

GENESIS

The Book of Foundations

The Fall of Man: Understanding Temptation and Sin

Handout on Genesis 3:7-13

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Introduction

The importance of Genesis 3:1-13 is critical to properly understanding the rest of the scriptures. Without knowing what happened in the Garden of Eden, we would have no understanding of temptation, sin or redemption.

➔ Opening discussion question: **What is temptation and how does it work in our lives?**

A) The Test and the Serpent (Genesis 3:1-6)

Genesis 3:1 introduces a third player, the serpent. Strange that a serpent should talk to man!

❖ The Identity of the Serpent (Genesis 3:1)

- How does the passage introduce the serpent? Anything unusual about this?
- What do you know of the serpent from other places? (2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9, 14,15; 20:2).

❖ Serpents Line of Questioning

This conversation between the serpent and Eve reveals a number of things about how the evil one still tempts and ensnares God's people today. Genesis 3 records two statements of the devil (Genesis 3:1, 4-5).

• Statement #1

Has God indeed (really) said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden"?' (Genesis 3:1)

• Statement #2

You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day that you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. (Genesis 3:4-5)

- What observations do you find about statement #1? Statement #2?
- How are we tempted today? How so? Is the serpent involved? Does he still speak to us today?



In order to discern error, we must ask, "How does what I hear or think differ from what God says?" We must, however, know God's Word in order to do this! What ways are you making sure God's Word is at the front of your thoughts?

Discussion question

- ➔ Did you ever feel or think one way even though your feelings did not fully reflect the facts? Should we trust such feelings? (Comment on Proverbs 28:26).

❖ Eve and Adam's decision-making considerations

How did Eve go from a full trust in God to making such a blunder? The scriptures are quite clear on the process by which Eve chose to disobey God. The longer she toyed with the idea of eating the attractive fruit, the more she allowed her mind to focus on that suggestion, and the less she thought of God's clear command.

- What were three clear reasons stated in Genesis 3:6 as to why Eve was persuaded.

1)

2)

3)

Here are some reasons Eve should have trusted God.

- (1) God personally revealed Himself to them (note: His name Yahweh) and talked with them.
- (2) The Lord provided clear and unambiguous words as to what was right and wrong.
- (3) He warned them what they shouldn't do.
- (4) He provided an abounding supply of trees to meet their needs.
- (5) Her husband, God's appointed head, told her what not to do.
- (6) The Lord told them of the consequence of death if they disobeyed.
- (7) The Lord had created a lovely garden for them.

She allowed herself to focus on what was not true and therefore was unable to allow that which she knew to be true to properly shape her decision.

❖ Why did Adam sin?

Eve was deceived, but Adam chose to go along with Eve.

For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression (1 Timothy 2:13-14).

- How did Adam sin if he was not deceived?

Conclusion

Genesis 3:1-6 summarizes man's fall into sin and at the same time describes the process by which temptation consistently pulls down the human race. Having everything one would ever need, there was no real reason for the fall. Through deception Eve misplaced her judgment and led her husband into disobedience with her. We need to daily seek the Lord to keep us from the evil one.

B) The Results of the Fall into Sin (Genesis 3:7-13, 22)

There were two contesting consequences from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

- ➔ 1) God's "You **shall surely die**" (Genesis 2:17).
- ➔ 2) The serpent's "You **shall not surely die**. For God knows that in the day that you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:4).

Serious subversion is expressed through counter questioning the nature of God and His supreme will. Telemarketers appeal to a potential victim's vulnerability but hide the real cost. Let's look at both the short term (immediate) and long term results of our forefather's sin.

❖ Eyes were opened (Genesis 3:7)

Was this good or bad? Does God want us to be like Him or not? If so, how so? (Compare Ephesians 5:1).

❖ Guilt, shame, lost innocence

A number of things resulted from their disobedience relating to their guilt.

- **Lost God's glory.** They knew they were naked (Genesis 3:7 compare with Genesis 2:25; Rev. 22:5)
- **Broken relationship with God.** They hid from God's presence (Genesis 3:8 -10; John 3:20)
- **Deception.** They passed the blame (Genesis 3:12)
- **Irresponsibility.** They deceived and made excuses (Genesis 3:13)

❖ Deception---the essence of the enemy of God and our souls!

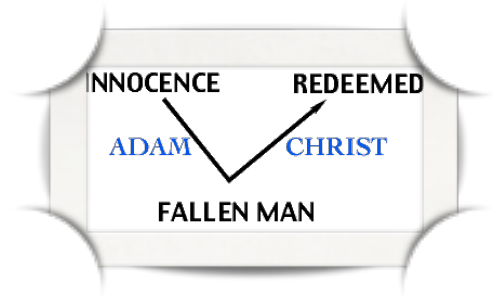
Why would anyone deceive? Deceit is admission to inferiority. The serpent is evil because he deceives to get what he otherwise could not have. The serpent only could bait mankind through deceit.

- ➔ Did the serpent's promise that "you would not surely die" come true? No.
- ➔ Did they surely 'die'? Yes.

❖ Long term results

Adam subjected all his progeny to the dominion of sin. Later on we shall see that it is God, in His wisdom, mercy and grace, who immediately took steps to prevent this catastrophic fall from happening in a way that could not be reversed (Genesis 3:23-24).

Man is fallen. Even the best of us struggle with the dominion of sin in our members. Paul says, “The body is dead because of sin” (Romans 8:10). He is holed in a world of sin. Man has prided himself in his lofty human cultures, but God’s standard is infinitely higher than those achievements. Romans 5:17 summarizes these long term results. Fortunately, these results have a positive long term effect through Christ Jesus—eternal life. Jesus Christ becomes the tree of life for us.



“For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17).

Conclusion

- In choosing to ignore God while exercising their free will, Adam and Eve suffered the very consequences of God’s warning. Man is responsible to God even though he has a free will. With freedom there is responsibility. With responsibility, accountability. As a people, we need to trust Him enough to obey Him or be consumed by our desires to gain what is vain though appealing.
- If only Eve and Adam had taken God at His word, they they would not have fallen. They only had to put the Lord and His will above their own, and all would have been fine.
- In making decisions, small or great, we need to persistently prioritize putting the clearly defined will and principles of God in action. God will never ask us to set aside His will to obtain His promises (John 17:17).
- Natural man is no longer innocent but fallen. However, through faith in Christ the second Adam, the people of God are alive and able to live in obedience.

Class Assignment for Genesis 3:1-13

- (1) From today’s lesson, how would you answer someone who makes this claim?
“It is all Adam’s fault. Why would God pass all the blame onto me?”
- (2) If you were Eve or Adam, how would you have combated the serpent’s temptation? How do you combat him now? Write out the evil one’s strategy to tempt and ensnare you? (Hint: You can detect his strategy to see what he tempts you with).
- (3) Compare this episode to Matthew 4:1-10. All the actors involved knew the word of God including Satan. Write down how each one handled or used God’s Word. What accounted for the triumph of Jesus Christ?
- (4) Who is actually tempting us? Is this one saying words to us like he did to Eve? List three methods of trickery that he uses. Give an example of each.
- (5) How would you characterize God’s confrontation with Adam and Eve? Is it what you would expect? Why do parents often raise their tempers when confronting their children? Is it proper? Why is God’s way better?