also note the chiasmic structure here.

Satan questions God's Word

(v.1)

He undermines its accuracy and authority The questioning is two-fold.

Did God actually say it? Is Eve really sure that what she believes is what God said? Is the Word she has, *ACCURATE*? The question intends to shake Eve's confidence in what Adam has taught and told her. Is the voice of counsel she has been following really telling her the way it is?

Are you, Eve, included in this prohibition (due to the plural pronoun)? Was this prohibition for Adam only so that she is exempted? Is the Word she has, *AUTHORITATIVE*? The question may be including Adam's standing by in the plural. It also may be insinuating that while the command was given to Adam, it may be good for him, but not Eve.

This line of attack is used over and over again. We are challenged with whether we have the Word in our hands. We are often tempted to think that what it is saying isn't applicable to us. I hear this all the time in counseling through sentences like, "Well that is just your interpretation;" and "I don't think that text applies to my situation."

Eve changes God's Word**(v.2-3)**

She undermines its scope and sufficiency. Her quoting of God's Word here is inaccurate by both taking away and adding to. The affect is to change what she believes to be true about God.

She leaves out "freely" and "all" thus making God less gracious.

She adds "neither touch it" thus making God more restrictive.

She leaves out "surely", making God less serious about judgment.

I am struck by the fact that she knows enough to respond to Satan with the Word of God. But she is not holding the line. She is not getting it right. She goes above the line by adding to the Word and below the line by taking away from the Word. Thank God for Jesus in the wilderness temptation who not only uses the Word of God to ward off temptation, but He gets it right and uses it right. Jesus holds the line when everyone else, including Eve and Adam here, fail.

Satan challenges God's Word**(v.4-5)**

He attacks God's integrity and intention. Satan now declares that what God has said is simply not true. He does not challenge the precept itself, only its punishment.

He attacks God's *INTEGRITY*. He effectively says that God has lied. It is simply not true that you will surely die.

He attacks God's *INTENTION*. He also imputes evil motives to God. God has given this command in order to keep you down, to keep you below Him and beneath Him.

Notice that this attack is aimed at what God knows and what God intends. His slander of God is framed by the God's own heart functions. God has not spoken the truth because God wants to preserve His unique deity and not grant equal status to anyone.

Here is the heart of Satan and the underlying sin in all sin. Satan wants to be equal with or just be God. And so do we. At the root of sin is self. At the root of self is the deceit and desire to be like God. In our desire to be like Him in idolatrous ways, we mar the very holy and righteous ways we are like Him as image bearers.

Do you see how these are lies and deceits aimed at getting Eve to agree with Satan and to believe what is not true so that she will act on them? This is part of why you do what you do. You believe certain things to be true and that belief causes actions (as well as emotions, affections).

Through Lusts Directed at the Heart Wants**(v.6)**

Now the temptation moves to present an attraction through lusts to the heart desires.

Temptation ***appeals through*** a physical medium, *sees*.

Most temptations are presented through the medium of the body. It is not that the body is evil, but that it is how the soul interacts with the world around it. Satan speaks, Eve hears. The tree is pointed to, Eve sees. Her heart is engaged with the temptation as enticement using the body.

Many temptations are to the misuse of legitimate things. There is nothing wrong with eating. But there is everything wrong with eating this fruit. Nothing is evil in and of itself. But almost everything has an evil misuse.

Temptation ***appeals to*** the wants of the heart, *desires*.

She is driven by her craving, desires and wants. She is going to trade desiring all the rest of the food and fruit of the garden to desire the one fruit she is forbidden. If she does not desire it, she will not take it. But she reaches out following the flow of her desires to take and eat.

Her believing Satan's lie shapes the object of her desires. The tree is not truly desirable to make one wise, but it is what Satan has said. Her wants are directed to what is false, deceived by Satan's lies. They deceive her into thinking this is a greater pleasure than all the legitimate ones God has given. Prizing this fruit more than the others causes her to crave, to be mastered by her desire for her.

Temptation ***appeals in*** thematic heart elements.

Notice that the fruit is delicious, delightful and desirable. It is good to eat. It is lovely and beautiful. It will bring me something I do not have now. The thematic heart elements have at their core pleasures and promises. Temptations hold out to the desires phony pleasures and false promises. Can you see in your own temptations how they appeal by presenting to you some sort of pleasure or promising you something desirable? Can you see how often they are substitutes for the true pleasures and promises God holds out for us?

Now, be clear on this: desiring is simply a function of the heart. It is not possible to "not want". But those wants, desires and cravings are to be shaped by truth and submitted to God. Now we watch what Eve believes linked with what Eve sees turn her desires against her to crave what God has forbidden. In the midst of sin, an important question is, "What did you want?"

