

STUDY GUIDE

CHURCH
NAME
T H E
COMEBACK
ADAM AND EVE
GENESIS 3:1-24
01/07/2018



NEW VISION

MAIN POINT

Sin is satanic, desirable and destructive. God is the only solution to our sin.

INTRODUCE

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Share about a time when your plans backfired on you. Why don't things always go according to plan for us?

How have your own shortcomings contributed to your plans failing?

Things don't always go according to our plans because we live in a fallen, broken world. However, we must not assume that we are merely victims of a sinful world—we have contributed to the brokenness of the world with our own rebellion against God. Life doesn't go according to our plan not just because we live in a fallen world, but because we are fallen people. We often give in to the lies of the Devil and trust in our own strength instead of looking to God for strength, mercy, and direction. Today we will look at how the fall has corrupted us and in so doing will see our desperate need for a comeback.

READ AND REFLECT

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

God created the world and the first married couple, Adam and Eve, and everything was good. But when the sudden arrival of a cunning serpent presents a challenge to Adam and Eve, their choice is to disregard God's instructions. In an act of willful rebellion, Adam threw his wife under the bus, and then had the audacity to blame God. As a result, God's creation was thrown into disorder, with chaotic effects that resulted in the disruption of all harmonious relationships that God had established. Through Adam and Eve, sin entered into the world with its promised punishment: death, both physical and spiritual. Adam and Eve fell into alienation both from God and from one another. They were driven out of the garden and away from God's presence.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 3:1-5.

In verse 1, what did the serpent try to get Eve to question?

What did God actually say (see Gen. 2:16-17) to Adam and Eve? How is that different from what the serpent said?

What did the serpent say about God's command in verses 4 and 5? What did he imply about God's character? What did he imply about God's motives?

The first words God said to man were " You are free" (Gen. 2:16). Adam was free to eat of any tree of the garden, except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The serpent was trying to get Eve to question God's Word and convince her God was holding out on her. Satan also called God's motives for mankind into question by suggesting God wanted less than what was best for them. Satan questioned God's word , character, and motives.

Has there ever been a time in your life when you viewed God's prohibition of something as unfair but later came to understand He was protecting you for your good?

Satan still uses our desires as well as half-truths to tempt us. We want more for ourselves and are willing to ignore God's guidance and commands to get what we desire. We sometimes feel God is against us or withholding something we need or deserve, so we ignore His instruction to get what we want.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 3:6.

What things did Eve perceive to be desirable in the fruit she was forbidden by God to eat? What is the relationship between desire and disobedience?

The serpent's words accomplished their purpose. The woman believed the serpent's statements that God was withholding something good and that the punishment of death for disobedience constituted an empty threat. Furthermore, the fruit seemed to offer only benefits with no consequences. We know that the serpent, Adam, and Eve all transgressed God's command. Each of them was guilty of disobeying God's word, as are we. And every time we choose to disobey, we are proclaiming to God that we are wiser than He is. We are "crafty" and we deserve condemnation.

Can you think of other examples of how a temptation to sin promised more than was actually experienced?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GENESIS 3:7-13.

Were Adam and Eve covering themselves to hide from each other or from God? Why?

There's no question that Adam and Eve felt a deep sense of guilt for their sin. The couple's desire to cover their nakedness from each other indicated a deeper rift had occurred. In the past they had stood before each other naked, each able to see the other as he or she was, and each trusting the other for acceptance. The shame of guilt created a lack of trust, causing them to hide the truth from one another and from God.

In what ways do we try to hide ourselves from other people? In what ways do we also try to hide from God?

What were Adam's and Eve's explanations for their disobedience (vv. 12-13)? Why do people often cast blame on someone or something when confronted about their wrongdoing?

Sin is incredibly destructive. Everyone has sinned and experienced alienation from God. Motivated by shame and fear, we have tried hiding from God or ignoring Him, hoping He would not notice or would forget our disobedience. Attempts to shift the blame to others like Adam and Eve produces greater alienation and guilt.

