

Key Events In Our History – The Fall of Adam and Eve

Genesis 3

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When I began this mini-series 2 weeks ago I mentioned there were 3 cataclysmic events that have occurred thus far in history. I am speaking of cataclysmic events regarding the earth we live on. The 1st of those events was the creation of the universe which is announced with those memorable words, **Genesis 1:1** (ESV) In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1 goes on to describe the creation of the heavens and the earth in 6 literal days, or calendar days. The pinnacle of God's creation was Adam and Eve, a historical couple from whom all humans have descended. Contrary to the claims of evolutionists, humankind have not evolved from monkeys or apes, they do not share common ancestry with other life forms on earth, but Adam and Eve were uniquely created by God in His image. That truth shapes the identity of everyone and is the legitimate basis for a sense of worth and belonging.

Sadly, God's majestic, magnificent and sinless creation didn't remain in its pristine state for very long. The 2nd cataclysmic event in history was the Fall of Adam and Eve, an event which affected all of God's creation and is universally evident. Genesis 3 describes what happened that day. While it is no surprise that those who make no profession of faith in God dismiss the historicity of this event, it is incomprehensible that a growing number of professing Christians do so as well. I see no reason to believe that it was anything other than a real historical event. There is nothing in the text to suggest this should be understood figuratively or symbolically. Genesis 3 provides information vital to correctly understanding the state of humankind and creation as a whole, as well as introducing us to God's plan of redemption. Remember, the Bible, God's Word to us, is an accurate grid through which we are to view life. It is trustworthy on all matters it addresses, not only those that are spiritually related, but science and history as well.

The Tempter

Genesis 3 begins with an introduction to the tempter in **3:1a** (ESV) Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made.

This is a reference to satan who appears in the form of a serpent and who is described as being more crafty or cunning than all other beasts. By comparing the scene described in verse 1 with God's pronouncement in verse 14, which addresses the serpent after the Fall, initially the serpent was very likely upright in form. Throughout the Bible, satan is associated with serpents and is for example called a *serpent* in,

Revelation 12:9 (ESV) And the great dragon was thrown down, **that ancient serpent**, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Revelation 20:2 (ESV) And he seized the dragon, **that ancient serpent**, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,

Unlike God, satan is not eternal, but is a created being who was created when God created the angels. Given God's description of His creation as "*very good*," in Gen 1.31, most conclude that satan's rebellion in heaven occurred after the 6th day of creation. Perhaps, when satan observed the beauty and exquisite magnificence of God's creation, and saw the uniqueness of Adam and Eve who alone were created in God's image, satan, himself an example of beauty and splendor (Eze 28.17), was no longer content to be subservient to God and rebelled along with one-third of the angels. He had begun his unachievable quest to usurp God's place,

Isaiah 14:13–14 (ESV) 13 You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

Jesus provides us with considerable insight into the character of satan when He responded to some Jews who were challenging Him, John 8:44 (ESV) "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

The first example of satan's destructive and deceptive agenda on earth is clearly seen in his encounter with Eve.

The Temptation

The strategy satan followed is instructive for us as we encounter temptation and is worthy of a separate message, but since this is only an overview, I will limit my remarks. True to Jesus' assessment of his character as a liar and murderer, satan used the guise that he was concerned with Eve's welfare, while his agenda was her destruction. Since no mention is made of Adam at this point, presumably he wasn't initially present. satan waited for the perfect setting when Eve would be most vulnerable. Adam was not present and she was near the *Tree of Good and Evil*. He began by subtly undermining God's integrity and distorting what God had said,

Genesis 3:1b (ESV) He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"

Likely very sarcastically, and in a manner intended to create doubt about God's integrity, the serpent's preamble to Eve, was, "*Did God actually say,*" like, "*Is that really what He said to you?*" Realize this, satan and his demonic realm, which consists of all the angels who rebelled in heaven along with him, have not changed their strategy since that day in the Garden. They seek to discredit God and His Word. If they can plant doubt in people's minds about God's integrity and His concern for those whom He created in His image, their success with temptation is more likely. Additionally, they distort and undermine the reliability of what God has said, e.g., "*Hath God said?*" We face an unrelenting assault on the reliability and authority of the Scriptures. An obvious example where that is happening is with the Bible's clear account of creation where there has been an almost universal understanding until the past 100 years or so, that God created the universe in 6 literal days. When one recognizes satan's ambition is to be like God, it is not surprising at all that one of his primary goals is to deceive people about God's role in creation. Since he seeks the glory due God, and since creation presents unmistakable evidence of the existence of God, he is delighted when people falsely claim God had nothing to do with creation, as secular science contends. What is particularly troubling is that so many Christians have been led astray by the deception of evolution and some have gone so far as dismissing Adam and Eve as the unique creation of God. The wide acceptance of the unsubstantiated and inherently flawed theory of evolution is a triumph of the realm of darkness.

Worship of God because of His creation is one of the themes in heaven,

Revelation 4:11 (ESV) "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

Because satan craves that worship, because he wants the glory for creation, he has mounted a comprehensive assault on the historical understanding of Genesis.