I want you to see some important implications here:

Your wants are shaped by what you believe to be true. Notice the movement here. Satan must first change what she believes before her wants begin to master her. This is why faith, knowledge and wisdom are the most essential ingredients for holiness.

Your wants and desires are carried about in words. You want in words. We know what we want through the words that express and carry those wants.

You are responsible to control and change your wants. You are not at the mercy of the pull of vague, inward tuggings called wants. Your wants are your responsibility.

James explains this when he writes in James 1:14-16, *God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 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.* John warns us out of this text when he writes in 1 John 2:15-17, *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. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

The Product of the Temptation

(v.7)

What are the results of the temptation?

Sin Resulting from Disobedience

Eve takes and eats. She disobeys God by believing Satan' lies and desiring what is forbidden. Deceived, she disobeys.

Adam takes and eats. It is clear to me that in the words, "gives to Adam who was with her," that he is standing there watching this happen. He is with her. He is not deceived. He chooses Eve over God. He chooses to disobey. This single act of disobedience takes the whole human race down with him.

Shame Resulting from Guilt

They are aware of their sin. Satan said their eyes would be opened. They are opened, but not to what they expected. The poison of sin in their souls now changes how they see what they see.

They are ashamed of their sin. Their knowledge now of evil is the root, the cause of the emotion called shame. Their holy simplicity is now corrupted by guilty shame.

This knowledge of good and evil they now know is not Godlike. Their experience has not made them into gods. It has exposed them as visible and vulnerable and needing to be covered because of sin and guilt.

The Confrontation of Sin

(v.8-13)

I cannot help but think that verse 8 is immediately after verses 6-7. Here they are, startled in the first moments of their sin and shame, by the sound of the Lord God in His presence moving in the Garden.

⁸And 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. ⁹But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹²The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Engages through Relationship***(v.8)***

This paragraph opens with words that convey fellowship and relationship. God engages Adam and Eve in a relationship with them. He comes to where they are to meet with them and fellowship with them. He confronts them out of a context of his communion with them. This encourages us as we want to counsel others to do so with a love, know speak, and do engagement. Build relationship, understand issues, represent God's agenda for change and give practical steps of action.

God initiates an active pursuit of the sinner. God is the seeker and man is runner. God knows that Adam and Eve have sinned. He is not coming into the Garden just to have a time of fellowship. He is coming in the time of fellowship to confront them with their sin. He is seeking them. They are hiding from God. This is ever the way it is – no one seeks after God first; He is always first in seeking man.

Sin destroys the relationship breaking fellowship through fear and folly. The hiding and running from the Presence of God is a graphic picture of a broken relationship. How sin causes us to cower in fear. When they ought to be moving toward God in loving delight, they are running and hiding in shame.

Sin destroys ones ability to see clearly, contrary to what was promised in the temptation. Here is the insanity and irrationally, the madness sin causes. How is Adam going to hide from omniscience? Where will Adam run from omnipresence? The most blinding affect of sin is that we are blind to it.

Exposes through Questions***(v.9-13)***

God exposes Adam and Eve through questions. God is not asking in order to learn what He does not know. He is asking penetrating questions in order to give Adam self-knowledge. The soul is poised to answer questions even if the answer is not spoken out loud. God causes Adam and Eve to face their own sin by exposing it through carefully crafted questions aimed to expose the heart.

Notice the categories of questions:

Questions around broken relationships***(v.9-10)***

These are questions that ask the "Where are you" around life and life's relationships. They are designed to show how sin alienates and turns friends into enemies, love into fear, walking with one another into running and hiding from one another.

Questions examining evidences of guilt***(v.11a)***

These are questions which probe how guilt is working itself out. They are designed to expose the foolish words of counsel, the fake pleasures and false promises. It exposes our exposure.

Questions about the facts of sin***(v.11b-12)***

These are questions that gather data about what one did or how one responded. It is meant to get the story straight. They are direct, centering on the precepts. Did you do? Did you say? What happened? It makes the response of Adam even more terrible that in

the face of the great wonderful Counselor he attempts to deflect the questions and shift blame.

Questions requiring self-accusation

(v.13).

These are questions which draw out admission of sin. They are designed to expose how one is culpable and how one has contributed. They help us see us as being responsible, responsible for our own sin and responsible for being the means to tempt, provoke, contribute, be the occasion of someone else's sin.

