

## The Darkest Day in History

### *The Origin of Sin*

**Text:** Gen. 3:1-10

#### **Introduction:**

1. There are different claims as to which day was the darkest in human history or the darkest for a particular nation. For example:
  - a. Winston Churchill, in his “finest hour” speech on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1940, described the collapse of France following the German invasion as “the darkest hour in French history”.
  - b. The battle of the Somme River, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, has been described as the darkest day in British military history when within 12 hours, 19,240 British soldiers were killed in about a 25 square mile area.
  - c. The battles of Fromelles and Pozieres in World War 1 have been called Australia’s darkest day when in a single night our young nation suffered 5,533 casualties – 1,917 died, 3,146 were wounded and 470 were taken prisoner. The Australian toll at Fromelles was equivalent to the total Australian casualties in the Boer War, Korean War and Vietnam War put together.
2. In reality, the darkest day in human history is recorded here in Genesis 3 where we have the Divine record of the Fall of Man. Jonathan Sarfati writes, “Genesis 3 is the most tragic chapter in the whole Bible. Here all the horrors of the world began: death, disease, suffering pain – and worst of all, sin, the progenitor of all these.”<sup>1</sup>
3. If there is no literal fall as described in this passage, then the rest of the Bible makes no sense and the cross of Christ becomes meaningless. Wiersbe writes, “If Genesis 3 is a myth/fable then the Christian faith is built upon fables, not fact, and Jesus suffered needlessly on the cross.”<sup>2</sup> The New Testament writers clearly believed in a literal fall (e.g., Christ & the Apostles).
4. In this message we will study the fall of man in its three phases:

#### **I. THE TEMPTATION (VS. 1-5)**

##### **A. The Deceiver (Vs. 1a)**

1. His History – the devil appears abruptly on the scene in Genesis so we might pause to consider for a moment how he came to be in the garden. Somewhere between God’s pronouncement that everything He had made was “very good” and the entrance of Satan into the garden, Satan had fallen.
  - a. The Creation of Lucifer – not specifically stated in Creation week but must have been made at some point during creation week (Ex. 20:11; Job 38:7; Col. 1:16).
  - b. The Fall of Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:13-15; Luke 10:18). There was a fall in the higher spiritual world before there was a fall in the lower earthly world.
2. His Identity – ‘serpent’

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<sup>1</sup> J Sarfati, *The Genesis Account: Commentary on Genesis 1-11*, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> W Wiersbe, *Be Basic: Commentary on Genesis 1-11*, p. 67.

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- a. Satan is a Deceiver – ‘serpent’.
    - i. Rev. 12:9 “And the great dragon was cast out, that old **serpent**, called the Devil, and Satan, which **deceiveth the whole world**: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”
    - ii. 2 Cor. 11:3 “But I fear, lest by any means, as **the serpent** beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”
  - b. Satan is a Counterfeiter – “angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14).
  - c. Satan is Liar – “he is a liar, and the father of it” (John 8:44).
  - d. Satan is a Murderer – “murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44).
3. His Subtilty – “more subtil than any beast”. Satan employs a subtle disguise, making use of a literal snake which was naturally shrewder and wiser than any other land animals God had made. The Hebrew word for ‘serpent’ literally means “shining one”. The word is similar to the Hebrew word for bronze so evidently the original serpent was a very beautiful, dazzling creature. Appears from the curse in verse 14 that initially the serpent carried itself in a more erect manner. Satan is a master of disguise, a master of veiling his true character (2 Cor. 11:14).

### B. The Deception (Vs. 1b-5)

Look at how the devil works on Eve to get her to disobey God. The method he used in the beginning he is still using today so beware of his tactics!

1. He casts doubt upon the Word of God (Vs. 1b-3)
  - a. The devil’s Question (Vs. 1b)
    - i. “Yea, hath God said” = the very first recorded words of the devil in the Bible. According to Keil and Delitzsch, there is a tone of surprise in the Hebrew.
    - ii. Satan came with a ‘yea’ (yes) but then quickly added “hath God said?” This is how sin approaches. “Yes...but is that what the Word really means?” “Yes...but aren’t you taking this in a too literal sense; perhaps God didn’t quite mean what He said?” From the beginning Satan’s attack has been on the Word of God. The Word of God was protection for Adam and Eve. So long as they lived within the boundaries of God’s Word, they would be safe and secure from sin and sin’s consequences, living in the bliss of innocence and unbroken fellowship with God. Satan knew that before he could lure man into sin, he had to first topple their confidence in the Word of God.
    - iii. Note: We still hear the whisper of Satan “hath God said” today with the attack of modernists, liberals and many neo-evangelicals upon the historicity of Genesis. To cast doubt upon God’s Word is to do the work of the devil! We also see Satan’s continuing attack against the Word of God with the modern versions (perversions) of the Bible which all sow doubt and confusion upon the Word of God.

