

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

“Paradise Lost”

Genesis 3:1-24

Introduction

In our last study in Genesis chapter 2, we found that God created the perfect world, made the perfect man, put him in the perfect environment, gave him the perfect job and blessed him with the perfect wife. It was the perfect life. It was paradise. But it was soon to be Paradise Lost!

I The Promoter Of Sin

A. The tempter [Verse 1a]

1. The **origin** of the “serpent” - Ezek 28:12-19; Isa 14:12-15

Ezekiel 28 tells us that prior to his rebellion, Satan was an angel of the highest rank among the hosts of heaven. Some speculate that he may have even been the "worship leader" in heaven. In Isaiah 14 we are told that Satan wasn't satisfied with serving and worshipping God; he wanted to be God. As a result, along with one third of the angels, he was cast out of heaven.

2. The **character** of the serpent

Crafty = `aruwm (aw-room') = “Cunning or subtle”

- a. He is a liar (and the father of lies) - John 8:44-45
- b. He is continually sinning (from the beginning) - 1 John 3:8-9
- b. He is a thief - John 10:10a
- c. He is a charlatan (masquerading as an angel of light) - 2 Cor 11:14-15
- d. He is an enemy of everything that is right - Acts 13:9-10
- f. He is a murderer - John 8:44-45
- g. He is bent on your destruction (to kill and destroy) - John 10:10b

B. The temptation [Verse 1b]

Demonic spirits have the ability, under certain circumstances, to indwell human or animal bodies. You will recall the occasion in which demons indwelt a herd of pigs and drove them to their destruction in Lk 8:33. On this occasion Satan possessed the body of a serpent. This particular serpent was apparently very beautiful, and had the ability to stand upright and converse with man.

Why did Satan choose approach Eve instead of Adam?

Perhaps Satan knew by observation that Adam had failed to properly communicate to Eve what the Lord had told him. This failure undoubtedly made Eve more vulnerable to the temptation of Satan.

Application: The importance of discipling our wives and families

1. The strategy of the serpent:
 - a. Raise doubts about God's **character** [Verse 1b]

Satan takes God's positive command, ("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." [Genesis 2:16-17]) and rephrases it in a negative way: "Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden?" Satan introduces a thought that had never even occurred to Eve. He insinuated that God was unfair and that they had been quite naïve to accept God's command without question.

b. Raise doubts about God's Word [Verse 4]

Satan has effectively laid the groundwork: he drew Eve into a discussion with him, he has planted the seed of doubt about God's Word in her, and he has exposed Eve's incomplete understanding of God's Word. Now he is about to move in for the kill, with an outright contradiction of what God has said. He challenged God's promise of judgment for disobedience; "You will not surely die!"

Application:

From the beginning, Satan has tried to undermine God's people by undermining God's Word. But if he can't undermine it, he is just as happy if we neglect it.

c. Raise doubts about God's motives [Verse 5]

Satan implies that God was selfishly withholding something good from Adam and Eve – namely the opportunity to become gods. This is the same temptation that led to Satan's own downfall and it proved to be an irresistible temptation for Eve as well. Prov 16:28 "A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends."

2. The failure of Eve

a. She dialogued with the enemy [Verse 1-2]

Eve's first mistake was having a conversation with the serpent. Psalms 1:1-5 "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD ..."

Application: The danger of having on-going discussions with Satan. We are to simply tell him, "*The Lord rebuke you!*" (Jude 9)

b. She misquoted God's Word [Verse 3]

Eve was rattled by Satan's challenge and makes two critical mistakes:

1. She subtracted from God's Word - Rev 22:19

Her version made God seem less generous than He is. God had said, "You are free to eat from any tree except ..."
Eve said, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden"

2. She added to God's Word - Rev 22:18

Her version made God seem more demanding than He is.

God had said, "You must not eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil."

But Eve added, "And you must not touch it."

Satan had discovered Eve's Achilles Heel – in a few short sentences she had revealed a shaky understanding and grasp of God's Word.

What should she have done? James 4:7

1. She should submitted herself to God
2. She should have resisted the devil (and he would have fled from her)
 - "There are several good protections against temptation, but the surest is cowardice." - Mark Twain
 - If all else fails, RUN!