For all of us as brothers and sisters, or in our roles as spouses or parents, or in our spheres of relationships in church, home, community or work, here is how we help people change. Our counsel uses God's kind of questions to help people see. And often they will not. Even here, we find Adam and Eve not repenting when counseled by God Himself.

Look at how Moses relates the universal sinful responses to sin and guilt.

Denial – We will cover the effects of our sin.

Escape/Avoid – We will hide from our accusers.

Blame-shift – We will place blame on others.

Brothers and sisters, this how we tend to respond to having sinned ourselves. We try to cover our sin, to hide from counsel, to shift blame. We refuse the Word of God and the Spirit of God and the people of God. How we need to be humble and receive the grace of God to grant repentance so that we will not respond like Adam and Eve. (Consider 2 Timothy 2:24-26).

The Condemnation of Sin

(v.14-19)

In the garden where there had been nothing but blessing, now comes the curse. This is fundamental to understanding the Bible. Blessing depends on obedience. Disobedience will bring the curse. The glory of the gospel is that both the bringing of the blessing we receive, and taking of the curse we deserve, are both in Christ.

¹⁴ The Lord God said to the serpent,

“Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.

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.”

¹⁶ To the woman he said,

“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

¹⁷ And to Adam he said,

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸ thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall

eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

The Curse affecting Satan

(v.14-15)

In reverse order to the confrontation, God announces the curse upon the Serpent. The curse in condemnation has both the physical and spiritual element. The tool of Satan suffers and Satan himself is condemned. The dragon will become a snake, demoted in his position in the animal kingdom crawling on his belly, sucking dirt.

This also is part of Satan’s condemnation. His place of honor has been brought down and he is confined to earth. Make no mistake, he may be prince and power of the air, not because God has ceded regency over the earth to Satan’s usurpation. No, he is roaming and ruling his present prison. He is chained here. He is a bully here. He is a dust-eater.

Finally, Satan is promised his eternal damnation. He will surely die. All the way down through redemptive history until the Redeemer comes, there is a war of descendents. We will see this beginning to be worked out in the next chapter. There will be enmity, war and hatred that will culminate in an offspring. Satan will cause a heel bruise. But that Offspring of the woman will bring down a deadly head blow.

Now be careful. This is not a promise to Eve. God is not talking to Eve. He is talking to Satan. This is a promise that prophecies doom for Satan. But in promising condemnation to eternal death and doom for Satan, there arises hope and help for sinful man.

The Curse affecting Eve

(v.16)

God turns to deal with Eve. The curse for her disobedience will have two terrible affects.

She will suffer in her childbearing. That in which she will be most fulfilled as she carries out her role and function in the world, she will have pain. The pains of childbearing are meant to remind us of our sin. Sin’s consequence and curse will embed even the obedience of being fruitful and multiplying with pain.

She will strive in her home. Why do I say that? The language here “you shall desire” and “he shall rule” is the exact same words and construction as in Genesis 4:7. Sin desired to master Cain, but he was to rule over it if he was to do well. So the word desire here is neither referring to sexual desire nor to submission. Part of the consequence and curse of sin is that she will desire to master her husband. Sin will drive a lack of submission and an attempt to assert control. And she will suffer as a result of sin, the domineering control of man.

In counseling, this is an important insight into what is often happening in marriages. Sinfully, the wife is attempting to usurp and assert control. The response of the husband is to ever increasing measures to assert his own authority and control. In some men, the clam-up spin in their sinful natures drives them to the murder of treating their wives as through they are not there. In other husbands the blow-up spin drives them to the murder of abusive words or deeds.

Ephesians 4-5 put this dynamic to death by implementing the relationship between Christ and the church in marriage. The wife’s sinful tendency to dominate is put off and loving,

Christ-like submission is to be put on. The husband's sinful tendency to dominate and dictate is put off and replaced by sacrificially loving leadership. So, in your own marriage, my beloved, which of these cycles or dynamics is being lived out?

The Curse affecting Adam

(v.17-19)

God grounds Adam's condemnation in his hearing and heeding false counsel, the voice of his wife. This clearly shows that while Eve disobeys because she prizes the fruit, Adam disobeys because he prizes Eve. He has chosen Eve over God.

So, his delightful tilling of the garden is turned into wearisome toil. The ground is cursed so that it resists him, his cultivating and his dominion. His work will now be hard as a reminder that he is in fact not god, not sovereign. He cannot hear and heed false counsel without dire effects. Every day of difficulty and futility is a reminder that we have sinned and richly deserve the misery we experience. Adam has traded God's rest in the Garden for hard slave labor in the world. Adam's sin has brought the whole earth under the curse. It will groan under that weight until the day when the children of God receive their glorified bodies and the creation is restored in the new heavens and new earth (Romans 8:18-25).

