

Bible Studies

Genesis - The Fall

Genesis Chapters 1 & 2 record that God created an idyllic world. The man and woman are in a Garden suited to their needs, pain, sorrow & natural disasters are unknown. God walks with them in the cool of the day.

In Chapter 4 there is anger, jealousy, hatred, murder, vengeance and curse. There is struggle with the earth to survive, marriage degenerates to polygamy.

If you did not know the account, you would wonder what on earth happened in Chapter 3, that allowed things to turn so ugly.

For some people, especially unbelievers, this is a big problem. How could a good God create a world, where floods and famines kill so many?

And the LORD God commanded the man, "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 of it you will surely die." Genesis 2:16-17

Is the tone of this verse freedom or restriction?

How many commands did God give?

What does this tell us about God?

When God said "you will surely die," was this a punishment or a consequence?

God gave one command, just one. God is not by nature a legalist. He does not make commands for the sake of it. God's nature has to do with grace not law. It is interesting that breaking one command opened the floodgates to all kind of sin and necessitated a whole system of commandments.

'You will die', is in my opinion, a consequence, not a punishment. (Ie, 'if you touch that fire you will get burned'. Not, 'if you touch that fire I will send you to your room'). This is true of many of God's laws.

The soul who sins is the one who will die. Ezekiel 18:20

For the wages of sin is death, Romans 6:23 This is still true.

A serpent that speaks?

Read Genesis 3v1-5

One of the names used for Satan in the New Testament is 'the tempter', Matthew 4v3, 1 Thes 3:5. There can be no doubt who's voice is speaking to Eve. But the form of the voice is strange. There are two possibilities; Either the author of Genesis uses, 'the serpent' as a type of Satan. (Ie. there was no snake, it's just another way of saying Satan spoke to Eve.) Such a use is found in Rev 12:9. Or Satan used the snake as a disguise in much the same way, that God chose to speak through Balaam's donkey, Numbers 22v28-30.

The fact that the snake was later cursed 3v14 suggests the latter, however even here the snake could still be a cover for Satan.

And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. 2 Corinthians 11:14-15

The events described in Genesis, were literal events they really happened. But they are also symbolic, they have strong meanings behind them.

If Satan told you to do something would you do it?

If Eve had known who was speaking to her would she have listened?

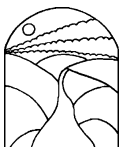
Temptation comes in many forms and guises. Satan will use subterfuge and guile when tempts us. He will try to look innocent and sound plausible. Deception is the key. As Eve latter pointed out "*The serpent deceived me, and I ate.*"

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People often describe Genesis 3 as recording the first sin.

But does it?

No, the tempters presence in the Garden tells us that sin was already alive and kicking in the angelic world. God gave man, as objects of His love and fellowship, freedom to sin. But He also gave the angels, described in Scripture as just servants, the same freedom.

What does this tell us about God?

Why do you think freedom is so important to Him?

Scripture tells us that Satan, or Lucifer (light bearer) as he was called was an arch-angel. One of just three who are named in Scripture (Michael & Gabriel). Instead of obeying God, pride filled his heart and he wanted to be like God. He rebelled and was cast out of heaven. He has been trying to frustrate God's purposes ever since. (Some reference that speak of this are; Isaiah 14v12-15, Ezekiel 28v12-17; Luke 10v18; Jude v6, 2 Peter 2v4, 1 John 3v8, 1 Tim 3v6).

Sin spread to the human world from the angelic world.

Where did sin come from?

Did God create sin?

He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. Deuteronomy 32:4

It is unthinkable that God would do wrong, that the Almighty would pervert justice. Job 34:12

You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; Psalm 5:4

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; James 1:13

Does our sin enhance God's righteousness? Romans 6:1

God's righteousness is total He does not need us to illustrate it.

Systematic theology has debated the origin of sin & evil for years, there are many theories and not enough space here to expound them. Suffice to say that God did not create sin, but he did create the possibility of sin. Sin only exists when there is rebellion against God or his nature (righteousness). If God gave us freedom to rebel then He also opened the door to sin. We however walked through it.

Augustine taught that as evil is by nature negative, it does not have an origin in the normal sense of the word.

You could say sin has a voluntary origin, it is not inherent in the world or in man, but is a product of free will.

Would it be possible to truly obey God ,if we were incapable of disobeying him?

Would our love for God have any meaning, if we had no choice?

How would you feel about a world in which we were incapable of sin?

What would such a world be like?

Could God's purposes be achieved in such a world?

As humans, we resent any restrictions on our freedom. However if we did live in such a world, we would not complain. We would not be able to. If our response to God is to mean anything, we have to be free not to respond.

