

Genesis

The Fall

Lesson #2 for April 9, 2022

Scriptures: Genesis 3; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:7-9; John 8:44; Romans 16:20; Hebrews 2:14; 1 Timothy 2:14-15.

1. Two key verses in Genesis for us to consider this week are God's instructions to Adam in the Garden of Eden just after He formed Adam.

Genesis 2:16-17: ¹⁶He said to him, “**You may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden, ¹⁷except the tree that gives knowledge of what is good and what is bad. You must not eat the fruit of that tree; if you do, you will die the same day.**”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Genesis 2:16-17). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].†‡

2. Why was this serious warning given so early in the history of humanity? Was that really necessary? It seems clear that God intended for us to know good but not to know evil. Did God give them any explanation of what He meant when He said, “Die”?
3. They were to eat of the tree of life every day. But, after taking the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they not only suffered the consequences which were/are death, but also they were excluded from the Garden of Eden, never to be able to approach the tree of life again.
4. What happened in God's universe before Adam and Eve were created? When did sin first occur in God's universe? What are the other terms used for Satan?

Revelation 12:7-10: ⁷ Then **war broke out in heaven**. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, who fought back with his angels; ⁸but the dragon was defeated, and he and his angels were not allowed to stay in heaven any longer. ⁹The huge dragon was thrown out—that ancient serpent, called the Devil, or Satan, that deceived the whole world. **He was thrown down to earth, and all his angels with him.**

¹⁰ Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, “Now God's salvation has come! Now God has shown his power as King! Now his Messiah has shown his authority! For the one who stood before our God and accused our brothers and sisters day and night has been thrown out of heaven.”—*Good News Bible*.*†

5. Now, let us turn our attention back to the Garden of Eden with the tree of knowledge of good and evil and the snake/serpent?

Genesis 3:1: Now the snake was the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made. The snake asked the woman, “Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?”—*Good News Bible*.*

6. It is very important to notice that the biblical writers identified that ancient serpent or snake of Revelation—no doubt, the same one spoken about in Genesis 3—with the Devil or Satan. And his work was always deception. **In Hebrew, a sentence begins by mentioning the most important word, in this case the serpent or the snake.** The fact that he is called the serpent with the definite article, *the*, indicates that he was already a well-known figure.

We should know about him already from his rebellion in heaven prior to the encounter in Eden. Notice these words from Ellen White, regarding the snake or serpent.

In order to accomplish his work unperceived, Satan chose to employ as his medium the serpent—a disguise well adapted for his purpose of deception. The serpent was then one of the wisest and most beautiful creatures on the earth. **It had wings, and while flying through the air presented an appearance of dazzling brightness, having the color and brilliancy of burnished gold.** Resting in the rich-laden branches of the forbidden tree and regaling itself with the delicious fruit, it was an object to arrest the attention and delight the eye of the beholder. Thus in the garden of peace lurked the destroyer, watching for his prey.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 53.4.[†]

7. **Satan is clearly a real being; he is not just some kind of metaphorical personification of evil as many claim.**
8. And when Satan addressed Eve, he certainly did not want her to think that he was God's enemy. He even quoted God's words—but in a deceptive manner with only a partial quotation of God, leaving out the portion that meant the opposite of what Satan implied! He also did that much later, even to Jesus Christ Himself as recorded in Matthew 4:6.
9. When she approached that tree, Eve knew that she was making two mistakes: (1) She had wandered away from Adam; and (2) She was approaching the tree of knowledge of good and evil which they had been forbidden to approach.
10. The serpent, really **Satan, used a very clever technique to get the woman's attention; he started with a question.** As we read earlier:
Genesis 3:1: Now the snake was the most cunning animal that the LORD God had made. The snake asked the woman, “Did God really tell you not to eat fruit from any tree in the garden?”—*Good News Bible*.*
11. Why do you think Satan started his conversation with Eve by asking her about her interpretation of God's words? To Eve, it probably seemed like an innocent question.
12. Notice that the implication of Satan's statement is that God had forbidden them to eat from **any** tree in the garden. This immediately implied that Eve needed to respond saying: “No, we can eat of **any** tree in the garden except that one tree.” If Satan was able to deceive Eve in the garden while she was daily speaking with God and with heavenly angels, how good is he at deceiving us?
13. Was Satan trying to imply to Eve that, perhaps, she had misunderstood God's instructions?
14. **Satan wanted to imply that God was withholding almost everything from them.** Eve's response, of course, told the truth that God was very generous, offering them everything except that one tree.
15. Do you think Eve really thought that eating from that tree would give her more wisdom? How often today are we tempted to explore avenues of knowledge that might be just as dangerous?

