

THE FALL - GEN. 3
World's Greatest Events #2

The French captain couldn't believe his eyes. He had sailed all the way from Europe with a cargo of cheese, and now just 12 days out of the port of Rio de Janeiro, his cheeses were all discolored. The salt water had somehow discolored the rinds making the cheeses look very unappetizing. He knew that he faced an angry mob in port, for the Brazilians loved that Dutch cheese. And when he returned home, he would face an even angrier owner who would have to eat the cheese financially.

But then he saw a ray of hope thru the porthole. Upon further inspection of the cheese, captain Pasan found that the cheese itself was fine. It was just the rinds that were so discolored that they made the cheese appear to be very unappetizing. Well, it didn't take the captain long to come up with a plan. He summoned one of his 17 year old cadets, a young man named Edward, and commissioned this creative young man to make those cheeses appear to be more edible. Give these cheeses some kind of face-lift.

Well, Edward had never held a paintbrush in his hand to this point in his life, but he grabbed one and started to paint the rinds of those cheeses. And by the time he got done, well, Captain Pasan was impressed. The cheeses looked fresher now than when they had started. And when the Brazilians saw that cheese, they bought out the entire cargo in one day.

But later that week, a problem occurred. You see, these cheeses looked so appetizing, that many of the customers not only ate the cheese, but they also ate the rinds as well. And they began to get sick. Today, we realize what the problem was. That yellow paint that Edward had used was lead based, and the people were getting lead poisoning from eating the rinds.

Happily, the Rio de Janeiroans recovered from their brief illness, Captain Pasan sailed his ship back to Europe, and the ship's owner was very pleased with the profits of the trip. But perhaps the most fortunate consequence of all was the change found in the life of that young 17 year old ship cadet named Edward. For as I mentioned before, this was the first painting experience for Edward. But he enjoyed it so much, he found such great satisfaction out of his painting those cheese rinds, that he abandoned the sailing profession when he got back to Europe, and he began to paint. And one day, Edward would change the artistic world by becoming the father of French impressionistic painting- Edward Monet.

Those Brazilians were not the first people to be deceived into eating some poisonous food by its appealing and appetizing appearance. No, the first sin that was committed on planet earth was somewhat similar in nature. But in their case, Adam and Eve did not act in ignorance, but they willfully disobeyed a direct command from God himself.

We have begun to study the top 10 events of Human History. Last time, we looked at creation. This

certainly has to qualify on the top 10 list for there wouldn't be any other world event without the world being created in the first place. But I think that the entrance of sin into this world also must qualify as one of the world's greatest events. For last time we left the world with God's commentary "It is good". The world that God created was pure and perfect. That certainly doesn't describe the reality of the world that we live in today. We will never be able to understand the world as it is today without a Biblical concept of sin. Without a proper understanding of sin and evil, we will never be able to have a Biblical worldview.

Many have seen the uniqueness of the human race and have tried to build a philosophy of life simply on that. We are living in a day when the humanist tries to focus his attention on great human potential and unique human abilities. But without the flip side of the coin- our willful sinfulness against God, we can never hope to have a realistic view of the human race. Any philosophy built upon the foundation of the inherent goodness of the human race is bound for ultimate failure for such a view is not based upon reality, it is not founded on the truth. The Bible makes this crystal clear.

This is the reason for Griffith Thomas starting his commentary on Genesis 3 with these words: "It is hardly too much to say that this chapter is the pivot of the Bible, for if we take it away, the rest of Scripture becomes meaningless. With the exception of the fact of Creation, we have here the record of the most important and far-reaching event in the world's history- the entrance of sin."

In this Genesis 3, we really have 4 beginnings that help us to see the critical importance of the entrance of sin into our planet. Let's look at these 4 beginnings briefly this morning.

1. First we have the beginning of temptation- for Gen. 3:1-5 speaks of the first temptation recorded in the Bible. Look at it with me. READ Genesis 3:1-5.

