

# OpenTheo

## Genesis 3:7 - 3:15



### Genesis - Steve Gregg

In Genesis 3, Eve eats from the tree of knowledge, causing her and Adam to feel shame and a desire to cover themselves. God calls out to them, and while Adam confesses, he also shifts blame onto Eve, highlighting the tendency for individuals to deflect responsibility for their sins. The Fall of Man leads to a change in the nature of the relationship between humanity and nature, making it unfriendly and resistant to man's efforts, and man becomes a slave to sin with the responsibility to tend the earth and deal with agricultural hardships.

## Transcript

Today we're turning again to Genesis chapter 3. We covered the first six verses, which really records most of the action of the chapter, but there's, there's, there are pronouncements in the rest of the chapter that are very, what happened of course in the first six verses was Eve was tempted and she succumbed. She ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which they had been forbidden to eat from. She was induced by a serpent to do that, whom we find later in scripture is identified with Satan.

So he is not so identified here. And then she gave also to her husband, who was with her, either with her right there in the spot by the tree, or else it may just mean with her living with her in the garden. In any case, he also made the wrong choice and he ate.

So they both sinned. And in verse seven, it says, 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. Now, why'd they do that? We read in the end of chapter two, the very last verse, they were both naked, the man and the wife, and they were not ashamed.

But now that they ate of this tree, it would appear they were ashamed. They wanted to hide themselves. They were naked.

They were no longer comfortable with that fact, and they did what they could to cover their nakedness. Now, of course, we actually see this in real human nature. Little children, when they're born, don't have any sense of shame about being unclad in a

public place.

This is true of toddlers. Often the parents are more embarrassed than the children when they've got guests over at the house and the child comes out of the room totally naked and the child is totally innocent, doesn't have any sense that there's anything different about being naked or being clothed. There's just no sense of shame at all.

However, anyone who's raised children knows that it comes a time when you don't have to teach the child to be modest. They eventually come to a place where they want to be modest. I find it's usually probably around maybe five or six years, maybe a little younger for some children, that they just don't want to get undressed in front of people.

They want the door shut when they're in the bathroom, when they're bathing, and they just have a natural sense of modesty, a sense of shame about being naked in front of other people. It's an interesting thing. I've often wondered whether that particular awareness that comes upon a child might mark the passing of the age of accountability or the passing into the age of accountability.

Because that's certainly what Adam and Eve passed it to. As soon as they became aware of good and evil, they became aware that they were not good. And the emblem of that was they wanted to cover up.

And although this was a physical covering up of their physical nakedness, it certainly corresponds to what they were feeling inside their consciences. They felt ashamed at this point because there was now something to be ashamed of. They were naked previously, and they were not ashamed.

Naked, of course, means they were totally exposed. They could see each other. God could see them.

There was nothing to be ashamed of. They were innocent. But when they were no longer innocent, they sensed guilt.

And guilt, of course, always is associated with shame. And when you feel convicted or condemned or you feel ashamed of something you've done, the natural tendency, of course, is to want to cover it up. Now, of course, in the story, they covered up their bodies with something that was an attempt at clothing.

But we have our own ways of trying to cover up, just secrecy, lying, and things like that. But when we feel guilty, the tendency is to not want people to see us the way we are, and to cover ourselves with some excuse. Or, in many cases, some have felt this is actually the origin of the instincts that have led people to start.

Because religions, no doubt, arise when they first came out of nothing, when people started their religions. It was no doubt because they sensed there was a breach between

themselves and the divine, between themselves and their Creator, or the deities that they happened to believe. And they sensed that they were inferior, that they were unworthy, and that there must be something we must do to atone for ourselves.

There must be something we must do to make the deities look upon us with greater favor, because we don't feel that we have in us the qualification to be looked upon favorably, because we know we are, we know we're sinful. And everybody knows they're sinful until they try to convince themselves otherwise. Every child who has come to the point where they know right and wrong, they seek to conceal the wrong that they do, from their parents and so forth.

And likewise, adults, when they are feeling guilty in the sight of their Creator, they want to conceal that, or make up for it, more likely. When one comes to the point where they feel like, I can't hide from God, then they feel like, well, I must cover myself up then. I must, I must accommodate the fact that I can't hide from God.

I must at least make myself respectable. And so, people have come up with religious systems of good works. You know, do these works, offer these sacrifices, do these rituals, and you'll appease God.

And they do so only because they have a sense of shame, only because they have a sense of alienation from God. There'd be no instinct to create religious behaviors unless there was already a previous instinct of separation and alienation and unworthiness to stand before God without those rituals, and without those special religious activities. And so, one could say that Adam and Eve, in sewing together fig leaves for their covering, can you imagine how impermanent such a garment would be? I mean, it wouldn't make it through more than ten washings, or it wouldn't even probably ever be washed.

Imagine leaves. Ever try to hold leaves together with, I don't know what they used to thread, but they sewed fig leaves together, and it obvious, it seems obvious that these did not really do the job. Because when God came walking into the garden, they hid themselves.

And Adam said, I'm naked. Well, I thought you covered yourself, Adam. Yeah, well, it didn't really do.

What Adam could put together through his own work was not really something that made him fully covered in the sight of God, so he hid from God. And so, actually, putting on the garments of fig leaves no doubt represents the change that had taken place between the man and the woman. Although they had both come into the same state together of sin, they both committed it.