16. Today, we usually regard knowledge as desirable. That is why many people spend many years getting an education. But, are there some kinds of knowledge that are not good? Think of this story of Adam and Eve!
17. **The real issue is whether sin is dangerous, even deadly, or not. Satan does not want us to believe that all the lies and temptations he promotes are deadly. Or, maybe, we would become wise and stop listening to him.**
18. **How did the conversation between Eve and the serpent continue?**

Genesis 3:2-5: ²“We may eat the fruit of any tree in the garden,” the woman answered, ³“except the tree in the middle of it. God told us not to eat the fruit of that tree or even touch it; if we do, we will die.”

“The snake replied, “That’s not true; you will not die.” ⁵God said that, because he knows that when you eat it you will be like God and know what is good and what is bad.”—Good News Bible.*†
19. **Satan’s two main accusations against God voiced to Eve were: (1) God is not telling you the truth, i.e., God is a liar! (Genesis 3:4) And (2) Contrary to what God has claimed, sin is not deadly! (Genesis 3:4)**
20. But, Satan did not want her to think about these issues. So, he suggested that by eating the fruit, she could become like God. And who wouldn’t want to be like God? Notice that in the chiasm below, the central point, the most important point of all, focused on the Messianic prophecy. The entire chapter of Genesis 3 was designed to get our focus on that point. However, keep in mind that Moses did not write chapters; the idea of chapters for the Bible was not conceived until long after Jesus’s time.
21. How should Eve have responded to the snake and his offerings? Eve could have said: “This tree and this fruit have been here every day that I have. If this fruit is such a good deal, I will come back tomorrow and have some after discussing it with Adam and with God.” But, Satan was a good salesman, closing the deal on the spot!
22. Why did God put the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the center of the garden, so close to the tree of life? Was that fair to Adam and Eve? And fair to Satan?

It is because humans have taken the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because they disobeyed God, that they lost access to the tree of life and could not live forever, at least in this condition. This connection underlies a profound principle. Moral and spiritual choices have an impact on biological life, as Solomon instructed his son: “Do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; for length of days and long life and peace they will add to you” (*Prov. 3:1, 2, NKJV*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Friday April 8.[§]
23. Couldn’t God have put the tree of knowledge of good and evil in a “far corner” of the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve would rarely go instead of in the center, near the tree of life where they had to go each day? Or, **did God “need” to show the universe that He is fair** by giving Satan a chance to approach Adam and Eve with his arguments against God?

24. It is important to recognize that **the tree of knowledge of good and evil was actually supposed to be a protection for Adam and Eve. Satan could only approach them at that one location; he could not follow them around the garden!**

Satan was not to follow them with continual temptations; he could have access to them only at the forbidden tree. Should they attempt to investigate its nature, they would be exposed to his wiles. They were admonished to give careful heed to the warning which God had sent them and to be content with the instruction which He had seen fit to impart.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 53.3.†

25. **The only thing Adam and Eve had to do to prevent ever falling into evil was for them to stay away from that tree; and that was God's instruction to them. So, that provision by God was intended to be a protection for them.**
26. Why did God call to Adam and Eve in the garden, saying, “**Where are you?**” Of course, God knew where they were. He was giving Adam and Eve an opportunity to recognize their guilt and to ask for repentance and forgiveness. God was already working for their salvation and redemption!
27. It is interesting to note that God had a similar question for Cain (Genesis 4:9) and others in the Bible. This is *anthropomorphism*, suggesting that God has the same kinds of limitations that we have.
28. Other examples of this progression are seen in the story of Cain, (Genesis 4:9-10) the flood, (Genesis 6:5-8) the tower of Babel, (Genesis 11:5) and Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 18:21) God never pronounces judgment on us without giving us an opportunity to respond. God never condemns human beings without giving us/them an opportunity to respond. But, we must be willing to admit our guilt.
29. So, who was more guilty? Eve? Or, Adam?

1 Timothy 2:14-15: ¹⁴And it was not Adam who was deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and broke God's law. ¹⁵But a woman will be saved through having children, if she perseveres in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.—*Good News Bible*.*

2 Corinthians 11:3: I am afraid that your minds will be corrupted and that you will abandon your full and pure devotion to Christ—in the same way that **Eve was deceived by the snake's clever lies.**—*Good News Bible*.†

30. **Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent—and God for placing the serpent there.** Why did Adam and Eve try to shift the blame to someone besides themselves?
31. The word translated *deceive* that Eve used implied that she thought, being deceived, she was doing the right thing. (Compare 2 Kings 19:10; Isaiah 37:10; Jeremiah 49:16.)
- Adam blames the woman, saying that she gave him the fruit (some truth to this), and Eve blames the serpent, saying he deceived her (some truth to this, too). But in the end, they both were guilty.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday April 5.
32. When trying to avoid blame, it is very common for people to mention some truth mixed with some error. That was Satan's original scheme.

33. Let us now turn to review a part of God's plan for healing for Adam and Eve and the whole human race. God was being very direct with Adam and Eve.

