

GENESIS

In this lesson, we begin a study of the fall of mankind from God's perfect love and creation into sin and a cursed world. We observe that in the first two chapters of Genesis, God is speaking; however, in Chapter 3, Satan is speaking. God's speaking leads to the good and perfect, while Satan's speaking leads only to destruction, disaster, chaos, pain, sorrow, death, and a permanent separation from God and all that is good, righteous, and holy. Later in Chapter 3, after Adam & Eve's sin (often referred to as "the fall,") God speaks again and reveals his plan to redeem mankind from its fallen state.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. Genesis 3:15

The word enmity seems strange to most of us, it's not a word that we use every day. It means to have continuous opposition. This "enmity," embodied in the one who will crush Satan's head is the "offspring" of the woman. This source of continuous opposition and victory over Satan is Jesus. Isaiah 53:5 refers to Jesus being pierced and crushed for our inequities. Christ's death on the cross defeated Satan eternally; just as his death and victory over death, i.e., his resurrection, brings salvation to all who will accept it. Isaiah 53:5 also tells us that he went through pain and suffering on the cross, and, as a result, his punishment brought us peace and healing.

The Fall

Some of you older students may remember a comedian, Flip Wilson, whose favorite line was, "The devil made me do it!" As we examine the account of the first sin and the fall of mankind, we need to be mindful of two things: (a) the environment that Adam and Eve were in, and (b) the perception that Satan has the power to make us do things that we do not want to do.

Let's read the story of Adam and Eve in the garden, their encounter with Satan, and the sin that followed; then respond to the following:

1. After God creates the animals and Eve in Genesis 2, we are introduced to what animal at the beginning of Chapter 3?
 - a. ANSWER: We encounter a talking serpent, a snake that can talk. Remarkable. First, Adam and Eve are with God and they can visit with God personally every day (Genesis 3:8); and now they are talking to a snake. This is probably no surprise to them, given all the miraculous things God created that they can see around them. Eve would have had no idea to whom, or to what, she was talking. We can debate whether Satan was an actual snake, or whether Satan caused the snake to be possessed by him, but those arguments are not fruitful. What we see pictured is the beginning of Eve's temptation as she starts down the path that leads to sin and destruction.
2. Read Matthew 7:13. How does this verse relate to the story of Adam and Eve in the garden?
 - a. ANSWER 1: In Matthew 7:13, Jesus tells us that we, as followers of Christ, are to "*Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.*" (Emphasis mine)
 - b. ANSWER 2: Eve is about to travel through the wide gate and travel down the broad road. After all, it seems so harmless, and why not take the wide road or path? At the beginning of temptation leading to sin we do not see any harm in traveling along the wide road, but Jesus warns us that it leads only one way—to sin and destruction.
3. Eve encounters the serpent in a perfect world, surrounded by birds and animals that God made for them. She is in a perfect garden that God also made, and something else is present during Eve's temptation. What is it? See Genesis 3:6.
 - a. ANSWER: It is her workmate, Adam. The man that God had made, her husband, is present when the serpent begins to talk to Eve.

4. It may seem odd to call God's creation "perfect" when we realize that he also made Satan and the demons. Actually, God created the angels with free will as well, but no chance of salvation if they made the wrong choice. Satan, originally an angel, chose evil and opposition to God's will. God's creation and the garden were exactly what God intended to make, and he knew that Satan would come to try and destroy it. How is the serpent described in verse one, and what is the serpent's first action? See Genesis 3:1 and John 8:44.
 - a. ANSWER 1: Satan engages with Eve at her level. The Genesis verse tells us that Satan is "more crafty" than any wild animal. Jesus teaches us that Satan is a liar and a murderer. This crafty serpent has a hidden agenda: to get Eve to succumb to temptation and sin. In doing so, he is trying to defeat Christ.
 - b. ANSWER 2: His first action is to misuse and distort God's words and intentions. He sounds correct, but in fact he is lying to her in the form of a question, attempting to distort the truth and confuse Eve.
5. Have you ever considered why the serpent's first act was to try to tempt Eve to sin? Why didn't he first try to get Adam to sin, considering that he was standing right there? What was Satan's end objective? See Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:11-19, Matthew 4:8-9, and Revelation 13:4, 12. Why did he choose Eve? See Genesis 3:15, 20.
 - a. ANSWER 1: The Bible tells us that Satan became proud and was determined to take the throne of God for himself. He wanted dominion over God's sovereignty.
 - b. ANSWER 2: He chose Eve because she was going to become the "mother of all living." By getting her to sin, the crafty serpent will bring death and misery to all her offspring through human history, and a curse on the earth. (Genesis 3:17)
6. What are some of the specific impacts of this sin that we can identify, knowing that Eve was the "mother of all living?" What are some of the things that Satan was trying influence or defeat by getting Eve to sin? See Genesis 3:20.
 - a. ANSWER 1: As we will discover when we look at the coming chapters of Genesis, above all else, Eve's children and their descendants represent the beginning of many peoples, including the Jewish people. Satan knew this in advance. The first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch, represent a history and chronology of how God's chosen people, those he would eventually lead out of Egypt, came to be, beginning all the way back with Eve. Satan wants to defeat God's chosen people—before they are even created—by getting Eve to sin.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Genesis also presents to us the line of Christ, i.e., "The Scarlet Thread of Redemption." This is a term coined by R.A. Chriswell in an Old Testament message. It represents the history of Christ's redemptive work, beginning in Genesis 3:21. From the moment that Satan fell from grace, he has been trying to defeat Christ. We see this play out over and over again throughout the Biblical text, in both the Old and New Testaments; and we will see him trying to accomplish this through any of us who proclaim the good news of Christ. Expect it.
7. By persuading Eve to sin, Satan's diabolical plan condemns all of mankind to death (which is the punishment of sin) and a life of pain, chaos, and destruction. His aim is to either destroy or rule over all of God's creation, including God himself. He will, as we will observe throughout Genesis, attempt to stop or defeat God's plan and His chosen people repeatedly. He continues to do so today through the followers of Christ. Satan will not stop, and he will not be defeated until Christ returns and personally defeats him. What do the following verses tell us about Satan and about God's condemnation of him in the Garden of Eden? See Romans 16:20 and Hebrews 2:14.
 - a. ANSWER: God will crush Satan through his Son Jesus Christ. Satan was hoping to not let that happen by eliminating the lineage and birth of Jesus. Now that Jesus has been born of a virgin, has died on the cross, has been resurrected from the dead, and now sits at God's right hand, Satan has turned his attention to the Church. His goal is to prevent the proclamation of the Good News, the Gospel of Christ, the resurrected hope of all who claim him as their savior. It is through Jesus and Jesus alone that we can overcome the world and the terminal effects of sin. Satan will not stop trying to defeat Jesus and all of his followers.

In the next lesson in this study, we continue our study of the Garden of Eden and Eve's encounter with the crafty serpent.

My prayer is that we will be watchful, being careful not to be deceived by the allure of sin, careful to enter through the narrow gate, and diligent in following the narrow road that Jesus leads us on.

There is much to learn regarding temptation and sin from Genesis Chapter 3, and we will both of these topics further in the next lesson.

Thanks for studying with us!

In Christ,

Wes