In satan's encounter with Eve, having attempted to instill doubt about God's intentions, he went on to exaggerate what God had actually said. God didn't say Adam and Eve couldn't eat of *any* tree, only of the *Tree of Good and Evil*. Notice how satan diverted the focus from the endless abundance of what God had provided and the diversity of fruit Adam and Eve were unhindered in enjoying, (Genesis 2:16 (ESV) "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden'"), to an exclusive focus on the single tree from which they were forbidden from eating its fruit.

A point often raised is why Eve wasn't immediately suspicious when approached by a talking serpent. Remember, Adam and Eve had not likely spent a great deal of time in the Garden before this. They were still exploring the abundance and breathless beauty surrounding them and the innumerable creatures they shared the Garden with. Hence Eve

may not have realized anything out of the ordinary. Unfortunately she should have been much more wary, for she was quickly enticed by satan. Consider her response,

Genesis 3:2–3 (ESV) 2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, 3 but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ”

Rather than run as she ought to have, she dialogued with satan and attempted to at least partially correct him, but she minimized the abundance of trees they were permitted to eat from by substituting “*the trees*,” for “*all the trees*.” And she added to God’s prohibition, “*neither shall you touch it*.” satan countered with an outright lie and sought to further undermine God’s integrity.

Genesis 3:4–5 (ESV) 4 But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 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.”

Contrary to what God had told Adam and Eve, satan declared she would not die. Rather, in what was at best a gross distortion of the truth he contended just the reverse would happen. She would be enlightened and become like God, for she would know good from evil. It was true her eyes would be opened and she would know good and evil, but not in a positive manner. She was poised to become a victim of satan’s deceit and would know evil experientially. While God understands good and evil, He has not, and cannot, experience evil. The difference between God’s knowledge of evil and Adam and Eve’s, and ours as well, is like the difference between a doctor knowing about an incurable cancer stealing away life from a person’s body, versus the knowledge of the patient whose life is being stolen away.

The Fall

The 2nd cataclysmic event in history was about to be precipitated as Eve, having been enticed into thinking that something evil, was good. She had been persuaded that despite God’s abundant provision and the intimate relationship she had with Him, that He couldn’t be trusted. While she was free to eat an undoubtedly endless variety and quantity of fruit, she perceived the fruit from this single tree was necessary to nourish her, that it was more esthetically appealing than the rest, and that eating from that tree would make her wise, and so she took of it and ate. By then Adam had appeared, and while Eve had been deceived into eating the fruit, he was well aware of what he was doing when he joined her in disobedience and rebellion against God.

Genesis 3:6 (ESV) 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

The Consequences

Immediately Adam and Eve knew something was terribly wrong; a cataclysmic change had begun.

Genesis 3:7 (ESV) Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Instantly their innocence was gone and guilt and shame entered the human race. Their guilt was not the result of years of mental conditioning by legalistic parents, or Christian fundamentalists, but the result of their rebellion against God. They became embarrassed by their nakedness and tried to hide their guilt by covering themselves with fig leaves. Ever since that day, descendants of Adam and Eve have tried to hide their guilt, but to no avail. Just as God was instantly aware of what Adam and Eve had done, God is aware of the guilt of their descendants and offers the only genuine solution for their sin and guilt.

Additionally, whereas just a short time earlier they were spiritually alive and enjoyed intimate fellowship with God, now they were spiritually dead and their fellowship with God was replaced with alienation. Rather than welcome God as they heard Him walking in the Garden, they tried to do the impossible, hide from Him.

Genesis 3:8–10 (ESV) 8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”

It is extremely important for people to acquaint themselves with Eden and what it meant for Adam and Eve to have fellowship with God, for it is then people realize the impoverished state to which people have fallen and their need to be forgiven. Further, those who are trusting in Jesus for their salvation gain a glimpse of what awaits them in the *New Heaven and New Earth*.

The consequences of the Fall were, and are, all encompassing. When God completed His creation, He told Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply (1.28). Now, that wouldn't be a painless process.

Genesis 3:16 (ESV) To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

God also gave dominion to them over all creation and they were to subdue it, but there too, it would hereafter take work and effort as Adam would contend with thorns and thistles and the ground which had been cursed.

Genesis 3:17–19 (ESV) 17 And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

From this point on, alienation became the new norm. It specifically affected husband-wife relationships where wives would be resistant to their husband’s leadership while husbands would be inclined to being unloving and harsh in carrying out their leadership in marriage.

Genesis 3:16 (ESV) “Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.” However, alienation wouldn’t be limited to couples, but would characterize all relationships in general. People would become self-absorbed, self-willed, self-focused, rather than being other-person focused with an instinct to help others. The alienation in relationships was immediately apparent when Adam and Eve hid from God, and when confronted by Him, Adam blamed his wife and she blamed the serpent.