GE 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"

GE 3:2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "

GE 3:4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

*Notice with me first the source of temptation. The serpent came to the woman and tempted her to sin. We know from comparing other Scriptures that this was more than just a snake, but it was rather the person of Satan using the form of the snake for his devious plans. But it is important to note this for it for it answers 2 very important concerns that we have:

1. It lets us know that God is not the source of sin in the human race. God had nothing to do with this temptation- it came from God's adversary, the devil.

2. It also lets us know that the original temptation came to the human race from without, not from within. It was not Eve's nature that first tempted her to sin. Yes, the serpent used the human desires of the flesh, but the temptation came from without. God created the human race originally in a perfect condition.

*Note the subtlety of the serpent's temptation with me:

1. He excites the woman's curiosity as he speaks with her so she is attracted to this very unusual event.

2. He then raises suspicions concerning the goodness of God by questioning her. If God were really good to you, why wouldn't he let you eat of every tree in the garden? Any restrictions are interpreted as God's lack of love and concern for her. What is God really holding back from you, Eve?

3. He then attacks the very word and integrity of God. You will not surely die. God has not told you the truth- his word cannot be trusted.

4. Then he appealed to her pride- if you eat of the fruit, you will be like God himself. Be your own god. Don't allow your life to revolve around your creator. Have your life revolve around yourself, your desires, your goals, your needs.

5. And finally, he appealed to her normal and natural fleshly desires. The fruit looks good, it is appealing to the eyes. The fruit certainly would taste good, it is good for food.

And the Bible records Eve's tragic acceptance of the serpent's temptation.

Temptation is a fact of life. We all are tempted to sin. Even Jesus Christ himself was tempted to sin. And in a very real sense, the ultimate success that we will have in life and our growth in relationship with God are in direct proportion to the patterns that we set up in our life handling temptation.

And the amazing thing is that the enemy continues with similar patterns of temptation even today.

*He excites our curiosity to the sins of the world. He tries to make sin look so appealing.

*He raises questions concerning the goodness of God. What is God trying to hold back from us?

*He continues to attack the word of God. The Bible has been and will continue to be under the constant attack of the enemy. Attack the word of God, sow seeds of doubt.

Why does he attack the Bible? Because it is the weapon that the enemy cannot stand against. Jesus Christ used quotes from the word of God to fend off the temptations of Satan. Paul encouraged the Ephesians to arm themselves with the sword of the spirit which is the word of God. And sadly, it was Eve's alteration of God's word which led directly to her downfall into sin- for she did not quote God's word accurately. She took the liberties of editing God's word by both adding to it and subtracting from it and look what happened to her.

Yes, we can learn a great deal from the first temptation recorded in Genesis 3.

2. But we also have the first willful disobedience of God's command also recorded in Gen. 3- and this first brought the plague of sin to the human race.

READ Gen. 3:6

GE 3:6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Now it is very important that we see the root of sin that is clearly seen in this passage. The basic foundation for human sin was found in the desire to assert oneself in a decision to be independent of God in controlling life.

*The serpent's temptation to Eve was eat this fruit and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

*Eve saw that the fruit looked good- it pleased her appetite and visual senses-, she also accepted Satan's assertion that by eating the fruit she would become wise like God. So she made a choice to directly disobey the instruction of God.

*And the indication from other parts of Scripture is that Adam made an even more willful choice. He just took of the fruit from Eve and ate. There is no indication of deception or subtlety here. It was just a blatant, willful choice to disobey God's clear instructions to him. Adam wanted his own desires over God's. He was willing to identify with Eve and choose her over God.

*And the bottom line in both cases was a desire for self-assertion, a desire to be independent of God's authority, a desire to usurp his rightful place in their lives.

*Now there have been many who have written and discussed this scene trying to make some logical sense over it throughout the years. I have come to the place in my life where I now feel that it is impossible to make any logical sense out of it because Eve and Adam's act of rebellion against God recorded here in Genesis 3 is the most illogical and irrational act that could ever be imagined. Here they were the only human beings on planet earth. They knew that they owed their existence to God as their creator. And for them to willfully choose to rebel against the one who had given life to them is beyond any understanding of rationality in my opinion. I believe that this is the reason why we have such trouble understanding the origin of sin – because it is totally illogical and irrational.