And you might think they would find camaraderie in that, yet sin alienates people from other people. You know, the person who used to look upon us favorably, we feel like they

will not respect us anymore. They won't love us anymore.

If they see us as we, as our conscience, as we really see ourselves, there's this putting up a barrier so that someone can't see my moral nakedness anymore. And so, the wearing of the fig leaves is sort of a, almost an emblem of a barrier that had come up between the man and the woman. They don't want to be exposed to each other, to each other's view as much as before.

And then when God comes walking, they hide in the bushes, it's clear that sin has also alienated them from God. They're just really alone now. They weren't alone before, they had each other, they had God, and now their sin just breaks all the relationships.

And it's obvious that the fig leaves did not really last. They didn't really do the job, because they still felt ashamed in the sight of God. And likewise, human works, a religion that seeks to cover our moral shame by doing good or religious works, or ritual works.

When a person really stands before God, face to face, they realize that no matter what they've done religiously, they still are not cutting the mustard. They're still not measuring up to God. They still will feel ashamed in the presence of the living God.

And so we find it here, it says in verse 8, they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. I could have mentioned this long earlier in our lectures, I guess better late than never. Do you notice throughout the entire story from about chapter 2 verse 4 on, we have found consistently God is referred to as the Lord God.

Prior to that, in the first chapter, it was just Elohim, God. Now it is Yahweh Elohim. And perhaps this change came about because we now have man in the picture.

God, the word God just seems like, you know, the divine being, the creator, sounds rather impersonal. But Yahweh is a personal name for God. And now that there's man and woman there to be in relationship with God, we find God spoken of in a more personal way.

Instead of just Elohim, it's Yahweh Elohim. And sometimes the term Lord God is repeated so often it almost gets redundant, but there's a strong emphasis here that there is the name Yahweh has been added. And I guess I didn't mention this earlier, though you may have known it.

In your Bible, when you find the word Lord, all in capital letters, that is the translator's way of communicating to you that the word Yahweh, or the name Yahweh, is in the Hebrew text. The word Lord was chosen to translate Yahweh following the Septuagint practice. The Septuagint, when it translated the Hebrew into the Greek, chose the word Kyrios, which is the Greek word for Lord.

Kyrios was the Greek word they chose to translate Yahweh. And so when English translations were made, likewise trying to think of some word in the language that could accommodate this, they simply followed what the Septuagint had done, and they took the English word Lord. But there's more than one Hebrew word that means Lord, and so whenever they wanted to let you know that the word Yahweh, actually it's not really the word Yahweh, it's the tetragrammaton, the four letters, YHWH, is in the Hebrew text.

That's the divine name. Our Bibles translate it with capital L, capital O, capital R, capital Z, all caps. Now if you find the word Lord, and it's not in all capitals, it's a different Hebrew word, but in the text it's Adonai.

Adonai is the ordinary word for Lord, or Master, in the Hebrew language, and so sometimes God is referred to as Adonai, Master, other times He's referred to by His proper name Yahweh. Here we have the combination of Yahweh and Elohim, Lord God. That's just a little side there, but we've been encountering through this entire passage from chapter 2, verse 4 until the present point, God seems consistently to be referred to as Yahweh Elohim, the Lord God.

And it says they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden, in verse 8, in the cool of the day. Now it's not clear whether this is the time of day that they were accustomed to walking with God in the garden. It would seem possible, but this was a regular appointment.

It was cool, things were cooling off, the nicest time of the day, God, and they would go for a walk and fellowship, and so here comes God looking for possibly His regular appointment with them. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh Elohim among the trees of the garden. Then Yahweh Elohim, the Lord God, called to Adam and said to him, where are you? Now, it would seem that God would not have to ask questions like this.

One of the things we learn about God later in Scripture, we haven't really been exposed to it here, but we might have deduced it here, is that God really knows everything. He's omniscient. He doesn't need to be informed by man about anything.

And yet He sometimes asks for information from man. He says, Adam, where are you? He didn't say, Adam, what are you doing there in the bushes? He said, where are you? And likewise in the next chapter we find Him speaking to Cain after Cain has killed his brother Abel. God comes to Cain and says, Cain, where's your brother? And we have to realize that God, when He asks questions like this, He's not really seeking information.

He's seeking to elicit a confession. Instead of coming with an accusation, He comes inviting a confession. Adam, where are you? Adam could have said, well, I'm hiding because I sinned.

I disobeyed you. That would have been coming completely clean. Adam didn't come completely clean.

In fact, Adam especially is the one who does the talking. We don't really read Eve's talking. But just so typical of like a childlike innocence in a way.

I mean, they're not innocent anymore, but they're still like children. They're grown up people. I should say they're big people.

They didn't do any growing up. They were created full grown, but they are naive as children, you know. And God says, Adam, where are you? And so Adam said, I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself.

And he's not very good at keeping himself concealed. And he doesn't confess his sin, but he does inadvertently let on that he did something wrong. Because he was naked.

He confessed that he was naked. But that is, he doesn't confess that it was sin. He just said, I'm in this condition.

