

Beginnings: Study and Discussion Questions

Lesson Five: The Beginning of Life Lived Under Judgment and Death – Genesis 3:8-24

Read Genesis 3:8-24 carefully and answer the following from verses 8-13:

- 1) Verse 8 says that Adam and Eve “heard the sound” of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden. According to John 4:24, God is spirit, so how was it possible that the Lord’s footsteps (or voice) were audible? See Genesis 18:1-19:1, Daniel 3:19-27, and Colossians 1:15. **Generally speaking, physical sounds come from physical objects. Perhaps it was God’s habit to visit with Adam and Eve in a physical form. Colossians 1:15 explains that Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. Physical appearances of God in the Old Testament are known as Christophanies (a physical manifestation of the second person of the Trinity prior to His incarnation).**
- 2) Contrast the ways you imagine Adam and Eve must have felt before and after their disobedience whenever they heard the sound of God approaching in the garden. **Oh, the sweet sound of perfect fellowship! Oh, the dreadful footsteps of impending judgment!**
- 3) How would you describe Adam and Eve’s responses to God’s questions about eating from the forbidden tree? What is your usual response when confronted with wrongdoing? **Adam and Eve shifted the blame. Personal sharing**

Reread Genesis 3:14-19.

- 4) In verse 15, God foretells ongoing enmity between the power of evil (the “seed” or “offspring” of the serpent) and the human race (the “seed” or “offspring” of the woman). What individual or group might the “offspring of the serpent” represent and what individual or group might the “offspring of the woman” represent? See John 8:42-45, Romans 5:15-19, Galatians 3:26, Titus 2:13-14, and 1 John 3:8-10. **Satan’s offspring (“seed”) are the demons and all who fall under their influence (those who reject God and live in rebellion against Him, preferring their own rulership). The woman’s offspring (“seed”) are all who align themselves with God through the Messiah, Jesus the Son of God. Jesus is our ultimate representative and Deliverer.**
- 5) How were the woman and the man cursed? **The woman’s curse involved increased pain in childbearing and child rearing. Furthermore, the woman’s “desire would be for her husband and he would rule over her.” The renowned, Old Testament scholar Dr. Walt Kaiser claims that the phrase “your desire shall be for your husband” is more accurately translated “your *turning* shall be to your husband.” The word “desire” is used in most modern English, but according to Dr. Kaiser, a monk who understood the word “turning” to convey sexual desire introduced the term “desire” in the Middle Ages. That translation of the verse has continued to be copied as the norm, but Kaiser explains, “As a result of her sin, Eve would *turn away* from her sole dependence on God and *turn now to* her husband. The results would not at all be pleasant, warned God, as he announced this curse.” A second suggested meaning is that Eve’s “desire” for her husband refers to a wife’s desire (ever since the Fall) to usurp her husband’s authority. With regard to being “ruled” by her husband, there is disagreement among scholars. Some believe God ordained the man’s leadership role at Eve’s creation, while others believe the man’s “rulership” is a result of the Fall. Some say that in 3:16, the word “rule” indicates a tyrannical kind of male dominance, not one that God ordained or approved, but one that would be the unfortunate result of the woman’s “turning.” God’s original assignment to work the garden was a gift to Adam, undoubtedly intended as an opportunity for creative expression, growth in his knowledge and mastery of the Garden, and physical exercise. However, Adam and Eve’s sin impacted the entire world, so that even the ground was cursed. Adam would continue his work, but the ground was uncooperative, thwarting his efforts, and making his work laborious and unsatisfying.**

- 6) If we cannot gain ultimate satisfaction from our families (3:16) or our work (3:17), where are we to find it? See Genesis 5:24, 6:8-9, and Psalm 16:11. Record a specific way that you need to apply this knowledge today. **Personal sharing**

Reread Genesis 3:14-24.

