

GENESIS 3

Introduction

C.S. Lewis called it "The Problem of Pain." He was referring to the struggle we have with regard to the *suffering* we endure in our own lives and the *suffering* we observe in the history of the human race. Why is there disease, decay, and death? What are their origins? Do they have any purpose or meaning? Will they ever end?

Men have for centuries attempted to address the perplexing Problem of Pain. Their suggestions all have one thing in common: They call into question the *goodness* of God. Pain and suffering are thought to be inconsistent with the goodness of God. As a result men reject rather than receive God or they think of God as impotent rather than omnipotent.

I call your attention to an important phrase in Genesis 3:17 - - "Cursed is the ground *for your sake...*" If we take God at *His* word, then the problem of pain is itself an example of His goodness toward mankind! It was both on account of Adam *and* for Adam's sake that God pronounced the "curse."

- - Even though, on account of Adam, it led to disease, decay, and death, God was good in giving Adam a free will to choose.

- - What God did was for Adam's sake, to let him see the awful consequences of sin, so Adam could be led to repentance.

We see the goodness of God in the Garden; we also see the Good News in the Garden: Adam sinned, but a Savior would be born and Adam could be saved!

This "good news" we call the Gospel. The Gospel was first preached in the Garden! We know more about it than Adam did because we have the rest of the Bible; but the Gospel in the Garden is the same Gospel that we preach today, dealing with our sin, with God's Savior, and with His offer of salvation.

- #1 The Gospel In The Garden
Pronounces You A Sinner
(v1-14 & 16-19)

- #2 The Gospel In The Garden
Promises You A Savior
(v15)

- #3 The Gospel In The Garden
Provides For Your Salvation
(v20-24)

- #1 The Gospel In The Garden
Pronounces You A Sinner
(v1-14 & 16-19)

You were present with Adam in the Garden when He sinned and you were represented by Adam in the Garden when he sinned! This is one of the most important teachings in all of the Word of God. You were present when Adam sinned because he is the natural father of every human being ever born; you were also represented by Adam in his testing; he was acting on the behalf of the whole future human race. Chapter 5 of the Book of Romans makes it clear that when Adam sinned in God's Garden it also involved *you*:

Romans 5:12 "...through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned..."

What Adam did affected "all" - - including you. The Bible teaches three results of Adam's sin upon the entire human race:

1) Sin is imputed to you; 2) you inherit a sin nature; 3) you commit individual sins.

To have sin imputed to you means that you have sin charged to your account in heaven as a member of Adam's race. As a result of imputed sin you inherit a sin nature from your parents - - you are born inwardly committed to sin from the very start. Because of imputed

and inherited sin, you soon become guilty of committing individual sins!

Let's take a look at how this came about.

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"

The Book of The Revelation, in chapters 12 & 20, identifies the "serpent" as Satan. Before Adam and Eve sinned, there was sin in the angelic realm. The Bible tells of Lucifer, God's most wonderful created angel, seeking to exalt his will against God's and leading one third of the angels into rebellion. Lucifer is now Satan.

We learn later, in verses 14 & 15, that God pronounced a curse on the "serpent." Part of the curse is on an animal - - a snake; part of it is on an angel - - Satan. We must conclude that the angel Satan was possessing the faculties of the animal we call a snake when this temptation took place.

The "cunning" or subtlety refers to that of the fallen angel. He is more cunning still today - - having had some 6,000 plus years of dealings with the human race! Spurgeon: "There is not a saint whom he has not beset, not a sinner that he has not misled."

He begins his temptation by questioning the command and the character of God. God's command is questioned : "has God *indeed* said..."; God's character is questioned "You shall *not* eat of every tree..."

Genesis 3:2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; Genesis 3:3 "but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

Eve both subtracts from and adds to God's Word. She subtracts the word "freely" - - "Of every tree of the Garden you may *freely* eat..." She adds the words "nor shall you touch it..." She subtracts from God's goodness, and she adds to God's government.

Genesis 3:4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

Genesis 3:5 "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Doubt is the beginning of denial, as we see in verse 4. Denial incites desire in verse 5.

Genesis 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

You are tempted in this same way, according to 1John 2:16 - -
"For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world."

"Good for food" - - the lust of the flesh. She had plenty of food but now coveted this one fruit! Need gave way to greed.

Eve "saw...that it was pleasant to the eyes" - - the lust of the eyes. The look turned to lust; much sin begins with what you see. Job 31:1 "I have made a covenant with my eyes..."

It was "desirable to make one wise" - - the pride of life. Submission to God's will gave way to self-will.

Genesis 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Satan had promised her that their eyes would be opened - - and they were. They were opened to sin, expressed as shame in their nakedness.

What does their "nakedness" tell us? God said "in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." They didn't die *physically* that day; they must have died some other way. They died *spiritually*. As far as having fellowship and relationship with God was concerned, they were separated. As the light of God's indwelling Spirit went out, they saw the physical and soulish aspects of their nature now in control; they saw themselves as fallen.

The sewing of the fig leaves is their own effort to be right with God.
Man cannot deal with sin through self-effort of *any* kind.

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"

Genesis 3:10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

God knew where Adam was - - he was lost. It is truly illustrated here that, because of sin, there is no one who seeks after God. It is also abundantly clear that God is near to all who call upon Him and that men are *encouraged* to seek the Lord! In Acts 17:27 we read, "... that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us..."

Genesis 3:11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

Genesis 3:12 Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."

Genesis 3:13 And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Given an opportunity to confess and repent, both Adam and Eve shift blame and they blame circumstances.

Genesis 3:14 So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

Genesis 3:16 To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

Genesis 3:17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.