Which of course was a dead giveaway that he had sinned, but he doesn't come out and say that. And the Lord said, who told you you were naked? That's something you're not really supposed to really be aware of. If you had not sinned, you wouldn't know or wouldn't think about it.

You'd be totally transparent between you and me, between you and your wife. There'd be total transparency unless there was guilt, unless there was shame. Someone must have told you you were naked.

That's kind of God being coy. Obviously, there's no one there to tell him that he was naked. He didn't say, who told you you were naked? It's a rhetorical question.

The idea is, you figured this out on your own, didn't you? And how did that happen? Well, he said, Adam knew that he had to answer that question. But God says, have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat? Again, God doesn't say, you ate of the tree. He could have accused him, but he's still trying to get a full confession out of the man.

The man had not come close enough to really confessing his sin. And so God lays out a line. Did you sin? Did you eat of the tree I commanded you not to eat of? Let's get his plain, straight answer here.

And Adam, again, though he confesses, he hedges his confession. He said, well, the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate. By the end of his long sentence, he confesses, yeah, I ate.

Bottom line is, yeah, I did sin. But there's a lot of mitigating factors here. I mean, it

wasn't my idea.

I got it from my wife. And come to think of it, I got her from you. So it seems like there's a lot of other responsible parties here to come into picture before my sin needs to be considered.

I did eat, but it's the woman that you gave me. I didn't even ask for her. And I didn't ask her for the fruit.

I was tempted by my wife. And there's a sense in which, God, you are the one who made the original mistake of putting this temptation into my life. And there are people who certainly don't feel very guilty for their sins.

They think they were born that way. It's God's fault. You ever heard people claim they were born the way that they are, which the Bible describes them? Whether it's something as simple as, I'm Irish.

Of course I have a bad temper. Or I was born homosexual. Or I was born alcoholic.

Or I was born... So my behavior, obviously, I didn't ask for it. Well, there is truth in the fact that we don't ask for what we get. The kit we get when we're born often does come with certain challenges.

And I don't personally think anyone is born homosexual, but I do think that maybe some people are born more susceptible to that sin than other people are. I don't think anyone's born an alcoholic, but I do believe that some people may be either because of something genetic or maybe just something in the home they're raised in that they didn't ask to be raised in. There are influences that make them prone to be weaker toward the temptation to drunkenness.

And no doubt, Irish people do sometimes have, you know, to fight a greater battle against temper than someone else, than say a Korean, an Asian who's more calm and so forth. But there are definitely cultural and even racial issues and perhaps genetic issues that cause some people to have more challenge from the beginning. And God could be said to be the one who put them in that position.

The woman you gave me, she's the one who tempted me. But you see, all that Adam said is true, but irrelevant to the question. Because the question is not how many challenges did you have to overcome? The question is not how many people were in the intermediary stage between you and your sin? The question is, what did you do? Now, I'll deal with Eve later, but I asked you, did you disobey me? And there's never a time when we can say, well, I'm sinning because it's the way I was raised, it was the genetic kit I received at birth, it's my ancestry, it's... Well, I mean, all those statements could actually be true, but they still don't provide an excuse, because you know what? We could still have obeyed.

Now, you might say, well, we can't because we're fallen, we're born fallen, we've got this sin nature, we can't live a holy life. Well, we can't live a holy life on our own strength, that is a fact. But while we're young and children, I don't believe God holds us responsible for our failures, because we truly don't have knowledge of good and evil when we're little children.

Not a mature grasp of it so as to make us fully responsible, I think, for our actions. But when we reach that stage where we are knowledgeable of good and evil, we also are at a stage where we could seek the grace of God, if we know of it, some people don't know about it. But the point is, by the grace of God, we can both receive strength in our temptations to overcome them, and we can receive forgiveness when we fall.

God knows our frame. He remembers that we're dust. It says in Psalm 103.

He is aware that we have challenges. He is aware that we are weak. And He's not even extremely, apparently, angry at our weakness.

We don't find God getting really hot under the collar here with Adam. God knew what Adam had done before God even showed up to have this conversation. And God doesn't appear to be angry.

He says, where are you, Adam? Oh, you're naked. Who told you that? Did you sin against me? And when Adam finally says, yes, I did sin against you, God, instead of just flying off the handle about this, He turns to the woman and says, now, why did you do this? Now, He turns to the woman because Adam pointed out the fact that the woman was an intermediary in the temptation. And God is going to deal with Adam.

But since Eve's responsibility has come up into the picture, God turns to Eve. And the Lord God said to the woman, what is this that you have done? And the woman said, the serpent deceived me and I ate. So she confessed also.

Now, she said I was deceived, and that was true also. The Bible confirms that she was deceived. Adam and Eve did not lie to God about this.

Though they did frame their reluctant confessions in such a way as to bring forth, first of all, the mitigating circumstances. I ate it. I did the wrong thing.

But the woman who gave me, she influenced me. Yes, I ate it, but the serpent deceived me. I was mistaken.

I was deceived. Well, that's often true. I mean, that's what the devil does.

He deceives the whole world. So when we confess our sins, it is often true that the devil deceives us. But we better make sure that when we come to God about it, we're not sticking the devil in between us and God as the responsible party.



God knew about the devil. God created the devil. The devil is under God's scrutiny as much as every man is under God's scrutiny.

