

The Book of Genesis

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The Subtle Serpent and the First Sin

- I. The Two Trees in Eden (Genesis 2:9, 16-17)
 - A. The Tree of Life
 1. This tree produced fruit that, when eaten, would cause man to live forever (3:22).
 2. God commanded Adam that he could eat of every tree of the garden, save one – the Tree of Knowledge.
 - a. This seems to imply that man was allowed to eat of the Tree of Life.
 - b. It also seems to indicate that as long as he continued to eat of it he would continue to enjoy life (cf. Rev. 22:2).
 3. However, some claim that man never ate of the tree of life, based on God's use of the word "lest" (Gen. 3:22).
 - a. They claim that to eat of the Tree of Life only once immediately granted one immortality.
 - b. Thus, they believe that man chose to eat of the Tree of Knowledge before eating of the Tree of Life.
 - c. Or some think that eating of the Tree of Life was not allowed until man had demonstrated faithfulness to God (cf. Rev. 2:7).
 4. Whatever the case, man's sin resulted in his separation from the Tree of Life.
 - B. The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil
 1. This tree was also located in the midst of the garden, near the Tree of Life (3:3).
 2. Obviously, the eating of the fruit of this tree did not grant to man the ability to know good from evil, right from wrong.
 - a. If man did not understand this, how could God command him to do right and not to do wrong?
 - b. Adam and Eve both understood that it was wrong to eat of this tree.
 3. Instead, eating of the fruit of this tree would allow man to know good from evil in a practical way – as a participant in both good and, now, evil.
 4. The devil claimed it would make them as gods (or, God) when, in reality, it would make them like him – though he thought himself equal with God.
 - C. Note that in connection with these trees, God's instructions were plain and could be clearly understood by man.
- II. The Subtle, Satanic Serpent (Genesis 3:1-5)
 - A. The origin of Satan...
 1. Satan is a created being for he is not God (cf. Col. 1:16; Neh. 9:6; Job 38:1-7; Psalm 148:2).
 2. However, he was not created as evil or an enemy to God or man (cf. Gen. 1:31; James 1:13, 17).
 3. Thus, Satan was originally one of the angels of God (most likely, though one cannot be dogmatic).
 4. Like man, angels were created with free will – the ability to choose – for some of them chose to sin (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6; cf. 1 John 3:4).

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5. It seems that Satan was an angel who chose to sin due to his pride (1 Tim. 3:6).
 - a. He thought he was equal to God.
 - b. He thought he was wiser than God.
 - c. He thought he was better than God.
 - d. **He still thinks this!**
6. In fact, he likely was the leader of the rebellious angels (cf. Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:9).
7. Also note Ezekiel 28:1-19 and Isaiah 14:12-15.
- B. Because of his sin, Satan was cast out of Heaven (Luke 18:10).
 1. Satan's sin came from within himself, with no outward temptation, while dwelling in the presence of God in Heaven.
 2. There is no redemption for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 19:20; Heb. 2:16).
- C. Thus, his domain or sphere of influence is upon the earth (cf. Job 1:6-8; 2 Cor. 4:4).
- D. Because of his rebellion against God, he has become the enemy of God's creation – especially man (Job 1:9-11; 2:1-5; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:9-10; etc.).
- E. Thus, he took his first opportunity to attack man at the beginning, in Eden.
- F. Though he sought to attack and destroy man, he did so with subtilty.
 1. He was timely – approaching Eve (cf. Matt. 4:1ff).
 2. He was sly – focusing on the negative.
 3. He was subtle – creating doubt in God and His Word.
 4. He was deceptive – simply adding the word “not” to God's command.
 5. He was tricky – creating trust in himself while impugning God's love.
 6. He was ruthless – appealing to man's desires while knowing the result.
- G. Satan is a cruel enemy of man.
- H. However, his fate is sealed – his head was crushed by the Savior and he awaits eternal punishment in Hell (cf. 3:14-15; Matt. 25:41).

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- III. The First Sin and Its Consequences (Genesis 3:6-24)
- A. After the serpent had placed doubt into the mind of Eve, it seems that he left her to think over this information.
- B. Instead of comparing what she had heard with the Word of God to determine what was true, Eve chose to believe the lie of Satan.
- C. The **WHAT** of the first sin...
1. 1 John 2:15-17; Matthew 4:1-11
 2. The lust of the flesh
 - a. The natural human desires, not sinful in themselves
 - b. "...saw that the tree was good for food..."
 - c. Jesus was hungry when the devil tempted Him to turn stones into bread – demonstrating a doubt of God.
 - d. Jesus placed His trust in the Word of God (Deut. 8:3).
 3. The lust of the eyes
 - a. That which appeals to human sight rather than God's wisdom
 - b. "...saw... that it was pleasant to the eyes..."
 - i. More than just physical beauty or appeal
 - ii. It appeals to man's own reasoning (cf. 2 Cor. 5:7).
 - c. Satan quoted Scripture to tempt Jesus to show His trust in God's protection (cf. Psa. 91:11).
 - d. Jesus quoted Scripture that taught a superseding principle – "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (cf. Deut. 6:16).
 4. The pride of life
 - a. The desire for glory in one's self, wisdom, and one's own existence
 - b. "...a tree to be desired to make one wise..."
 - c. Jesus was tempted to acquire the kingdoms of the world by worshipping Satan instead of God.
 - d. Jesus trusted in God and His Word (Deut. 6:13).
 5. All temptations come in this manner (cf. 1 Cor. 1:13; Heb. 4:15).
- D. The **HOW** of the first sin...
1. Man heard a lie.
 2. Man believed a lie.
 3. Man obeyed a lie.
 4. The "how" of restoration follows logically...
 - a. Man must hear the truth.
 - b. Man must believe the truth.
 - c. Man must obey the truth.
- E. The **WHY** of the first sin...
1. It was not because of ignorance (vs. 1-3).
 2. Deception was involved, but Eve was deceived willingly (cf. 1 Tim. 2:14; 2 Cor. 11:3).
 3. Man sinned because of pride – thinking he knew better than God.
 4. Man sinned because he desired to be free from God's law (cf. Luke 15:11ff).