*But we must come to a realization of the basic nature of sin in order to deal effectively with it in our lives. The problem in the world is that there is a denial of the basic nature of sin. Symptoms are dealt with- but the basic problem is never addressed. And this often is true in our individual lives as well. Until we come to the place where we recognize that the foundation of sin is our desire to take over God's place in our life, and until we come to the place where we consciously and willfully give that rightful place back to God, allowing him His

rightful position of being God in every area of our life, we are going to be in a constant battle with symptoms, but we will never get to the root of our sin problem.

3. A third first necessarily followed these other firsts, for when sin entered the human race as the result of temptation and a willful choice to give in to it, the consequences of sin were close behind. So in Gen. 3 we have the first examples of consequences for sin or punishments for sin.

*The immediate consequence was an inner one- feelings of guilt.

Read Gen. 3:7

⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

The natural question that comes to mind is the one that God would later ask- "Who told you you were naked" 3:11

How did Adam and Eve have this sudden awareness of their nakedness? They had the awareness because of the guilt feelings that they immediately had internally having sinned against God.

*But then they also suffered the consequences of their sins. Gen. 3:14-19 records the consequences of sin- consequences to the animal kingdom, consequences to the plant kingdom, consequences to the human race. It is interesting that every single aspect of this earth's realm was affected by the consequences of Adam and Eve's sins. They had been created and placed in a position of authority over all the rest of God's creation on this earth, they had been given dominion by God over all the rest of creation, and when they sinned everything that they were in charge of was affected by actions.

There are always consequences for sin. One of the enemy's greatest lies is that we can sin and enjoy the pleasures of it without suffering any adverse consequences. But this is a lie for there are always consequences for sins. And the saddest part is that we sometimes never really do see those consequences. None of us will never ever know what our lives could have been without all of the sins that we have committed.

Of all the consequences of sin, separation from fellowship with God is by far the most severe one. It is one that must occur because of the perfect holiness of God. God does not want to be separated from fellowship with us - no, he created the human race for the purpose of having fellowship with him. He delighted in the daily fellowship that he had with Adam and Eve as he walked and communicated with them in the Garden of Eden. But in our sinful condition, a perfectly holy and righteous God cannot have fellowship with us. So there was the necessity of banning Adam and Eve from that Garden of Eden.

READ Gen. 3:23,24.

²³ So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

4. And this brings us to the 4th beginning in this chapter- for passage also gives to us the first mention of redemption in the Bible. In his statement of curse on the serpent, God said these words:

GE 3:15 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."

And then later in the chapter these actions of God are recorded:

GE 3:21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

God's banning Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden was not only a necessary consequence because of their sin, but it was also an act of love on His part. For God loved them too much to leave them helplessly in their sinful state. No, God already had a plan of redemption for them.

*That plan of redemption was pictured in the sacrificial animal out of which God made skins of clothing for them.

*That plan of redemption would be culminated in the lamb of God who would come to crush the serpent's head.

*That plan of redemption made it possible to impart to human beings God's own eternal life.

*What a horrible thing it would have been for Adam and Eve to stay in the garden of Eden, partake of that tree of life, and be sentenced to live forever in their sinful state with the cancer of sin just eating away at their bodies forever and ever. No, God had a better plan. A plan to pay for their sins. A plan to help them deal with guilt and the consequences of sins in their lives. A plan for to permanently restore them to fellowship with God. A plan to provide a way for all human beings to be able to battle against temptation successfully in the future.

*I began by quoting Griffith Thomas writing that this chapter in his opinion is the pivot of the Bible. And it is true. For we can only have a proper relationship with God as we:

*admit our sinful condition before him

*accept the consequences of sin in our lives as our just desserts so that we are not bitter against God

*receive his redemptive work so that complete fellowship can be restored with God

*use the armor that God has provided for us so that we might be consistently successful in the battle against continuing temptation.