God knows the things that influence us to sin. The people, the devil. And indeed, it is true that God is the one who has put those influences in our lives.

God did put the woman in man's life. God did put the serpents in the garden. What do you think? Who do you think put the serpent there? If it wasn't God.

God created that serpent. In fact, we're specifically told, notice in verse one of chapter three, The serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. The way it's worded, you might say, well, he's not one of the ones that's made.

But I think it's more to be understood as inclusive. Of all the creatures that the Lord God had made, the serpent was the most cunning, more than the rest. The serpent was there at God's behest.

God wanted man and woman to be tested. So it's kind of irrelevant to plead, God, I sinned because there was a temptation, because I was deceived, because someone that was close to me urged. Yes, when we are tempted, it is often through these media.

But that's just the way temptation works. But temptation is a test that we are expected to pass, or at least we're required to pass. And when we don't pass it, we should just come clean and say, I failed.

I did, yes, I'm not going to focus on the people or the influences that caused me to be weak. All I'm going to say is, I should have done better. I could have sought God in the hour of temptation and received strength and grace to help in time of need.

That was available. I didn't use it. So I'm going to take responsibility.

Now, this is not groveling. This is just being mature in taking responsibility. A mature person is one who says, I'm the one who made the mistake.

The buck stops here. You know how, which president had that sign on his desk? The buck stops here. Truman.

Truman had that little plaque on his desk when he was president. The buck stops here. Obviously referring to the same, about passing the buck.

People pass responsibility. We have had presidents, and maybe even now have one, that are willing to say, things are going badly, but it's not my fault. It's that person's fault.

It's this general. It's this person who's the head of VP. It's someone else's fault, not mine.

And in some cases, that may be a true statement, but the man in charge is the one who

needs to be mature and take responsibility. The buck cannot be passed past this desk. When the responsibility is brought to my door, I will not pass it on to somebody else as it's not mine.

And that's how we have to be when we sin. We just have to be mature about it. I sinned.

I did the wrong thing. Now, let's get right with this. And when you confess your sin, what's it say? In 1 John 1, 9, if we confess our sins, he is faithful.

He is just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And that's how God is. And it would appear that God, in fact, may have forgiven Adam and Eve here.

Their confessions were reluctant, but they came out eventually. And the reason I say it's possible that God forgave them, although we do find him speaking about the consequences of human life that will come about as a result of their sin. Of course, there's this famous little bit here where it says that God made coverings from the skins of animals and clothed them.

Verse 21 says, Also for Adam and his wife, the Lord God made tunics of skin, meaning animal skin, of course, hides and clothed them. Now, this makes it very clear that whatever they had done to cover their own nakedness was not really working out. And God says, I can fix that, but it's going to take some animals going to have to die.

They have to shed some blood here to cover this sin. And so God had to kill a couple of animals and take their skins and put them on Adam and Eve. And then their guilt and their shame was adequately covered.

And this would be the first hint in the Bible of a blood atonement that when when when we sin, someone has to die or else it may be us. We can die for our sins or someone else can die in place of us for our sins. Now, there's an important thing to note here, and that is that God had said to Adam in the day you eat of it, you will die.

Now, this was that day. Did Adam die? It does not appear as if Adam did die on this day. And we read, in fact, in Chapter five, that Adam lived hundreds of years after this time.

In fact, when he when he was 130 years old, he had a son named Seth, and then he lived another 800 years after that. Adam lived almost a thousand years after this point. Nine hundred and thirty years.

So what does it mean in the day you eat of it, you'll die? Now, the way the classic, I guess, Augustinian theology has described it is that Adam died spiritually. You know, Paul says in Ephesians, Chapter two, that before we were converted, we were dead in trespasses and sins. And Augustinian theology seems to understand that to mean we were spiritually dead.

Now, some people say, well, what other way would you take that? Dead in trespasses and sins? Isn't that spiritually dead? Well, it could be. It's not clear that it is. To be dead in sins, the term dead in Scripture often means doomed to die.

In our sins, we were doomed. We were on death row. We were as good as dead.

The word dead in the Bible often means as good as dead. For example, there's two passages, one in Hebrews 11 and one in Romans 4 that speak about Abraham. He and Sarah would have.

And I believe it's in Romans 4 where it says that he did not consider his body, which was now dead when the promise was given. But in Hebrews, talking about the same story in Chapter 11, it says he was as good as dead for having children. So we see the metaphor of death is often just means that you're no better than dead.

When it says of the prodigal son, he was dead. But then he was living when he came back to his father's house. He was dead to his father.

He was alienated. But many people feel that when Paul said we were dead in trespasses and sins, it means that we had been born with a condition that we inherited from Adam. Adam acquired this condition of spiritual death at the day that he ate the fruit.

This could be true, but the Bible doesn't tell us so. It is simply one way of trying to harmonize the fact that God said the day you eat it, you'll die. And it does not look like he physically died.

It seems to me there's at least one other possible explanation. And that is God said the day that you eat of it, you shall die. But there's a subtext or maybe someone else can die in your place.

There must be an execution. Your sins must be paid for with blood. You eat of it.

You will die either personally or through a substitute. You see, in a sense, when Christ died in our place, it said that we died because he was standing in for us. We died in him.

We rose in him. In our substitute, he died. We died in him because he stood in for us.