Genesis 3:18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.

Genesis 3:19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return."

This whole section we refer to as "the curse."

We mentioned the curse on the animal in v14; we will look at the curse on the angel in a moment. It is interesting to note that the

serpent must have originally walked upright and that it is likely that animals actually communicated with Adam and Eve before the fall.

The curse upon the woman and upon all future women first of all involves pain in childbirth. Why this? Many things could be suggested. It is sweet to read in Isaiah 53:10-11 that the work of Jesus in saving His people is compared to the labor of childbirth that brings joy when it is completed! Every human birth should remind you of sin *and* of the Savior!

Secondly, the curse on women is that their "desire shall be for [their] husband[s], and [they] shall rule over [them]." The woman was already created in submission; this is something else. This word "desire" is used again of Cain in 4:7 to speak of sin desiring to rule over him. *The woman would have the same sort of desire toward her husband that sin has toward Cain - - the desire to possess, control, and rule over him!

The curse on the man and on all future men is a life of toil among thorns and thistles in a decaying world until he and all of his future offspring would physically die.

Sin is the answer to the Problem of Pain - - sin that cannot be ascribed to God. Satan willfully sinned; Adam and Eve willfully sinned. To say that circumstances or people cause sin is to blame God, as Adam did. To say that Satan causes sin is to blame God, as Eve did. In fact, whenever you do not take personal responsibility for your sin, you are accusing God of being the author of sin.

What Adam did in the Garden affects you. But, in a very important way, it is a good thing that it does. Let me put it this way: It's a good thing that God thinks like this, because if what Adam did affects you, then what Jesus did *can also affect you!*

Romans 5:12-19 "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned...Adam... is a type of Him who was to come...For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many...And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous."

What Adam did affected the entire human race; what Jesus did also affected the entire human race! Adam's sin was imputed to you; Jesus Christ's righteousness can be imputed to you!

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

#2 The Gospel In The Garden Promises You A Savior (v15)

In pronouncing the curse upon the angel in v15, God promises to send a Savior. God describes human history as "enmity" with our enemy. Since neither Eve nor Satan can produce physical "seed," we understand God to mean that there will be an ongoing spiritual conflict between Satan and the human race. There is a special reference here to his long enmity against Israel - - pictured for us in Revelation 12 as a woman ready to give birth to the Savior and Satan ready to devour Him. Human history is the victory of God's plan to bring the promised Savior.

The virgin birth of the Savior is hinted at. Eve has no "seed"; it is Adam, the man, who supplies seed. In the case of the promised Savior, He is said to be the "seed" of the woman - - indicating something remarkable: A human birth *without* male seed!

The suffering and obedience of Jesus in His life and in His death are summarized, "He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." In the NIV it reads, "He will crush your head, and you will strike His heel." This occurred at the Cross. As Satan was striking what he thought was the final blow at God's Savior, Jesus was actually crushing him once and for all.

#3 The Gospel In The Garden Provides For Your Salvation (v20-24)

God's dealings with Adam and Eve reflect His goodness and they reveal His grace. He didn't pour out His wrath upon them...He would later do that upon Jesus, at the Cross! His promised Savior would provide their salvation, and for the salvation of "all" those who have Jesus Christ's righteousness imputed to them.

How is this done? The remaining verses give us the Bible's only answer, the only way of salvation.

Genesis 3:20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

In 5:2 we learn that God named Adam and Eve "Adam." God's name for them both was "Adam." [By the way, this is one reason why we resist the efforts to feminize the Bible; "Adam," or "mankind," is God's name and not an arbitrary sexism].

It was Adam who named his wife "Eve" - - and he does so *after* their sin, and immediately after God's promise to send a Savior through her offspring. Eve was not yet a mother; she had not yet even conceived in her womb. Naming her "Eve" was an evidence that Adam believed God by *faith* - - that he believed God would send the promised One just as He had said! Adam, and his wife, were justified by faith - - they were saved by grace through faith.

Genesis 3:21 Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

We saw that their own efforts at covering sin were inadequate. God now gives them more adequate covering - - animal skins. It should be obvious that God Himself had to kill the animals to provide this covering for sinners. Proper covering requires the shedding of blood from an innocent victim - - the blood of a substitute.

Genesis 3:22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever";

Genesis 3:23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken.

Genesis 3:24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

In His grace, God kept Adam and Eve from eating of this tree and from living eternally in the guilt and penalty of their sin.

These cherubim guarded the entrance to the presence of God in the Garden. Adam and Eve could only meet God between them. Many have suggested that there was an altar there - - the altar upon which God killed the lambs and upon which Adam and Eve and their offspring would kill their own lambs.

You might recall that in Israel's Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies had cherubim carved on its lid. It was here that the High Priest yearly sprinkled the lamb's blood for the sins of the whole nation. God's Word knows of only one way of salvation - - God must provide Himself for it, must provide Himself the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world. Men receive this grace by faith in His provision for them of the blood of Jesus.

Conclusion

What kind of animals did God kill? We are not told - - but we can guess! They were lambs.

God required one lamb for each person. Later, at the time of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, He would require one lamb for each family. After He gave Israel the Law, He would require one lamb for the whole nation. These were all types, shadows, illustrations, and symbols pointing towards the Lamb of God - - Jesus Christ - - Whom John the Baptist declared was the *one* Lamb for the entire world!

John said, ""Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

You behold Him set wonderfully before you in Genesis 3 - -

God Preincarnate pronouncing you and I sinners;
God Incarnate promised as our Savior.

To those who receive His salvation by grace through faith, He is precious.