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F. The **CONSEQUENCES** of the first sin...

1. 3:7 - Shame
2. 3:8 - Guilt
3. 3:9-10 - Fear
4. 3:11-12 - Deception
5. 3:13 - Humiliation
6. 3:14-19 - Punishment
7. 3:16 - Subjection
8. 3:17-19 - Curse
9. 3:21 - Sacrifice
10. 3:22-23 - Separation
11. 3:24 - Death

IV. The Punishment and the Prophecy

(Genesis 3:14-24)

A. Punishment for Eve (vs. 16)

1. Suffering
 - a. The process of pregnancy and childbirth would be multiplied greatly with sorrow.
 - b. The word for 'sorrow' can mean "pain," "labor," or "worry."
2. Subordination
 - a. Man had been created first and was to be the head of the household (cf. 1 Tim. 2:13-14).
 - b. Eve had taken that role for herself by believing the lie of the devil and leading her husband into sin.
 - c. Thus, God reinforced the principle of the wife's submission to her husband (cf. 1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-29; Col. 3:18-19; 1 Tim. 2:11-15; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).
 - i. This does not mean that woman is inferior to man.
 - ii. This does not permit men to abuse or mistreat women.
 - iii. However, it does teach that there are differences between men and women and different roles for each sex in the home and in the church.

B. Punishment for Adam (vs. 17-19)

1. The reason for Adam's punishment is two-fold:
 - a. He ate of the fruit from the forbidden tree.
 - b. He listened to the temptation from his wife – rather than attempting to protect her or lead her to repentance.
2. Cursing of the ground
 - a. Originally, God did the planting in Eden and Adam only had to "dress it and keep it" (2:15).
 - b. Now, he would be expelled from the Garden of Eden and forced to cultivate his own food.
 - c. Furthermore, the ground would be cursed with thorns and thistles – weeds that must be fought in order to grow food.
 - d. As a result, man would have to toil in sorrow (the same word in vs. 16) for his food until the day he died.
 - i. This word for 'sorrow' is found only one other time in the OT.

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- ii. Genesis 5:29 speaks of Noah comforting man from his ‘toil’ due to the cursed ground.
 - iii. Man long desired and anticipated the removal of the curse.
 - 2. Confirmation of mortality
 - a. Physical death will now occur just as God had promised.
 - b. For the first time, man learned that he would return to dust.
 - C. Punishment for mankind (vs. 20-24)
 - 1. Physical death is a consequence of the first sin.
 - a. Man was expelled from the Garden of Eden and separated from the Tree of Life.
 - i. Cast out
 - ii. Shut out
 - b. Thus, the wages of sin is death (cf. Rom. 6:23; 5:12; Heb. 9:27; etc.).
 - 2. Modest clothing is required.
 - a. God made coats of animal skins to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve.
 - b. Their fig-leaf garments were insufficient.
 - c. The coats were tunics that covered the body from the shoulders to the knees.
 - 3. Sacrifice was necessary.
 - a. The shedding of blood is required for remission of sins (Heb. 9:22).
 - b. The killing of these animals to cover man and woman is the first death recorded in Scripture.
 - c. Whether or not it was a sacrifice, it typified the law of God that was to follow – the blood of animals would be shed to pay for man’s sins, until the coming of the Savior.
 - D. Punishment for Satan (vs. 14-15)
 - 1. The serpent would be humbled and dishonored.
 - 2. Satan would be in continuous conflict with mankind.
 - 3. Satan would be defeated soundly by the seed of woman.
 - E. The Prophecy of a Savior (vs. 15)
 - 1. Genesis 3:15 records the first prophecy of Jesus, the Messiah and Savior.
 - 2. The phrase “her seed” may not reference specifically the virgin birth of Jesus, but it seems to hint at it (cf. Matt. 1:20-21; Luke 1:34-35; Isa. 7:14; Jer. 31:22).
 - 3. The seed of woman is referred to in the singular – “he.”
 - a. Genesis 22:18 – “thy seed” (Abraham)
 - b. 2 Samuel 7:12-14 – “thy seed” (David) [cf. Psalms 89:3-4, 29, 36]
 - c. Galatians 3:16 – “thy seed, which is Christ”
 - 4. He – Jesus – would bruise the head of Satan (cf. Rom. 16:20; Eph. 4:8; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 20:10).
 - 5. It is a prophecy of victory in the face of man’s first defeat.
 - 6. It is a gleam of hope in the darkness of sin and its punishment.
 - 7. It is a picture of love and grace – God would work to restore fellowship with His creation, man.