These animals that were slain to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve, they died. We might say in place of Adam and Eve. The penalty was exacted that day and not at a later day.

But it was allowed that a substitute could stand in for Adam and a substitute could stand in for Eve, in this case, animals. And this begins thousands of years of religious behavior, which points forward to the atonement of Christ. In the Old Testament, we find again and again that righteous people offered lambs as sacrifices.

And of course, even pagans did that kind of thing. Even the pagans knew they had to offer sacrifices. How is it that even before God revealed himself to Abraham or before God gave the law to Moses, that even pagans decided that had no contact with Abraham or Moses, they in their religions were offering sacrifices.

Some of them were so corrupted in their practice, they offered virgins into the volcano, or they offered human sacrifices. But the point is that all societies, since Adam's time, have apparently known that to atone for sin requires either that you die or that someone dies in your place, something or someone. There has to be a substitute or else if there's no substitute, you got to do it yourself.

Adam and Eve would have to die that day, I believe, if God had not provided a substitutionary atonement in the animals that provided the skins for their tunics and which pointed forward, of course, to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. So the covering for sin that man provided for himself was certainly not adequate in the least. But this covering which God provides by the shedding of blood is the, well, it's the remedy for the shame of nakedness that comes because of our guilt and because of our sin.

Now, Eve, remember, said the serpent deceived me and I ate, and then so God then turns to the serpent. He had first spoken to Adam, then to Eve, and Adam had mentioned Eve, so God spoke to Eve, and Eve mentions the serpent, so God speaks to the serpent, then he's going to speak to Eve, and then to Adam. He's going to kind of address them in reverse order.

The serpent is where the buck really stops here for them. I mean, they should have taken responsibility themselves, but they passed the buck. Adam passed it to Eve, Eve passed it to the serpent, so while the serpent really did have his place in this story, and so God's going to tell the serpent what he's going to get.

Then Eve's going to be told what she's going to get, and then Adam what he's going to get. And so the Lord God said to the serpent in verse 14, because you've done this and you are cursed more than all cattle, more than every beast of the field, on your belly you should go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. I will put enmity, that's hostility, between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed.

He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. Now, that the serpent was cursed above all the other animals, above the cattle and so forth, it was suggested the other day by a student that maybe this is saying that all animals in some sense are cursed, but the serpent more than others. Probably true, because all the creation came under a curse, as we shall see, even the plant life, even the grounds came under a curse.

God cursed the ground, as we read further on down here in this chapter. The creation itself came under a curse because of Adam. Now, that doesn't seem really very fair.

Now, for the snake to come under a curse, that seems fair in a sense, I mean, the snake was an accomplice to the crime. Although one might say it doesn't seem very fair to the later generations of snakes who didn't have any choice in that, they have to go on their belly. But we need to put things in perspective.

We've watched too much Bambi movies, you know, and where we think of animals as having human personalities and things like that. I don't think a snake that hatches from a snake's egg has any sense of, dang, I'm on my belly. How come I have to go on my belly? How come I'm suffering like this? And all those other animals seem to have legs, and I have to go on my belly.

There's no sense of subjective sense of suffering that the serpent goes through for this. It is an emblem for those who look on. For those all generations later, to see the serpent on its belly is to remind them that this creature was instrumental in the fall of man, or one of its ancestors was.

But it's not personally suffering more than others because it's on its belly, but the fact that it's groveling is emblematic, it's symbolic, it is a reminder that that creature that yields itself to Satan, to be the instrument of Satan, must expect to be brought very low under the judgment of God. Now, remember, Jesus said, whoever causes one of these little ones to stumble who believes in me, it would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck, he's thrown in the depths of the sea. Now, the serpent, as an instrument of Satan, had caused these believers to stumble.

And certainly, some judgment of significance was important. And for the whole species to bear the marks of that curse is something that becomes a continual visual aid to all generations of people after to remember that we are fallen and that creature that we see on every continent, wherever we are, there are snakes, except Antarctica, then there's no people there to look at. There you have the leopard eels, they're worse than snakes.

But the point is, there's this continual reminder in the animal kingdom that this creature bears the shame more than other animals. And all animals have endured cursing, the whole creation has come under a curse. But the serpent more, in that it becomes a source of remembrance of the shameful thing that happened.

And he says there'll be enmity between the woman and the serpent. This has typically been true. Now, many, many serpents, many snakes, many species are harmless.

And in some cases, some people like the snakes. I actually like snakes. My daughters always like to find snakes on our property and play with them, but they're not dangerous snakes.

But in general, snakes, many of them are deadly. And even the ones that are not deadly, many people simply find loathsome. There's almost like an instinct in a lot of people.

They just, it gives them the creeps. Not sure why. I think snakes are rather, rather attractive animals to look at, but I'm a guy.

It's the woman and the snake that have the problem. I'll put enmity between you and the woman. And although there are exceptions, and there are women who are not troubled by snakes, it's often the case that snakes, for reasons, almost irrational reasons, are viewed with loathing and with contempt by both men and women, probably more often women than men.

And that is no doubt because it is known that many snakes are deadly. This one was. This one in the garden was a deadly one.

He's the murderer from the beginning, as Jesus said it in John 8, 44. You are of your father, the devil. He was a murderer from the beginning.