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- iv. “ye shall not eat of every tree” = Satan’s question had the effect of making Eve focus on the one prohibition God had put in place. This is Satan’s way. He tempts you to focus on what God has forbidden rather than on His overwhelming goodness, provisions and blessings He has made available to us.
- b. The Woman’s Reaction (Vs. 2-3).  
The devil’s method clearly impacts Eve as she:
  - i. Subtracts from God’s Word – she omits the word ‘freely’, thus minimizing God’s goodness. Un-thankfulness is a precondition for temptation, the fertile soil in which sin grows. Satan cannot penetrate into a heart filled with gratitude to God (Rom. 1:21).
  - ii. Adds to God’s Word – she adds the words “neither shall ye touch it”, thus magnifying God’s restriction on them and making it seem harsher than it actually was.
  - iii. She made God appear less generous and more demanding than He really was. It is always dangerous to alter God’s Word by deletion (e.g., modern liberals and textual critics) or by addition (e.g., modern cultists and charismatics). God can always be trusted to say exactly what He means!
- 2. He denies the Word of God (Vs. 4).
  - a. The devil now moves from doubt to denial. Once you begin doubting God’s Word, it is only a matter of time before you begin denying God’s Word.
  - b. It is interesting that the first doctrine the devil denied concerned God’s promised judgment upon sin and disobedience. Essentially the devil was saying “God won’t judge you for this!” The same lie abounds today, deceiving multitudes into believing that God will never administer justice for their sins. Satan promised the exact opposite to God. God said they would die the day they ate the fruit, Satan promised that not only would they not die, they would actually become gods!
- 3. He defames the Goodness of God (Vs. 5a).
  - a. Having questioned the Word of God, the devil now questions the goodness of God, insinuating that God was selfishly withholding something good from them.
  - b. This is the deceitfulness of temptation. We suspect that God is withholding something good from us. Remember that God does not withhold any good thing from those who walk uprightly! (Psalm 84:11).
- 4. He declares his own lie (Vs. 5b)
  - c. Do you discern the sequence? Having effectively removed Eve’s foundation on the Word of God, he now substitutes the truth with a lie.
  - d. The devil’s promise to Eve was a deceptive mix of truth and error. This is how Satan works, he mixes truth and error

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together. Leupold writes, “As in all temptations, the devil’s beguilements are an inextricable tangle of truth and falsehood.”<sup>3</sup>

- i. The Truth – “your eyes shall be opened”. This was true and happened just as he promised (See Vs. 7a) but their eyes were not opened in a positive way as he implied. That they would become knowledgeable of both good and evil was also true but “Satan left out the material part of the truth, that they should know good, without the power to do it; and that they should know evil, without the power to avoid it.”<sup>4</sup>
- ii. The Lie – “ye shall be as gods”. Satan’s aspiration to “be like the most high” was what led to him being cast out of heaven (Is. 14:13-14). He now promises Eve the same status which he knew himself he could never attain. In effect, once you reject God’s Word, you are really setting yourself up as god to decide for yourself the standards of truth and righteousness.

## II. THE TRANSGRESSION (VS. 6-7)

### A. The Course of the Transgression (Vs. 6a)

Genesis chapter 3 is the most tragic chapter in the Bible and verse 6 is the most tragic verse. There is a sequence from temptation to transgression. James 1:15 expresses it this way, “Then when lust hath **conceived**, it **bringeth forth sin**: and sin, when it is finished, **bringeth forth death**.” The union of lust and the will brings about sins conception which is then birthed in sinful actions. Look at the three-fold allurements of sin in the verse (see 1 John 2:16):

1. The lust of the flesh – “good for food”. Temptation appeals to the bodily appetites. The bodily appetites themselves are good and God-given if exercised in the way God intended. The world, the flesh and the devil tempt us to use bodily appetites independent from God’s commands and hence in a sinful way. Take the God given drive for procreation as an example. God’s Word says that within the context of marriage, it is good, right and pure. Heb. 13:4 “Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” The devil tells you, “Don’t worry about marriage, just go ahead and do it!”
2. The lust of the eyes – “pleasant to the eyes”. Temptation appeals to the emotions. Don’t underestimate the power of images upon the heart and mind. The world and the devil have a way of making sin look so beautiful, attractive and desirable.
3. The pride of life – “desired to make one wise”. Temptation appeals to the mind and the spirit. It promises prestige, success and position but in reality, it delivers defeat and shame.
4. Note: Satan used the same three-pronged attack against our Lord and He defeated each one with the Words, “It is written”. We need to learn to fight temptation with the Sword of the Spirit.

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<sup>3</sup> H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, p. 151.

<sup>4</sup> C.H. Mackintosh, *Notes on the Book of Genesis*, p. 44.