ASK SOMEONE TO READ GENESIS 3:14-24.

What consequences did Adam and Eve face as a result of their sin? How have you personally experienced the effects of these curses even today?

God punished the serpent, the woman, and the man, drastically changing their lives (and thus also the lives of their descendants) forever. Life would be difficult. Their sin had driven a wedge between themselves and God. Their previous life was forever gone. They had sinned and thus had to live with the consequences. Sin entered into the world and the consequence of sin entered as well: death.

What is the significance of God making skins for Adam and Eve and clothing them (Gen. 3:21)? What would have had to happen for the Lord to give them clothing made of skins?

Genesis 3:21 is the first sacrifice ever made in the Bible. For God to give Adam and Eve skins implies that an animal had been killed. This sacrifice was made by God on behalf of Adam and Eve. God covered their shame instead of abandoning them to regret! We always want to blame Adam and Eve for their failure but never contemplate their willingness to receive grace. They looked to the death of an animal to cover their nakedness and it is this grace that was pointing to the eventual sacrificial death of Christ as payment for the sin of mankind. A comeback had begun! The course of human history was changing and, like Adam and Eve, we now get to take part in it. This grace becomes the theme for the rest of Scripture, as every character and event find their place in relation to the great battle that now unfolds between the conquering Seed of the woman and the resistance of Satan.

APPLY

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Where might you be tempted to blur the lines, downplay, or even redefine the sin in your life as something other than sin?

How might you address those issues this week? When is it easiest and most difficult for you to confess sin to God and other people?

How can we encourage one another this week in our battle with sin and with remembering our true identity in Christ?

PRAY

Thank God for taking the initiative with us and sending Jesus to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Thank Him for His sacrifice on the cross by which we may be forgiven and reconciled to God. Ask Him to help us trust in the power of the cross both for salvation and for strength in our daily battle against sin. Pray that you will recognize sin for what it is and desire Jesus more.

COMMENTARY

3:1. The account of the temptation and sin of the first man and woman does not attempt to explain the origin of evil. Bible students have debated where evil came from for untold years and still disagree. While we may not be able to definitively explain evil's origin, the Bible affirms God's goodness and love, our disobedience and sin, and our need

to confess our sin to God. The serpent, clearly identified in the New Testament as Satan (Rev. 12:9; 20:2), constituted the most cunning wild animal created by God.

3:2. To her credit, the woman attempted to correct the serpent's misquotation of God. She responded that God had created a wonderful environment providing both beauty and abundant physical nourishment. Rather than being selfish or stingy, God had lavishly demonstrated His generosity and love.

3:3. The woman gave her understanding of God's command. While much she said agrees with God's original command (2:17), she made three significant changes. First, she referred to the tree by its location rather than by its name, thus minimizing the importance of the tree and the possible reason God told them not to eat from it. Second, she declared God had instructed the man and woman not only to avoid eating the tree's fruit but also to avoid even touching the tree. Perhaps she believed not touching the fruit would better enable her to keep God's command, but her addition indicated she felt a need to modify God's command. Third, by not using the word for "certainly" in God's command, the woman tried to eliminate the certainty of the punishment of death.

3:4. Hearing the woman's response, the serpent directly contradicted God in stating death would not result from eating the fruit. Having accused God of being selfish and spiteful, the serpent then charged Him with lying. According to the serpent, God did not want humans to have some things He had, including knowledge, so He ordered them not to eat from one tree's fruit and threatened them with death to scare them into obeying. The serpent slyly described God in a negative way that caused the woman to doubt and disobey Him.

3:5. The serpent appeared to know God better than the woman, suggesting God was intentionally keeping her and her husband from becoming what they could. According to the serpent, eating the fruit would not lead to death but to a superior, divine knowledge and stature. Their eyes would be opened to a new awareness and knowledge, making them like God. The serpent partially spoke the truth. After the man and woman ate the fruit, they gained new knowledge and became like God but only in a limited sense.