This is a deadly serpent. And therefore, serpents from this point on would have a, let's just say, a challenged relationship with human beings, especially with women. But there's a special prediction here in verse 15 that has always been seen, at least by Christians, as a prophecy about Christ.

And that is the last part of verse 15, where it says, not only would God put enmity between the serpent and the woman, but also between your seed, that is the seed of the serpent, and her seed. Now, the New King James has put a capital S on seed in the second instance because the New King James translators believe this is a reference to Christ. I think they're probably right.

Christians have usually understood it this way. There is no capitalization in the Hebrew, so the capital S in English is simply a translator's giving away his ideas about what he thinks about this meaning, that this is a reference to Christ. He is the seed of the woman.

Now, in a sense, it's a strange thing to even use the phrase the seed of a woman. Because in the Bible, although offspring are often called seed, they're always the seed of their father. Because seed is considered to be identical to human sperm.

As a matter of fact, in Greek, now this is written in Hebrew, but in the Greek language, the ordinary word for seed is sperma. We get our term sperm from the Greek word for seed. And the Bible always, everywhere except here, speaks of the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, the seed of Jacob, the seed of some man.

Never the seed of some woman, because women have an egg, but they don't have seed. And therefore, to say that I'll put enmity between your seed, the serpent's seed, and the woman's seed is kind of a, just kind of a bizarre, strange phrase. But if we understand that Jesus is born of a virgin, and he is not the seed of any man, then if he's anyone's seed, he must be the seed of the woman.

He must be, he has only a female parent, not a male parent. And so many have felt that that is implied here, by referring to Jesus as the seed of the woman. But there's enmity between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed.

Let's take the woman's seed to be Christ, as many do. So there's enmity between Christ and the seed of the serpent. Now, who's the seed of the serpent? Who's the offspring of Satan? Well, I just quoted a moment ago, John 8, 44.

Jesus said to those people who opposed him, he said, you are of your father, the devil. And they would then be regarded to be the serpent's offspring. Now, I might just make you aware of a heresy that's not too uncommon, and you may encounter it, so I might as well just alert you to it.

There is a doctrine taught by certain fringe groups that think themselves Christian. It's called the serpent seed doctrine. The serpent seed doctrine.

Most of the people who hold it today are white supremacist, neo-Nazi, skinhead type people, but not all. There was a Pentecostal movement called the latter rain movement, where one of the principal teachers was a man named William Branham, and he taught the serpent seed doctrine also. This doctrine is this, that Eve, her sin, was that she had sexual intimacy with the serpent and became pregnant.

This doctrine teaches that Cain was the offspring of that. And we read in 1 John 3 that Cain was of that wicked one. This is totally a foolish doctrine as far as I'm concerned.

Let me show you the scripture in 1 John that they use. In 1 John 3, verses 11 and 12, it says, for this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another not as Cain, who was of that wicked one and murders his brother. And you can see that before that, it says in verse 10, it says, in this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest.

So John says there are children of God and the children of the devil. Then he says Cain was of that wicked one. Presumably he's one of the children of the devil.

And so the serpent seed doctrine teaches that Eve and the serpent had relations and Cain was the offspring of that. And he is the seed of the serpent. He and his offspring are a race of humans or half humans that are actually half Satan.

Just as Jesus was human and divine, that Cain was human and diabolical. That he was the seed of the devil. Now, they developed this doctrine further to point out that Jesus said to the Jews of his day, you are of your father, the devil.

So you can maybe see where this is going, especially when it comes from anti-Semitic groups. They say that the Jews, that Jesus declared that the Jews are the serpent seed. They suggest perhaps the Jews descended from Cain.

Now, you know, this entire thing is based on like three verses of scripture that are completely misunderstood by them. One is in Genesis 3 where it talks about the serpent seed. Then you have 1 John that says Cain was of that wicked one.

Then you have Jesus saying of the Jews, you are of your father, the devil. And these three verses together combine essentially the whole case for viewing the Jewish people as the descendants of Cain who is himself the seed of Satan. And this is used as a justification for anti-Semite attitudes.

But you see, the mistake is transparent. I mean, anyone who just thinks a little intelligently, which is not what these people do, can see that they're making a mistake. When John said, here's how you see the children of God and the children of God.

He says, whoever loves his neighbor is a child of God. Whoever does not love is a child of the devil. Well, certainly there are people who don't love and there are not Jewish.

And in fact, people of every race, you'll find some who love and some who don't love. So you'll find some people of every race who are children of God and some of every race who are children of the devil. Obviously, being a child of the devil is a spiritual thing, not something about your genealogy.

It's like being a child of God. What's it mean to be a child of God? It means that you, it doesn't mean that God, it means that you have been born again, you have a spiritual link to God. You have a spiritual affinity to God.

And so children of the devil have a similar spiritual affinity to the devil. It has nothing to do with their ancestry. Likewise, the Jews.

He said, you are of your father the devil and the deeds of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and never abode in the truth. And that's what you want to do.

You want to kill me. So the serpent's seed will be anybody who's got the serpent's heart. Not anyone who's biologically descended from the serpent, but who has a spiritual affinity to Satan, just like children of God are those who have a spiritual affinity to God.