You are taking your dog for a walk in the park. You let it off the lead, it runs to play, you call it and it comes to you. It is being obedient, because it has the choice to ignore you. On the other hand if you have one of those spring loaded leads, you push a button, the spring is released, and the dog is pulled toward you. You cannot say it is being obedient, it has no choice. Our obedience means nothing if we can't disobey.

If this is the case is it fair to blame God for the effects of sin?

Who should we blame?

Bible Studies

Genesis - The Temptation

Read Genesis 3v1-5

It is interesting to note Satan's technique when he comes to tempt Eve.



Did God really say "you must not eat from any tree in the garden"?

Is that what God said? Genesis 2v16-17

God said there was one tree they may not eat from. Satan generalises it to make it sound unreasonable. Satan shifted the emphasis from what God allowed, to what he forbade.



Tactic: Satan questioned God's Word.

He did not contradict God, that would have been to overplay his hand. He sowed seeds of doubt. *Was it really God, was that what God really meant? Maybe we can reinterpret this. Maybe God only meant Adam.*

How does Satan question God's word today?

The Bible is God's word and Satan is always trying to bring it into question. For example when the Bible says homosexuality is wrong, some people have tried to side-step this by saying what it really means is homosexual rape, is wrong. Others will tell you that the Bible is only a record of human effort to reach God. It does not originate in God, but in man, it might be helpful, but it is not authoritative.

How should we treat God's word?

How did Eve respond? Genesis 3v3

Does Eve quote God's command accurately? Genesis 2v16-17

Maybe God said more to them, than is recorded, but Genesis contains no stipulation not to touch the tree, just not to eat it's fruit.

Do you think it is significant that Eve exaggerated the command?

Firstly, I think while some people have a tendency to water down God's commands, others like to make them stricter, both lead to sin. Mark 7:8, Col 2v22, Mat 23v4
"Do not go beyond what is written." 1 Corinthians 4:6

The moment we start to doubt God's word, we are in trouble. Jesus told a parable to illustrate just this. When you hear God's word and obey it you are like a house built on rock. When you hear it only you are like a house built on sand.



"You will not die" the serpent said to the women.

Now the Serpent does directly contradict God, but he does more than that, he questions God's integrity and the consequences of sin.



Tactic: It doesn't matter, it won't harm you.

Satan denies the effects of sin and the reality of Judgement.

How does Satan deny the effects of sin today?

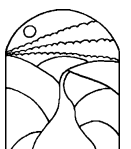
If there are no consequences for sin, there is no reason not to sin. Sin is disobedience to God. It is God who holds us accountable, He sets the standards. When people deny a personal God, they also deny any fixed standards of right and wrong. It all becomes a matter of opinion, relative and subjective.

How does sin do harm?

How does sin harm us?

Why does God prohibit the things we call sin?

Did Eve die?



Did she drop dead at the foot of the tree? No, God never said she would. She died spiritually, she lost the closeness of communion with God, that she had enjoyed and was driven from the Garden. The purity of her nature died, she lost an innocence which she could never regain. More over, from this time on '*death reigned*.' Romans 5:14. A recurring phrase in the next few chapters is, '*and then he died*'. The Bible does not tell us the Adam was immortal, but premature death, is a clear effect of the fall.

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For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, you will be like God knowing good and evil.

Wanting to be like God, was what got Satan into trouble in the first place. Now Satan questions God's motives, in giving the command. God is trying to keep from you something good.

What kind of a God would want to keep something good from you?

Satan was in effect saying "*if God really loved you, would He put all these constraints on you?*" **Would He?**



Tactic: Question God's motives, His love and His goodness, suggest you now better.

Satan appealed to an appetite in Eve, what was it?

Were all these desires of themselves wrong?

How does Satan use this temptation today?

Does God withhold anything good from us? Psalm 84v11

Did Satan correctly interpret the results of knowing good from evil?

We will never be God, but it is our calling to be like Him. Satan rather strangely suggested this could be achieved by disobeying God.

How can it be achieved?

One of Satan's tricks here, was to make things that are bad for you, seem desirable. Make you want, make you need, what will destroy you!

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Isaiah 5:20

Can you think of any ways that Satan still tries this trick?

Why do you think Satan tempted Eve first?

It was Adam who received the command, Eve only heard it second hand. Eve was the second made, was she more vulnerable to the attack?

What mistakes did Eve make?

When did Eve actually sin?

If she had realised what would happen would she have done it?

Is this any excuse?

Deception was Satan's key to success, it still is.

Read Genesis 3v6-7

Eve ate first, but the New Testament holds Adam responsible; 1 Corinthians 15v22

How did Satan tempt Adam?

Eve was deceived, but Adam sinned knowingly. Satan used different techniques for Adam and Eve, he tempted both of them at their weak points.

Why do you think Adam was susceptible to temptation from his wife?

How does Satan use other people to tempt up?

Matthew 18v6-7

Matthew 16v23 – What is the danger here?