Humanity will die. God's threat is made good. There is mercy mingled with judgment. They do not return to the dust immediately. They will live together, bear children in pain, sweat over hard work, and long and hope for the great Reversal.

The Consequences of Sin

(v.20-24)

Sin has consequences. There is both condemnation and consequences. The consequences of sin are described in this last, sad paragraph.

²⁰The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. ²¹And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

²²Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—" ²³therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

The Expectation because of Sin

(v.20-21)

There will be *FUTURE GENERATIONS*, bringing the redeemer through the woman. Adam hears the promise of pain in childbirth, responding in hope and expectation for the future. She will be the mother of all the living. While there may be pain, there is still a promise. There is a promise of a future seed dealing the enemy a deadly blow and of children through whom that hope will come.

There are *PRESENT GARMENTS*, covering sin through death. Adam and Eve are given an object lesson. Their human efforts to deal with sin through covering with leaves, are insufficient. God must take an animal, slay it and cover their sin, its guilt and shame. While the text here

does not specifically say a lamb or sheep was slain, the rest of the Bible would at least indicate it. God will initiate the sacrifice; will slay it with His own hand. The sins under the Old Covenant will be covered until the final Lamb comes and completes the work of redemption.

The Expulsion because of Sin

(v.22-24)

The next consequence

Driven from the Garden.

This is an act of mercy. God expels them so as to bring about hope for transformation and renovation. As long as they are in the Garden, they could reach out and take the tree of life and the sentence is not completed. Here is the reason for the expulsion. God has not determined that man will live forever in a lost estate. God has determined that man must die; he must die because of his sin and he must die in order to be delivered from his sin.

And then the phrase, "drove out man". Does this imply that Adam and Eve went reluctantly? God sent them out verse 23 but then drove them out, verse 24. What a simply awful day!

Denied access to the Garden

Here are the cherubim signifying the presence of God. Always in the bible, God's manifesting Himself to man is accompanied by the cherubim. So here at the east of Eden, God will meet with man while guarding access to the blessings of the Garden.

Here is the sword. Access to the Garden is denied until the Redeemer comes and passes through the sword Himself and becomes the gate instead of the guard. So the way into heaven is closed until the Redeemer comes. Then the sword of wrath severs the life of the Lamb and through death the gate is opened. Until then, men may meet with God. But they meet outside the gate, outside the curtain, outside the Temple. In that meeting with God, the threat of judgment is always hovering and fear dominates. Now that the way is open, men meet with God at the mercy seat in the heart of Eden, in Zion, the city-Temple of God.

Reflect and Respond

Let me close with these challenges to you.

PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE WORD OF GOD. Read it carefully. Learn it well. Handle it accurately. Obey it completely. Satan's surrogates will question its accuracy and authority. You must not add to it or take away from it. You must be clear from it who God is and what He promises and provides.

REJECT ALL FORMS OF FALSE COUNSEL. Eve listened to the quiet, compelling questions and denials of the serpent. Adam listened and obeyed the tempting voice and example of Eve. Eve needed to hold the line and not listen to Satan. Adam needed to hold the line and not listen

to Eve. We all need to hold the line of the Scriptures and not listen to false counsel of the world.

WATCH OVER YOUR HEART WITH DILIGENCE. Out of your heart, you act. Out of what you believe and what you want, arise all affections, emotions, choices and actions. Over the patterns of sin in your life, ask the “what was I thinking” questions. What do you believe to be true? What do you want? What appeals to you and why? What pleasures and promises does sin hold out to you that your heart moves toward?

RESPOND IN HUMBLE REPENTANCE WHEN CONFRONTED WITH GODLY COUNSEL. Do not hide your sin, run from counsel or shift blame. We are a culture of skilled blame-shifters. While our families, our childhood, our bodies, our brains, our spouses, our children, our situations, our jobs even our churches may contribute, tempt, test, provoke, be the occasion or the context for sin, they never ever cause sin. Be humble and receive grace to change and grow.

OWN THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN. When you have dealt with sin and repented of sin, be willing to live with its consequences. Rejecting the results of sin often is a sign that there has been worldly sorrow, not godly repentance.

BANK YOUR HOPE ON THE REDEEMER OF OUR SOULS. In the darkness and difficulty of sin, turn to Christ. Turn to Him for salvation. Turn to Him for transformation. You are saved and transformed by a Person, by the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies begun in Genesis 3. He is all you need. Trust in Him, O sinners and saints today.