

# THE FALL AND SIN'S CONSEQUENCES

## Genesis 3 • Brian Brodersen

**Introduction:** In our Story of God series, we have been looking at Creation, and over the past several weeks, we've looked specifically at humankind created in the image of God and what was meant by that then and now. The pronouncement of God over everything he had made was that it was good, *very good!* This brings us to the age-old question: what went wrong? That the world and humans are broken, flawed, that something is wrong with all of us is almost universally acknowledged. The brokenness of the world has often been used as evidence against the existence of God, especially a good and loving God. If God created a good world, what is the explanation for the world as we know it? The explanation is right here before us—(read Genesis 3).

One theologian wrote:

*“It is hardly too much to say that this chapter is the pivot of the Bible, for if we take it away the rest of Scripture becomes meaningless. With the exception of the fact of Creation, we have here the record of the most important and far-reaching event in the world’s history—the entrance of sin and death.”*

—W. H. Griffith-Thomas

Let's look at the story as it is here before us. But first, is this a myth—a fictional story made up to illustrate a truth? Or is it the record of actual events in history? A real serpent, garden, man, woman, tree, fruit?

Let me quote Old Testament scholar, Derek Kidner:

*“The trees could be meant as metaphors for the respective means of gaining either life or forbidden knowledge ... Yet there is much to commend the literal sense, naïve though it may seem.”*

I agree with Kidner and take them literally, just as the inspired writers of the New Testament did. Kidner further said:

*“On the historicity ... the New Testament assumes it and argues from it, making the first Adam as literal as the last, and his sin ‘one trespass,’ as factual as the cross and resurrection.”*

### I. The Serpent

Here for the first time in Scripture, we meet with this mysterious being. He is introduced without any word of explanation concerning his previous history. That this is indeed the evil spirit that the Scriptures would later refer to as the Devil and Satan possessing the body of this creature is proven by several New Testament passages: “But I fear, that somehow as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus” (2 Cor. 11:3). “So that great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world ...” (Rev. 12:9). As for when this creature who is called the Devil and Satan was created, and when his rebellion against God took place, we are not told.

## II. The Temptation

- A. The Serpent: “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree of the garden?’”

*God had said, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”*

—Genesis 2:16–17

- B. The Woman: “We may eat fruit from the trees of the garden, but God did say, ‘you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, you must not touch, or you will die.’”
- C. The Serpent—“You will not certainly die ... For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

### What is the temptation?

*“Many foolish things have been said about this tree. It has been called an apple tree and the forbidden fruit an apple. One writer has conjectured that the fruit was a grape and the sin that of making wine. Many today perceive the fruit to be sex.” The fruit is none of these. The type of fruit is irrelevant. The fruit, though real, was symbolic of God’s rule. “It symbolizes the fact that, although the man and woman had maximum freedom and dominion in the earth, they were nevertheless God’s creatures and enjoyed their freedom and exercised their dominion as a result of God’s gift. It was a restraint on them. It was to remind them that they were not God and they were responsible to Him.”*

—J. M. Boice

*“God knows good and evil in the sense that he has the authority to decide what is good and what is evil because his moral character is woven into the very fabric of the created order ... For Eve to know what is good and evil is to usurp God’s authority and decide, on the basis of her own judgement, what is to be counted as good and what is to be counted as evil.”*

—Christopher Watkin

The temptation was to cast off God’s rule and become the masters of their own lives.

- III. **The Sin**—It was not eating a piece of fruit, per se. Their sin was coveting godlike power, craving something that was not rightfully theirs, rejecting their nature as created, limited, finite beings, and trying to be what they never could be—divine. Like Satan who tempted them, they wanted to be their own god!
- IV. **The Consequences of Sin**—Not what they were promised or expected. Instead, guilt, shame, fear, division, pain, toil, nature cursed ... Verses 7–13, 16–19
- A. Death, first spiritual, eventually physical. Genesis 2:17 “The Day ... Dying, Die.”
- B. Dead in trespasses and sins—Adam and Eve died spiritually and passed on that spiritual death to their descendants.

No longer animated and governed by the Spirit, a new ruling principle has overtaken them—sin, and sin brings forth death.

- C. “The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.” Genesis 6:5
- D. “Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all people, because all sinned.” Romans 5:12

*“Eve’s decision triggered such a seismic catastrophe, from which the world has been reeling ever since ... Sin entered the world to wreak endless havoc. So serious is that moral infection that the business of restoring men and women to fellowship with their Creator will involve something much bigger than creation itself: nothing less than the Creator becoming human, dying at the hands of his creatures and rising again in triumph over sin and death.”*

—Prof. J. Lennox

#### V. **The Proto-Euangelion**—Verse 15

- A. The Seed of the Woman vs. the Seed of the Serpent.

*“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain ... no longer will there be any curse.”*

—Revelation 21:4; 22:3

**Close:** Former evangelist turned skeptic, Charles Templeton, wrote in his book *Farewell to God*:

*“A loving God could not possibly be the author of the horrors that go on daily, and have gone on since time began, and will continue as long as life exist. It is an inconceivable tale of suffering and death, and because the tale is fact—is, in truth, the history of the world—it is obvious that there cannot be a loving God.”*

Templeton is right! God is not the author of these horrors! He’s also wrong. There is a good and loving God. The fact is, God made the world perfect and human beings upright. We made ourselves sinners and brought all this misery into a once good world ourselves. But God, as we shall see, has committed himself to redeeming and restoring it all, so that once again, all will be well, and all will be well, and all manner of things will be well.

**Last question:** Why has God allowed it all to happen this way? There is only one answer, Love. God loved us so much that even when he saw the sin and suffering that would darken and distort his creation, he chose to create us anyway.

As Augustine so wisely put it,

*“God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to suffer no evil at all.”*