So anyway, we see there's this in Genesis 3, 15, this hostility between the woman and the serpent and the serpent's seed and the woman's seed. There was hostility between those that Jesus said, you have your father, the devil and Jesus himself. But it says then he, meaning the woman's seed, Christ shall bruise your head.

Now, notice he first says that the hostility is between Christ and the seed of the serpent. But when it comes to bruising heads, it's the serpent himself whose head gets bruised, not his seed. Jesus didn't come and bruise people.



He came and he bruised, crushed really, Satan's head. He says, and you shall bruise his heel. So the serpent will harm the Messiah, but not in a vital organ.

I mean, certainly Jesus died, but he rose again. Harm is not permanent, but the damage done to the serpent is deadly. Crushing the head is the way to kill a snake.

And so we read elsewhere in scripture that Jesus destroyed Satan through his death. And most Christians believe this was the first prediction of that, in a bit of a cryptic manner. But it does speak about Christ, the seed of this woman and crushing the head of the serpent.

It says in Hebrews chapter 2, in verse 14, that Christ partook of flesh and blood, that is, he became a human being so that through death, he might destroy him who had the power of death. That's Hebrews 2, 14. Jesus, through his death, destroyed the devil, the one who had the power of death.

In Colossians 2, in verse 15, it says that through the death, Jesus made a show openly of the principalities and powers, the demonic hosts, and he triumphed over them in the cross. There is a victory of Christ over Satan that is described in the New Testament that took place through Christ's obedient death and his resurrection. And this is seen as the fulfillment of this, or at least the beginning of the fulfillment of it.

Christ still is trampling on the serpent's head. You see, Christ won a decisive victory at Calvary, just like David won a decisive victory over Goliath when Goliath was killed. But the Philistines still had to be conquered because they didn't surrender.

When the Philistine champion went down, the Philistine army fled, and the people of Israel, the people of David, had to pursue and mop up. Jesus won the decisive victory over Satan at the cross, but we enforce his victory by going out and trampling upon Satan by making disciples and challenging Satan's dominion and throwing him out of his erstwhile domain and planting the kingdom of God there. Why do I say that? Because Paul actually said that.

In Romans chapter 16, he's alluding to this passage in Genesis. In Romans 16, in verse 20, Paul said, And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. Under whose feet? Under the church of Rome? God will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

So the seed of the woman has bruised or crushed the head of the serpent, but the serpent isn't exactly dead. He's doomed, but he's still wriggling, and the efforts of the church are that which brings an end to his activity completely in the realm where he still has some activity going on. There's a Psalm 47 that says something like that too.

Not mentioning the devil per se, but it says in Psalm 47, 2 and 3, it says, For the Lord Most High is awesome. He is a great king over all the earth. He will subdue the peoples under us, the nations under our feet.

This is a good old post-millennial sounding kind of scripture. The idea that the nations will be subdued to Christ through our marching forward, under our feet, it doesn't mean that we're going to be taking the glory and the power to ourselves. It means that as we are carrying out the mission of Christ, it is under our feet that he crushes the serpent ultimately by crushing or at least subduing the nations that had been under the serpent's control.

So there's an extended fulfillment of this. There's what Christ accomplished at the cross was the signal victory over Satan. But there's this ongoing mop-up of the warfare until Satan's domain or Satan's rule over people everywhere in the world has been defeated.

And that's the church's warfare. That's the warfare we're involved in. Verse 16, Genesis 3, 16, To the woman he said, I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception.

In pain you should bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you. Now, you'll find that Adam also was given more pain or more sorrow in his activity.

In verse 17, and I will talk about verse 16, but I want to bring it into the picture here. 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. Now, the word toil in verse 17 and the word sorrow in verse 16, in sorrow, I'll increase your sorrow. It's the same Hebrew word, at least it's from the same root.

In both cases, what man and woman were already going to be doing, pretty much, is going to be harder. It's going to be more sorrowful, more toilsome, more difficult. The woman already was destined to have children.

That's what she was made for. God made Adam and Eve and said, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. And by the way, those who say that sex was the original sin, and some strange Christians have said things like that, don't realize that God is the one who commanded Adam and Eve to have sex.

He commanded them to have children. He didn't make them, you know, reproduced by mitosis. They had to have sexual relations, have children.

That was commanded, that's good. But now, although the assignment has not changed, and they must still be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, it's going to be more difficult for her. Her end is to bear the children, always was going to be, but now there's going to be an increase in labor involved in it.

I don't know exactly how easily women would, had there been no fall, but we do know

that they have difficulty now, and this is why. And man, who of course was going to continue to grow food, was now going to find it more difficult. Why? Because he's not going to be in a garden anymore.

He's going to be out toiling in the soil. He's going to have to till the ground. He's going to have to work in the field, not in the garden.

And he's going to encounter thorns and thistles, it says. In verse 19, in the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread. You shall return to the ground, for out of it you are taken, for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.

And I guess I didn't read verse 18 about the thorns and the thistles. That's also in there. Thorns and thistles, the earth shall bring forth to you, and you should eat the herb of the field.

Now, notice it is talking about farming now. Adam was not made originally to farm. He was made to be involved in horticulture.

He was there to dress the garden, to tend the garden, and so forth, but not to have to farm. God was going to produce the food. Man would just have to kind of harvest it, or you know, pluck it and eat it, and make sure the plants didn't overgrow.