- 7) Can you suggest a prophetic fulfillment to Genesis 3:15? See Galatians 4:4-5, Hebrews 2:14, and 1 John 3:8. **Satan would strike Jesus' heel at the cross. Through His resurrection, Jesus crushed Satan's head, ensuring Satan's ultimate and total future defeat.**
- 8) In light of all you have learned in these early chapters of Genesis, consider God's judgments upon the serpent, Eve, and Adam. Based on Genesis 1-3 alone, what do we learn about the justice of God? **God's warning to Adam was clear (2:16-17): to eat of this tree was to die. 1) Not only was God's judgment fair, it was merciful. Adam and Eve deserved immediate and permanent physical and spiritual death. Their spiritual death was immediate, but their physical deaths (although now certain) were delayed. However, by putting their faith in God's promised Deliverer (the One who would crush their enemy), Adam and Eve had the opportunity to experience spiritual rebirth. Their fellowship with God would not be the same as it had been before their fall, but God gave them a promise by which they could (if they believed) remain in relationship with Him. 2) The particular judgments God gave were fitting. The serpent was haughty and prideful to tempt Eve to doubt God's goodness and love, to suggest she could become like God, and to appeal to her selfish desire for power. Therefore, it was fitting that he was doomed to such a lowly position. The woman led her husband into sin. She should have depended on God, but she turned away from God and to her husband, seeking his approval and support in her sin. From that time forward, she would continue to "turn" to her husband, and the results would not be pleasant. Furthermore, she would experience pain in the entire childbearing (and child rearing) process. She would experience a degree of the pain that God, her Father, felt when she disobeyed Him. Finally, Adam's judgment was fitting. Adam was the God-ordained keeper of the garden. He knowingly broke the rules God established and was banned from the garden. Furthermore, the one, God-given rule had ensured Adam's lordship over the garden would be purely enjoyable and free of conflict. Now, with the ground cursed, Adam would find his rulership greatly challenged.**
- 9) The serpent, Adam, and Eve faced God's judgment. One day, each of us will stand before God's judgment seat.
- If you have considered God's judgment prior to this study, what thoughts and feelings have come to mind? **Personal sharing**
 - How is your thinking about God's judgment impacted by your study of Genesis 3 and the following references: 1 Samuel 16:7; Psalm 9:7-8, 96:10; John 3:16-18; Romans 2:2, 11:33; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27; 1 John 4:17-18; and Revelation 20:13? **Personal sharing**

Reread Genesis 3:20-24.

- 10) Presumably, what sacrifice had to be made for Adam and Eve to be sufficiently redeemed following their sin? **God made garments of skin for Adam and Eve and clothed them. Presumably, animals were put to death.**
- 11) In the scriptures, fire often symbolizes God's glory, holiness, and judgment (Exodus 3:2, 13:21, 24:17; Isaiah 33:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:7; and Hebrews 12:29). With this in mind, what was the purpose of the flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the Tree of Life? **God is holy, and He demands that same perfect standard from His creatures. Anything that falls short necessarily comes under God's judgment and the death penalty (Romans 6:23). The flaming sword reminded Adam and Eve that they had fallen under God's judgment and were separated from the tree of life. In order to regain access, they needed to be made holy.**

- 12) Read John 5:24, Romans 5:8, 6:23, and 10:9-10, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and 1 Peter 2:24.
- According to these passages, what had to happen in order for the way to eternal life (represented by the Tree of Life) to reopen? **One who was without sin had to die in our place. Jesus, God's only Son, bore the penalty for our sins on the cross. He died in our place, in order that we might have eternal life.**
 - Have you verbally confessed that Jesus is Lord, believed in your heart that He is God's provision for your sin, and believed that God raised Jesus from the dead as proof that His sacrifice was accepted? If so, record a prayer of gratitude to God for His life-giving provision. If not, are you willing to believe and to make that confession today? **Personal sharing**

Overview of Genesis 3:8-24

- 13) Using whatever amount of Bible knowledge you may have, list the major Biblical themes that are introduced in Genesis 3:8-24? **Themes include fellowship between man and God (verse 8), God's pursuit of man (verse 9), God's holiness and judgment (verses 10, 24), the curse upon all mankind that has resulted from sin (verses 14-19), Satan's struggle against Christ and His kingdom (verse 15), God's promise of a Redeemer (verse 15), the principle of substitutionary sacrifice (verse 21), God's provision of a covering for sinful men and women (verse 21), and eternal life (the Tree of Life [verse 22]).**
- 14) God's grace is His unmerited favor. How did God extend grace to Adam and Eve immediately after their fall? **God graciously sought out Adam and Eve and confronted them with their sin (verses 9 and 11). He offered them hope, when all they deserved was judgment (verse 15). God made provisions for them, for this life and the next (verses 15 and 21). Eve became the mother of all the living (verse 20). God protected them from eating of the tree of life and remaining eternally in their sinful state (verse 22).**
- 15) How has God extended grace (undeserved favor) to you in the past week? Be as specific as possible. **Personal sharing**

ⁱ Kaiser, W. C., Jr., Davids, P. H., Bruce, F. F., & Brauch, M. T. (1996). *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (98). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.