Genesis 3:14-19: ¹⁴ Then the LORD God said to the snake, "You will be punished for this; **you alone of all the animals must bear this curse:** from now on you will crawl on your belly, and you will have to eat dust as long as you live. ¹⁵I will make you and the woman hate each other; **her offspring and yours will always be enemies. Her offspring will crush your head, and you will bite her offspring's heel.**"

¹⁶ And he said to the woman, "I will increase your trouble in pregnancy and your pain in giving birth. In spite of this, you will still have desire for your husband, yet you will be subject to him."

¹⁷ And he said to the man, "You listened to your wife and ate the fruit which I told you not to eat. Because of what you have done, **the ground will be under a curse.** You will have to work hard all your life to make it produce enough food for you. ¹⁸It will produce weeds and thorns, and you will have to eat wild plants. ¹⁹**You will have to work hard and sweat to make the soil produce anything,** until you go back to the soil from which you were formed. You were made from soil, and you will become soil again."—*Good News Bible.**†

34. Notice especially that God first condemned the serpent. But, then, almost immediately in the next verse, He offered hope to Adam and Eve involving a Messiah. (Genesis 3:15) That verse is the only positive one in the entire chapter. God had said that each of the things He created during creation week was good. Eve's mind was focused on that tree, and she said the fruit looked good.

These two temptations, those of being immortal and of being like God, are at the root of the idea of immortality in ancient Egyptian and Greek religions. The desire for immortality, which they believed was a divine attribute, obliged these people to seek divine status, as well, in order (they hoped) to acquire immortality. **Surreptitiously, this way of thinking infiltrated Jewish-Christian cultures and has given birth to the belief in the immortality of the soul, which exists even today in many churches [resulting in the doctrine of eternally-burning hell as a "logical" result of the incorrect premise/assumption that one cannot die. Therefore, if s/he chooses the side of evil, s/he must be punished forever].**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, April 4.†‡

35. Consider again Genesis 3:14-15 which we read just above in Item #33.

We reach here [in Genesis 3:14-15] a kind of "reversal" of Creation. While Creation led to life, the appreciation of good, and blessings, judgment leads to death, evil, and curses—but also to the hope and promise of salvation.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, April 6.‡

36. There are some very interesting parallels between Genesis 3:15 and Revelation 12:17:

The dragon (serpent), enraged (enmity); the seed (offspring); and the woman in Eden and the woman in Revelation 12:17. The battle (the great

controversy) that moved to Eden, with the Fall, will continue to the end of time. However, **the promise of Satan's defeat already was given in Eden, in that his head will be crushed, a theme more explicitly revealed in Revelation, which depicts his final demise (Rev. 20:10)**. That is, right from the start, humanity was given hope that there will be a way out of the terrible mess that came from the knowledge of evil, a hope that we all can share in right now.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, April 6.^{†§}

37. **It is important to notice that no sooner had God pronounced a sentence on human beings than He promised them salvation. But, the consequences of sin were unavoidable.** Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden, never to have access again to the tree of life until they see it in heaven.
38. It is interesting to notice that having been given the death sentence because of their behavior, God told them that Eve would be able to give birth, (Genesis 3:20) the hope of new life.
39. In many places in the Bible, there are **logical constructs known as chiasms**. They begin with a certain point and **progress down to a central main focus**, and then, retreat back to the point from which they started. Notice the following interesting chiasm in Genesis 3.

Significantly, the first Messianic prophecy (*Gen. 3:14, 15*) is located exactly in the center of the structure of the chapter (A B C **D** C₁ B₁ A₁):

- A. **Gen. 3:1–5.** Serpent-Eve, God absent: Temptation to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil
- B. **Gen. 3:6–8.** Adam-Eve: Human clothing
- C. **Gen. 3:9–13.** God-Adam-Eve: Investigative judgment
- D. Gen. 3:14, 15. God-Serpent: Messianic prophecy**
- C₁. **Gen. 3:16–19.** God-Eve-Adam: Suffering
- B₁. **Gen. 3:20, 21.** Adam-Eve: Divine clothing
- A₁. **Gen. 3:22–24.** God alone: Prohibition to eat from the tree of life

The structure of the chapter highlights two main themes: the theme of temptation and the theme of salvation.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 26.^{†§} [Bold type is added except the bold type related to “D,” and that bold type is in the Bible study guide.]‡

40. Christians have often pointed to Genesis 3:15 as the promise of a future Messiah. What is the basis for that interpretation?

Now, what is meant by the word *seed*? This word should neither be understood in a collective sense, referring to humanity or a people (Israel, for instance), nor in a particular sense, meaning a specific human individual. It is interesting to note that in the next line the “seed” has been replaced by the personal pronoun “he” (in Hebrew, *hu*’), which is the actual subject of the verb “bruise” (*shuf*). Thus, “he” receives a special emphasis in the structure of the paragraph and the syntax of the phrase: it appears as the

exact center of the strophe [section] at the very moment when the poetic rhythm shifts from four beats to three.