But now he's going to produce his own food out of the ground, and the ground's not going to be friendly. The ground is going to resist. Nature is not going to be on man's side anymore.

When man was made, he was given dominion over all things. But he has now lost even the dominion over himself. He has become a slave of sin, and the dominion of the earth seems to no longer be fully under him.

Paul said that. He said, we do not yet see all things put under man, but we do see Jesus. Actually, Hebrews 2 says that.

But the point is, there is now hardship in the ordinary things. Production of food, production of babies. Interestingly enough, both of these are fruit-bearing activities.

The fruit of the womb, the fruit of the ground. God has always been interested in fruit. He first told him to be fruitful and multiply.

Throughout the rest of Scripture, fruit-bearing is a continual metaphor for what God wants out of his people. He's looking for fruit. So the woman, she's to bear fruit from her womb, but it's going to be more difficult.

Man, he's got to produce fruit. Nature's just not going to be as friendly, because nature now has fallen. And this fallenness means that nature is hostile toward man, and man still has to dominate it.

It is still man's responsibility to have dominion over it, but it's going to put up a greater fight than before. But not forever. Paul talks about this in Romans chapter 8. And we see that Paul anticipates a change in this arrangement when Jesus returns.

Paul said in Romans 8, 18, For I consider that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation, the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. That is, we are children of God now, but it hasn't been revealed yet.

It'll be revealed at the resurrection when we're glorified. We will be revealed to the world as God's children. Right now, we are children of God.

It says that in 1 John chapter 3. Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be. But when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3, 2 and 3. Now, Paul says that we are looking for to be the manifestation of the sons of God, because that's when we're glorified with Christ, when he comes back.

But the whole creation is eagerly looking forward to that day, too. Well, why? What does the creation care about that? Well, he says, because the creation was subjected to futility, not by its own will, but because of him who subjected it. God or Adam is in view here as the one who subjected the creation to futility because of man's sin.

But not without hope. There was hope given. And that hope is this.

The creation itself, verse 21, will also be delivered from the bondage of corruption. Right now, the creation is in the bondage of corruption. The extreme manifestation of the second law of thermodynamics, how things decay and corrode and so forth, that's what corruption means.

And the nature itself is subject to the laws. It's in bondage to this corrupting principle. But that's not going to always be true, just as we are not going to be always subject to the second law of thermodynamics.

We are not always going to be aging and so forth. The time will come when we don't age, we don't die, we don't get sick. Likewise, the creation is going to be delivered from these laws as well.

He says, the creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth things together till now. No doubt, every volcano that erupts, every tsunami, every hurricane that disrupts the ecosystem, that's an example of what Paul is referring to as the groaning of creation.

Creation looks forward to being delivered from these adverse circumstances that came

upon it because it's Lord Adam's failure. When a person's in charge of other people or a domain, and that person goes bad, it affects the whole domain. The whole creation suffered because the Lord of creation, Adam, sinned.

A whole family can be destroyed because of the father's addictions or his evil choices or whatever. It's not fair, but it's just the way things are. Put someone in charge, the fate of those who are under them is very much determined by their choices.

The creation, that's why there's thorns and thistles that we have to deal with. Now, I might just add this. Some people say, well, did God make new plants, thorns and thistles that weren't there before? God didn't do any more creating after the sixth day.

Did he, at this point, just create a few more species? Or the thorns and thistles that interfere with human farming today, are they maybe mutations? Plants that were at one time beneficial, but because of the fall, harmful mutations came along, and now we have weeds and things. That's a possibility. Someone suggested to me something I'd never considered before, not too long ago.

I heard it for the first time. They said, you know, maybe the Garden of Eden was the only place on the planet where there weren't thorns and thistles. It was the place that God made for man to live.

Outside of God's home that he'd made for man, there might have been thorns and thistles and adverse circumstances out there. That man was never intended to encounter. And then God said, now you're going to have to be out of the garden.

Now you get out there farming, and you're going to have thorns and thistles you have to deal with. I don't know. I really don't know.

But it seems like probably the best way to understand this is that certain plants that God had made earlier now would be mutated. And that's probably true of certain animals. We do know that mutations usually produce monsters now.

Mutations happen. By monsters, I don't mean Frankensteins, you know. I'm not talking about scary monsters from horror movies.

A monster is a monstrosity, a subnormal. And mutations almost always are destructive. And it's possible that some insects are mutations of something better that their ancestors once were before the fall.

Mosquitoes, for example. You know, unless they're just straight from the pit of hell. You know, maybe the bottom of the pit was open and the swarms came out of house flies and mosquitoes and gnats and things like that.

Or else these creatures at one time had some better function. And as a result of the fall,

they became, you know, the nasty things they are now. Something more needs to be said about the effect of the curse.

And there's much more about what he said to the woman that really needs some clarification. Because obviously, not only is what he said to the woman, well, let's just say out of sync with much modern thinking, but also sometimes it's just hard to understand what it means. Like, what does it mean your desire should be for your husband? Well, we need to take a break.

And then we can come back to consider this and we'll finish up chapter three. And I'm pretty sure we'll probably get through chapter four next time, too. So let's break for about 15 minutes.

All right.