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### B. The Consequences of the Transgression (Vs. 6b-7)

The saddest moment in human history now occurs as Eve, having been deceived by the devil, reaches out her hand and picks the forbidden fruit and takes the first bite. The consequences flowed in rapid succession, plunging our first parents into the darkness and depravity of sin. The history of the human family has been one sad story of sin's destructive influence ever since. Look at the flow on effects of Eve's sin:

1. Sin Defiled her Husband (Vs. 6b)
  - a. We do not know what transpired between Adam and Eve that lead to his taking the fruit but we do know he was influenced by her words from what God said to Adam in verse 17 – “And unto Adam he said, Because thou **hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife**, and hast eaten of the tree...” Eve used her influence as a wife to lead her husband into sin. Ladies, never underestimate the tremendous power you have to influence for good or evil.
  - b. Your sin always affects others. Achan is an illustration of this (Josh. 7:24-25). Joshua 22:20 “Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and **that man perished not alone in his iniquity.**”
  - c. There was a very important difference between Adam and Eve's transgression that the Bible notes. There was an element of deception with Eve whereas with Adam there was not. He made a full, rational and conscious decision to disobey God. 1 Tim. 2:14 “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”
  - d. Consequently, the responsibility for plunging the human race into sin is attributed to Adam, not Eve. Adam sinned as head of the human race. As our federal head and representative, we sinned in Adam and the sin nature has been passed down ever since.
    - i. Romans 5:12 “Wherefore, as by **one man** sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”
    - ii. 1 Cor. 15:22 “For **as in Adam all die**, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”
2. Sin Defiled their Hearts (Vs. 7)
  - a. Their shame (Vs. 7a). Their eyes were opened and they began to see things in a different way. Whereas before, they were “naked...and not ashamed” (Gen. 2:25) now they are ashamed of their nakedness. Before they were totally innocent with no knowledge of sin, now they become aware of their sinful potential. Sin takes the blush from the cheeks. Jeremiah 6:15 “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? **Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush:** therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.”
  - b. Their vain solution (Vs. 7b)

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- i. The “fig leaves” symbolize man’s works, his own attempt to make himself acceptable in the sight of God. But they were totally insufficient to cover man’s sin. Man had the power to go into sin, but he had no power to get himself out of it.
- ii. Isaiah 64:6 “...But we are all as an unclean thing, and **all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;**”
- iii. Question: What are some of the leaves you have sown into your apron of self-righteousness? Church attendance, prayers, Bible reading, religion, penance, baptism, a quick prayer without true sorrow for sin and repentance?

### III. THE SEPARATION (VS. 8-10)

#### A. Man Cowered from God’s Presence (vs. 8, 10)

1. “walking in the garden = appears that this was an established time of regular, daily fellowship Adam and Eve had with their Creator. This is what we call a Christophany, a preincarnate appearance of the Second Person of the Godhead. God clothed Himself in human form to communicate with those whom He had created in His own image. Before sin entered, mankind enjoyed unbroken fellowship with His Maker. But now sin had disrupted this union and man was separated from his Maker.
2. “cool of the day” = mid-afternoon or early evening.
3. Note: The essence of death is separation. Adam and Eve died spiritually the very day they sinned – they were separated from God. While they did not die physically the very same day, the process of physical decay began from that moment that would eventually lead to their death.

#### B. God Called them into His Presence (Vs. 9)

The account that follows man’s sin, while in no way making light of sin, is full of God’s grace and mercy towards sinners. Consider three acts of God’s grace to restore estranged sinners to Himself:

1. The Plea of a Seeking God (Vs. 9)
  - a. Man in his natural state does not seek after God: Psalm 10:4 “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, **will not seek after God**: God is not in all his thoughts.”
  - b. God seeks the sinner: Luke 19:10 “For the Son of man is come **to seek and to save** that which was lost.” The question “Where art thou” proved two things – that man was lost and that God had come to seek. It proved man’s sin and God’s grace.<sup>5</sup>
2. The Promise of a coming Saviour (Vs. 15)
  - a. This has been appropriately called the dawn of world redemption and is the first promise of the Messiah who would come.
  - b. What mercy and grace that God Himself would come to be our Saviour!
3. The Provision of a bleeding Substitute (Vs. 21)

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid p. 47.

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- a. This is the first time there is the death of the innocent for the guilty and is the first picture of the substitutionary death of Christ which was to come.
- b. The garment of fig leaves was insufficient to cover man's sin. They needed a covering provided by God. This is a picture of imputed righteousness. The filthy, tattered garment of our own righteousness will never make us fit to stand in God's presence. We need the seamless, perfect robe of God's righteousness. It cannot be earned; it must be received as a gift by faith.
- c. Isaiah 61:10 "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with **the garments of salvation**, he hath covered me with the **robe of righteousness**, as a bridegroom decketh *himself* with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels."

### Conclusion:

1. Where are you dear sinner? Will you exchange your filthy rags for Christ's robe of righteousness today?
2. Where are you dear saint? Are you falling into the trap of the devil as a Christian?