II The Progression Of Sin

A. The woman **saw** that the tree was: [Verse 6a]

1. Good for food – the lust of the flesh - 1 John 2:16a
2. Pleasing to the eye – the lust of the eyes - 1 John 2:16b
 - a. Achan
 - Josh 7:21 "When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath."
 - b. David
 - 2 Sam 11:2 "One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing."
3. Desirable for gaining wisdom – the boastful pride of life - 1 John 2:16c
 - James 3:14-16 "But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil."

Illustration:

It is interesting to note that Jesus in Matt 4:1-11, was tempted in the same 3 ways: 1) The lust of the flesh, 2) The lust of the eyes and 3) The pride of life. However, where Adam failed, Jesus succeeded!! How did He succeed? By effectively using the sword of the Spirit – the Word of God.

B. She **took** some and ate it [Verse 6b]

Job 20:12-14 "Though evil is sweet in his mouth and he hides it under his tongue, though he cannot bear to let it go and keeps it in his mouth, yet his food will turn sour in his stomach; it will become the venom of serpents within him."

C. She **gave** some to her husband who ate it [Verse 6c]

Adam followed her example, although he was not deceived (1 Tim 2:14). Some have suggested that Adam ate the fruit out of love for Eve. Whatever the reason for his disobedience, he was without excuse before God.

James 1:13-15 “When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

III The Product Of Sin

A. Their **eyes** were opened [Verse 7]

1. They realized they were naked

In Gen 2:25 “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.” But now Adam and Eve found themselves stripped of their original innocence and for the first time experienced the awful sense of shame and guilt.

Application: Spiritual nakedness - Laodecia

Rev 3:16-18 “You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.”

2. They attempted to **cover** their sin

Unfortunately, like most of us, Adam and Eve were not functioning at their top mental capacity when they were scrambling to figure out what to do next. In their attempt to cover their sin they quickly sewed fig leaves together and covered themselves. Now, if you didn't know, fig leaves are prickly and very itchy. If it weren't so tragic it would have been funny!

Isa 64:6 “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”

B. They **hid** from God [Verse 8-11] (Broken fellowship with God)

Isa 59:2 “But your iniquities have separated you from your God ...”

Funny story:

A telemarketer called a home one day, and a small voice whispered, “Hello?”

“Hello! What's your name?”

Still whispering, the voice said, “Jimmy.”

“How old are you, Jimmy?”

“I'm four.”

“Good, Is your mother home?”

“Yes, but she's busy.”

“Okay, is your father home?”

“He's busy too.”

“I see, who else is there?”

“The police.”

“The police? May I speak with one of them?”

“They’re busy.”

“Any other grown-ups there?”

“The firemen.”

“May I speak with a fireman, please?”

“They’re all busy.”

“Jimmy, all those people in your house, and I can’t talk with any of them? What are they doing?”

“Looking for me,” whispered Jimmy.

Illustration: Daniel L.

1. They were approached by God

“Where are you?”

Jer 23:24 “Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?”

2. They were **afraid** of God

Heb 4:13 “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

3. They were questioned by God

Notice that to this point, God has not addressed Eve at all. As the family head, Adam is the one God looks to for an explanation. God gave Adam a wide open door to repent and confess his sin.

- C. They shifted the **blame** [Verse 12-13]

1. Man blamed woman and God

Instead of confessing and repenting, Adam attempts to justify himself by blaming Eve. And to make a bad situation worse, he actually blames God.

Prv 19:3 “A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord.”

2. Woman blamed the serpent

Proverbs 28:13 “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

IV The Punishment Of Sin

- A. God punished the serpent [Verse 14-15]

Now while the whole animal kingdom was affected by the fall (Rom 8:22), the serpent, as an instrument of deception was singled out for judgment.

1. First, the serpent is cursed as an animal, because the serpent was used as a vehicle of Satan. God reduced the serpent to slithering along the ground instead of walking on legs as he had done before.

The "eating of dust" emphasizes the idea of *total defeat* (Is 65:25, Mic 7:17). Satan will always reach for victory, but ultimately, he will know only defeat.

2. Second, God places a natural animosity between Satan and mankind.
 - Enmity** = "Ill will, hatred, and a mutual antagonism"
 - a. God prophesies the hostility between Satan and Eve; between the children of the devil and the Messiah.
 - b. God also prophesies the doom of Satan through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - "He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

In Jesus, we share in the victory over Satan because "*the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*" (Romans 16:20)

B. God punished the woman [Verse 16]

1. Physical **pain** in childbirth

John 16:21 "A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world."