This rhythmic shift indicates that this pronoun is the hinge of the passage. Moreover, "he" is the first word in the phrase, thus giving it emphasis. Out of the 103 passages in which the Hebrew pronoun *hu'*, "he," is translated in the Septuagint, Genesis 3:15 is the only occurrence in which it does not agree with its immediate antecedent.

Indeed, the Greek form of the pronoun (*autos*) refers neither to the woman (it is not feminine), nor to the seed (it is not gender neutral). Rather, *autos* refers instead to a male individual. This syntactical irregularity shows us that the translators had in mind a specific person, a man in real history, the Messiah. This Messianic interpretation of Genesis 3:15 is even attested by the Hebrew Scriptures. One of the most eloquent testimonies of this view is found in Psalm 110, where the words of Genesis 3:15 reappear and are directly applied to the Davidic Messiah. The words of the psalm, " 'Till I make Your enemies' " (Ps. 110:1, NKJV), are indeed a verbal repetition of the first words of the Genesis promise "I will put enmity."—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 28.^{‡§}

41. Compare Genesis 3:15 and Psalm 110:6-7 which is the only other reference in the entire Old Testament with the words related to crushing the head.
42. But, in Psalm 110, we notice something else. The Messiah who was to come was to be a Priest in the order of Melchizedek. We should remember all about Melchizedek from our studies last quarter. More than that, this Messiah will end up seated at the right hand of God in heaven. No one else could fulfill that prophecy except Jesus Christ, the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament.
43. It is interesting to note God's actions after His encounter and conversation with Adam and Eve after their sin.

Genesis 3:24: Then at the east side of the garden he put living creatures and a flaming sword which turned in all directions. This was to keep **anyone** from coming near the tree that gives life.—*Good News Bible.*†*

44. How does sin change us? Why were Adam and Eve, who had been so comfortable with God in the past, trying to hide from Him? What does the Bible mean when it says they "realized that they were naked"? (Genesis 3:7, GNB*) Adam and Eve had placed themselves on the side of Satan in opposition to God's plan for their lives. So, what were the immediate results? The following is a section compiled in *The Truth About Angels*:

Holy angels were sent to drive out the disobedient pair from the garden, while **other angels guarded the way to the tree of life**. Each one of these mighty angels had in his right hand a glittering sword.—*Spiritual Gifts 3:45*.

Strong angels, with beams of light representing flaming swords turning in every direction, were placed as sentinels **to guard the way of the tree of life from the approach of Satan and the guilty pair**.—The Review and Herald, February 24, 1874 [par. 20].

It was Satan's studied plan that Adam and Eve should disobey God, receive His frown, and then partake of the tree of life, that they might perpetuate a life of sin. But holy angels were sent to debar their way to the tree of life. Around these angels flashed beams of light on every side, which had the appearance of glittering swords.—The Spirit of Prophecy 1:44.—Ellen G. White, *The Truth About Angels 62.2-4.^{†‡} [Portions of this compilation in *The Truth About Angels* are from 3SG* 45.2; *RH** February 24, 1874, par. 20; and 1SP* 44.2.][‡]**

45. Remember that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was in the center of the garden, near the tree of life. Satan and whoever of his forces might have been at that tree of knowledge of good and evil immediately tried to go over to the tree of life. But, God's angels were already preventing **anyone** from approaching the tree of life.
46. What do we know about that "covering" that Adam and Eve wore in the beginning? (Genesis 3:7) Ellen White suggested that a garment of light is also what the angels wear.

Psalm 104:1-2: Praise the LORD, my soul!

O LORD, my God, how great you are!
You are clothed with majesty and glory;
² **you cover yourself with light.**
You have spread out the heavens like a tent.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

47. What had been God's original plan for the relationship between Eve and Adam?

When God created Eve, He designed that she should possess neither inferiority nor superiority to the man, but that in all things she should be his equal. The holy pair were to have no interest independent of each other; and yet each had an individuality in thinking and acting. But after Eve's sin, as she was first in the transgression, the Lord told her that Adam should rule over her. She was to be in subjection to her husband, and this was a part of the curse. **In many cases the curse has made the lot of woman [sic] very grievous and her life a burden. The superiority which God has given man he has abused in many respects by exercising arbitrary power. Infinite wisdom devised the plan of redemption, which places the race on a second probation by giving them another trial.**—

Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,* vol. 3, 484.1.[‡]

48. Do we make the correct associations between these passages in Genesis and what we read in the rest of the Bible? Do we appreciate all that God has done for us? **Have we become wise enough to distinguish between good and evil?**

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