God’s warning that they would die was very real. The moment Adam and Eve ate, they died spiritually and all their descendants would be born with a fallen human nature, or what is generally referred to as original sin. All humans would be sinners at birth and would have the inclination to sin. Death, however, was not limited to their spiritual state; they, together with the rest of creation received a death sentence when Adam and Eve sinned. The earthly journey to physical death had begun. God told Adam,

Genesis 3:19 (ESV) By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

The inescapable evidence of the rebellion of Adam and Eve is the deterioration and degeneration of our bodies which ends on earth with physical death. Every cemetery we visit or drive by is testimony to what happened that day in Eden. Those grave markers bear witness to the fact that sin infected all of creation. The realm of darkness over which satan rules would have us believe that death is normal, that nothing is amiss, but nothing could be further from the truth. Those who dismiss the historicity of Adam and Eve or their sin in the Garden, are confronted with the reality that death awaits us.

It has become fashionable among some Christians in their quest to reconcile the Bible with the claims of evolutionists to propose that only spiritual death is in focus in Gen 3. To do so one not only needs to ignore verse 19, but also dismiss God's pronouncement that His creation was *very good*. Surely that excluded the possibility of death, which thereby excluded any fossils of conscious life such as animals or birds.

Let me add, it is clear in **Genesis 1:29**, that initially humans were vegetarians, "And God said, 'Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food.'" However, not just humans, but that was also the case for the animals and birds as well, **Genesis 1:30** (ESV) "'And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so."

The effects of the Fall were pervasive. The animal kingdom formerly lived in peace and harmony with one another, but now were transformed into competitors and predators. Many of those that originally were herbivores, became carnivores. A cataclysmic change occurred on earth, something many ignore. Not only were Adam and Eve and their descendants affected, but all of creation, which groans, longing for deliverance.

Romans 8:20–22 (ESV) 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now

The Restoration of Eden

How fortunate, that as bleak as that picture is, history didn't stop there! Rather, it pointed forward to another **Key Event In Our History**, the *Cross of Calvary* where Jesus Christ died to reverse the effects of the Fall and restore Eden. The first promise of redemption and the restoration of Eden is found in,

Genesis 3:15 (ESV) I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

This verse looks ahead to a confrontation between Eve's offspring and satan. While the full extent of this prophecy was surely not fully understood at the time, God spoke of the day when He would send His Son, Jesus Christ from the glories of heaven to earth for the purpose of paying the price for the sins of humankind. No one else in the entire universe qualified to pay the price for sin. To qualify one had to be a man without any sin whatsoever. That meant that since only God was without sin, He would need to come to earth where He would cloth Himself with humanity as He did when He was born as a babe at Bethlehem.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, not only remained fully God, but He also became fully man. When Jesus Christ became an adult, satan would inflict enormous pain on Him on the cross and the torture which preceded it, i.e. he would *bruise His heel*. However, the physical offspring of Eve, Jesus Christ, would *bruise satan's head* in victory over him. That prophecy has been fulfilled and Jesus has triumphed over satan.

However, even though Jesus paid the price for sin, redemption of people is not automatic, nor is it conferred on someone by a religious rite. Redemption is experienced when an individual acknowledges he/she is a sinner, and repents of his/her sin and claims the forgiveness universally offered by Jesus Christ by placing his/her trust in Jesus Christ and His death on the cross for their sins. The Bible describes it as being *born-again*; it is the essence of the *Gospel*, or *Good News*. People chose whether they will believe the Gospel, or ignore God's invitation to accept His forgiveness and gift of eternal life.

It is true Genesis 1 to 11 contains symbolic and figurative language. An example of that is the portrait of redemption of the prophecy of Genesis 3.15 found in 3.21.

Genesis 3:21 (ESV) And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

This verse describes the first death in all of God's creation. The first death was at the hand of God when He killed some of the animals He had created to make garments of skins for Adam and Eve. That act conveys a number of important truths. One is that sin requires a covering, it pointed forward to the righteousness of Christ which is the only adequate covering for sin. Also, sin not only requires a sacrifice to be made, but the sacrifice of an innocent victim, in this case it was animals that were not complicit in the sin at all. Their death pointed forward to Jesus Christ. He was sinless and not guilty of any of the sins for which He died. He voluntarily laid down His life on the cross at Calvary as a sacrifice for our sins, so that we wouldn't need to.

Those who place their trust in the sufficiency of Jesus' sacrifice for their sins, are born-again, and experience the beginnings of the reversal of the effects of Adam and Eve's sin. They are instantly made alive spiritually and a relationship with God is restored. They are enabled to commune with God and are recipients of innumerable blessings. As children of God, they experience His provisions during their earthly sojourn and are heirs of all His promises. And when a person who knows the Lord physically dies they will experience the culmination of promise made in Genesis 3.15. And when the Lord returns, just as He promised, the cataclysmic change that occurred when Adam and Eve sinned, will be reversed. Then God's Promise of the Restoration of Eden will be fulfilled when all God's children join Him in the **New Heaven and New Earth** where God will again dwell face to face with His people.

A fitting hymn to conclude with considering that as descendants of Adam and Eve our destiny if left to ourselves was eternal separation from God, is

And Can It Be That I Should Gain?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29myH7xXI4M&ab_channel=killertrumpet