3:6. The serpent's words accomplished their purpose. The woman believed the serpent's statements that God was withholding something good and that the punishment of death for disobedience constituted an empty threat. Furthermore, the fruit seemed to offer only benefits with no consequences. The benefits included food to satisfy physical needs, natural beauty to enhance the enjoyment of life, and the promise of wisdom to make humans like God. The woman's coveting led to her disobeying God to satisfy her desires.

3:7. Immediately the man and woman possessed new knowledge. They knew they were naked. The man and woman acted by sewing fig leaves together to create loincloths to hide the parts of their bodies that differentiated them from each other. Fig leaves constituted the largest leaves known in Palestine, but they certainly would not create appropriate, long-lasting clothing. The pair's feeble attempt to cover their nakedness prefigured their feeble effort to escape condemnation by blaming others.

Probably, the man and woman gained wisdom. While God wanted humans to seek wisdom (see Prov. 3:13; 8:10-11), some wisdom remains beyond human comprehension, appropriate only for God (see Job 28:12- 28; Prov. 30:1-4). God even might provide humans with some of this wisdom but only through revelation to those who honor and serve Him. To seek and seize knowledge outside a personal, mature relationship with God demonstrates arrogance and contempt for God. The man's and woman's selfish quest for knowledge and status damaged their relationship with God and with each other. Thus, they covered themselves before each other and hid from God.

3:8. Genesis often describes the close relationship God desires with individuals by using the word for "walk" (Gen. 5:24; 6:9; 48:15). What for the first humans had been an enjoyable daily communion with God became something to be avoided. The man and woman had hoped to become like God. Instead, they could not face Him. Hearing God approach, they retreated among the trees of the garden hoping to escape His presence. The shame they felt before God mirrored the shame they felt before each other.

3:9. God called out asking the man where he was. God spoke as a loving father. He could see them and knew exactly where the man and woman were, but He invited them to reveal themselves and admit their sin. The use of the masculine singular you indicates God spoke specifically to the man.

3:10. The man avoided answering God's question, but provided a reason for his hiding. The man stated he feared God seeing him naked and thus hid himself. While he did not answer God's question directly, the man's response indirectly acknowledged his sin. This sin had created a shame he had not previously known and had impaired his relationship with God (just as it had damaged his relationship with the woman).

3:11. The man's admission of nakedness revealed his sin. Rather than condemn the man, however, God invited him to confess.

3:12. Given the opportunity to confess, the man instead blamed the woman and God. The man implied the woman forced him to sin. He further charged God with ultimate responsibility because He gave him the woman. The man sought to convince God he was an innocent victim of circumstances, led astray by the woman whom God should

have created with greater care. The man's excuse constituted a lie because he had eaten the fruit knowing exactly what he did (3:6).

3:13. God then turned His attention to the woman, providing her the opportunity to confess. Like the man, she blamed another, accusing the serpent of deceiving her. Both her and her husband's excuses indicated they realized they were in trouble and hoped to save themselves by shifting God's attention to someone else.

3:15. Hostility between the first woman and the serpent would be passed on to future generations. This verse is known in Christendom as the protoevangelium, or "first good news," because it is the first foretelling of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Using an emphatic Hebrew construction, God announced here that a male descendant— He—would someday deal the serpent (meaning Satan) a fatal blow. The NT writers understood Jesus Christ to have fulfilled this prophecy (see Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8). In an extended sense, the NT also indicates that God would work through the church—those indwelt by the Spirit of Christ—to destroy the works of the Devil (see Rom. 16:20). The assertion that the snake would only strike his opponent's heel (as opposed to head) suggests that the devil will be defeated in the ensuing struggle (see Rev. 2:2,7-10).

3:21. By making clothing out of skins, the Lord God graciously provided for humanity's need in a way superior to what Adam and Eve had done with fig leaves. The use of animal skins anticipates the OT system of animal sacrifices (see Lev. 1; 3-7; Num. 15:1-31). In the NT, the apostle Paul spoke of a day when God would clothe His people with immortality (see 1 Cor. 15:53-54; 2 Cor. 5:4), thus providing the complete undoing of the curse of humanity's sin.