2. Spiritual **headship** of husband

The Bible presents us with two justifications for man's headship in the home:

- a. Adam was formed first - 1 Tim 2:13
- b. Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner." - 1 Tim 2:14

Prior to Eve's rebellion, submission to her husband was a joy and an expression of her submission to God. However, from this point on she would find it much more difficult to yield herself to the authority of her husband and would have a tendency to challenge and usurp her husband's leadership and authority. As a result, we find numerous commands for wives to submit to their husbands as to the Lord (1 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:22-24; Col 3:18).

"As a result of the fall, man no longer rules easily; he must fight for his headship. Sin has corrupted both the willing submission of the wife and the loving headship of the husband. The woman's desire is to control her husband (to usurp his divinely appointed headship), and he must master her, if he can. So the rule of love founded in paradise is replaced by struggle, tyranny and domination."

Susan T. Foh, "What Is The Woman's Desire?" [Westminster Theological Journal 37 \(Spring, 1975\): 376-83.](#)

Funny story:

There were two lines of husbands in heaven, one for the dominant husbands and one for the passive, submissive husbands. The submissive husband line extended almost out of sight. There was one man in the dominant husband line. He was small, timid, appeared anything but a dominant husband. When the angel inquired as to why he was in this line, he said, "My wife told me to stand here."

Application:

How can we counter the effects of this curse? By simply honoring God's commands:

1. Husband's, love your wife sacrificially.
2. Wives, respect your husband as the leader of your home.

C. God punished the man [Verse 17-19]

1. The ground will require **painful** toil

Adam worked before the curse, but it was all joy. Now work has a curse attached to it. Pain and weariness accompany it.

Ecc 2:22-23 "What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless."

2. The ground will produce thorns and thistles

God cursed the ground so that it would yield its fruits only after much hard work. Thorns and thistles would frustrate man's agricultural efforts. All creation groans under this curse because of sin (Rom. 8:20-22).

3. The ground will **reclaim** man

Ecc 12:6-7 "Remember him-before the silver cord is severed, or the golden bowl is broken; before the pitcher is shattered at the spring, or the wheel broken at the well, and the dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it."

What were the results of Adam's sin for the human race?

1. Sin entered the world - Romans 5:12)
2. Death came to all mankind - Romans 5:15; 1 Corinthians 15:22
3. Death reigned over man and creation - Romans 5:17
4. All men were condemned - Romans 5:18
5. All men were made sinners - Romans 5:19

V The Provision For Sin [Verse 20-21]

A. God made **garments** of skin and clothed them

In order for Adam and Eve to be clothed, a sacrifice had to be made. An animal had to die. They witnessed the ugly truth regarding the price for sin. *“Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”* (Heb 9:22)

This animal skin covering provided by God foreshadowed the ultimate covering of righteousness that was purchased with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Gal 3:26-27 *“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”*

B. God banished man from the Garden of Eden [Verse 22-23]

In mercy, God protected Adam and Eve from the horrible fate of having to live forever as sinners separated from God by prohibiting them from eating from the Tree of Life.

C. God **guarded** the Tree of Life with cherubim and sword [Verse 20-21]

Cherubim = “Angelic creatures engaged in worship and service for God”

The flaming sword was pointed against Satan to keep him from destroying the way of access to the altar, which God had set up.” (Barnhouse)

But one day, not long from now, access will once again be opened to the Tree of Life. Jesus said in Rev 2:7 *“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”*

Conclusion

We live in a fallen, sinful, rebellious world. It is Paradise Lost. But one day not long from now, the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ will destroy the existing heavens and earth and create a new one – a perfect one. And Paradise will be restored.

In the meantime, where are you? Are you right with God or are you hiding from Him? Have you been clothed with the righteousness of Christ or are you wearing the patchwork of uncomfortable coverings of your own righteous works?

If you have never accepted God’s gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ:

1. **Repent of your sin** = “To think differently and to change course.”

Acts 3:19 *“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord ...”*

2. **Reconcile with God** = “To put right a broken relationship”

1 Peter 3:18 *“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.”*

3. **Realign your heart to God** = (your loyalties and allegiance)

2 Cor 5:15 *“And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”*

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