Romans 14v21

Titus 2v7

There is a camaraderie of sin, if I sin and then get you to commit the same sin, it takes the pressure of me.

What do you think is the most important thing you have realised in this study?

Bible Studies

Genesis - The Consequences

The Bible describes Jesus as, *the lamb that was slain from the creation of the world* Rev 13:8. This means that right from the act of creation, God knew Jesus death would be necessary. Therefore, He knew man would sin.

Why then did he put the tree in the Garden?

Obedience that goes untested, is not true obedience. Faith that is untested, is no true faith.

In the Garden Adam had purity of innocence, but is this the same as purity of holiness?

For us to be pure, our purity must be tested and maintained.

Freedom of choice is essential for us to grow spiritually and morally.

I also believe that our freedom is an essential part of God's defeat of Satan. When we chose to obey God, when we have the choice to disobey, God is proved right.

Read Genesis 3v6-7

When Eve bit into the fruit, she did so expecting some wonderful result. Instead something in her did and she became aware of what she had done.

Sin sprang to life and I died. Romans 7:9



There eyes were opened and they realised they were naked.

They became aware of sin and guilt.

They became slaves to sin. Once sin was awakened it could not again be restrained. Their innocence was stripped from them. Up to this point, they had known what sin was only intellectually, now they knew it by experience.

How do you think they felt?

For as in Adam all die, 1 Corinthians 15:22

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— Romans 5:12

The effects of the sin were not confined to Adam alone, the innocence that he had lost, he could not now pass on to his offspring. He could only pass onto them his fallen, corrupt nature. We call this original sin, or, original pollution. All this really means is that we are born as slaves to sin. Something human history since that time proves. Our nature is tainted.



They tried to cover their guilt by fig leaves.

Apples are not indigenous to the Middle East, Jewish tradition says the tree was a fig tree. Figs stand for sin, if you pick them wrongly, a sticky residue is left on your hands.

How do you think this is a like sin?

Why do you think Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves?

In what way do we do the same?

Ever since this time, man has been trying to find his own way to deal with sin. Denying it, redefining it, trying to cancel it out with good works, trying to do penance for it.

How effective do you think fig leaves would be as a fashion garment?

That is just how efficient our attempts are to deal with our own sin.

Read Genesis 3v8-13



Communion with God was broken.

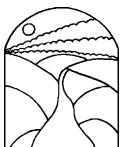
Who hid God or man?

Why did he hide?

God came looking and calling for man, He knew what had happened but He still came.

What does this imply and what is it symbolic of?

Man was created to be in communion with God. There is, as someone said, a God shaped hole in each of us. This is why there has been no known indigenous culture



in the history of mankind that has not believed in some kind of a god. Separation from God is spiritual death. That is why the NT describes unbelievers as dead in their sins. Ephesians 2:1.

How is this communion with God re-established?



Both of them tried to deny responsibility.

'It was Eve's fault'. 'It was the snakes fault'.

Have you ever heard this line?

What excuses do you use?

Whose responsibility is sin?

" sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." Genesis 4:7

What does this verse mean?

Read Genesis 3v14-19



The curse was enacted.

Who was cursed?

There are four recipients, the Snake/Satan, Eve, the earth, and man.

What were the consequences for each?

The snake lost it's dignity.

Eve experienced the pain of child birth and got to live in a male dominated world.

Does this mean male supremacy is right? Galatians 3:28

The earth to was cursed, this is where the severity's of nature and it's hostility to man comes from. (Natural disasters are 'Acts of Man', not God). The NT describes it as groaning, subject to frustration. Romans 8v18-25

Finally man is cursed. Life will become hard work, and death will be his destiny.

In this curse the future is predicted. *"He will crush your head and you will strike his heel"*

What does this refer to?

God could have left man to his own devices, instead He promised a way that man could be bought back to God. This way was Jesus.

Read Genesis 3v20-24



God made clothes for Adam.

Where do you think God got the skins from?

It looks like the skins were more than just, clothes more practical than fig leaves. It looks like God is doing something symbolic.

What do you think it was?

Did God continue to have fellowship with man after the fall? Genesis 5v21

It looks like this was God's way of atoning for, or covering over Adam's sin. Many believe this is the first reference to sacrifice in Scripture.

For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. Leviticus 17v11

This is another pointer to the restoration, Jesus would bring, through his final sacrifice.



Adam and Eve are banished from the garden.

There can be no going back to the way it was. The way to redemption is forward, to Christ, not back to the tree. This is also symbolic of the fact that sin separates us from God. We cannot force our way back, God must reach out to us.

All this is intended to explain how the world got to it's current sorry state.

But there is hope. We have noted before in a Bible study that the last 3 chapters of Revelation, parallel the first three chapters of Genesis. We find what Adam lost, Christ restores.

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 1 Corinthians 15:22

Read Revelation 21v1-5 & 22v1-4