

Genesis 3:1-13 The Fall of Creation

I. The First Act of Rebellion (1-7a)

A. The Temptation From Without (1-5)

1. The Tempter's Appearance (1)

a. The Serpent is Shrewd and Crafty

i. The Identity of the Serpent

- Revelation 12:9 identifies Satan as “the ancient serpent” – the power behind the serpent
- The Serpent here is a created being – “that God had made”
- No information is given about the form of the serpent (i.e. were all animals able to talk, did the serpent originally have legs, etc.) – the point is that the temptation came in disguise

ii. The Subtlety of the Serpent

- He is said to be more subtle (shrewd, crafty) than the other animals
- The word is עָרֹם (pronounced arum) means “cunning” or “clever” – the implication is that the serpent knew what was going on – There is a word play in Hebrew between the snake described as subtle (arum) and couple described as Naked (arummim)
- The couple will seek to be crafty but end up only recognizing they are naked

b. The Serpent Questions God's Command

i. He Begins By Questioning The Woman's Understanding of God's Command

- He doesn't just come right out and deny God's word yet – he simply asks a question
- The question implies God is a cruel harsh master who wants to deprive the couple
- Notice the serpent doesn't use God's covenant name (Yahweh Elohim – Lord God) – He simply says God.

ii. He Purposefully Misquotes God's Command

- NOTE: The “You” here is plural as are all in the serpent's words. In v. 6, we will see that Adam is “with” his wife, the entire time the temptation is taking place.

2. The Woman Misstates God's Command (2-3)
 - a. The Woman Inaccurately Clarifies God's Provision (2)
 - i. The woman sees in part where the serpent has misconstrued God's command
 - ii. The woman clarifies that God has allowed them to eat of every tree of the garden
 - iii. The woman does not use the same language God used when saying, "you may freely eat"
 - God gave the command to Adam before Eve was created
 - Perhaps Adam didn't explain it properly
 - Perhaps Eve just misquoted or was paraphrasing it
 - She inadvertently minimized God's abundant provision for the couple
 - b. The Woman Inaccurately Clarifies God's Prohibition (3a)
 - i. The woman correctly states that they are prohibited from eating from one particular tree
 - ii. The woman adds a stipulation to God's command
 - The man was forbidden to eat from the tree
 - The woman adds that they are not allowed to touch it or they will die
 - iii. The woman adopts the language of the serpent
 - Instead of saying LORD God (Yahweh Elohim) which expresses the covenant nature between God and man, she uses "God" as the serpent has just done
 - iv. The woman minimizes the consequences
 - She simply says "or we will die"
 - God originally said "you will surely die" – making it an absolute certainty
 - c. The Woman Haphazardly Understands God's Word
 - i. It is clear she is not prepared to face the temptation of the serpent
 - ii. She is only loosely familiar with God's Words which is the weapon Jesus uses to combat Satan's temptation in the wilderness
 - d. What should Adam have done after hearing His Wife's words to the Serpent?
3. The Tempter Maligns God's Nature (4-5)
 - a. The Serpent Contradicts God's Warning (4)
 - i. Notice that the serpent's words are much closer to God's actual promise of punishment – he knows God's word.

- ii. Here is the first lie – The Serpent directly denies what God has said – He probably understands that the woman is not well versed in what God said, and the man is standing idle.
 - iii. Why would they believe God would mislead them?
 - b. The Serpent Disparages God's Motives (5)
 - i. The Serpent Implies God is Selfish and Keeping Good from them
 - He says God told them not to eat because if they do they will be like God
 - He says they will know good and evil like God if they eat
 - God has already pronounced everything "good" – now the Serpent tells them there is a "good" they are missing
 - ii. The Woman Seems to believe that there is no actual consequence for disobedience.
 - The serpent has done his work
 - Now the internal allure of the fruit itself begins to tempt her
- B. The Temptation From Within (6a)
 - 1. The Woman is Enticed Physically, Emotionally, and Spiritually
 - a. The fruit is "good for food" – physical temptation
 - b. The fruit is "pleasing to the eye" – emotionally
 - c. The fruit is "desirable to make wise" – spiritually
 - 2. Notice that the first two descriptions "good for food" and "pleasing to the eye" are exactly how all the trees in the garden are described in chapter 2:9
 - 3. The word "desirable" comes from the root used in the Ten Commandments meaning "to covet."
 - 4. Notice that she focuses only on the "good" that the fruit can give
 - a. She seems oblivious to the fact that God has forbidden it
 - b. She seems to be justifying her desire to eat
 - c. She is enticed to sin "so that good will come of it"
- C. The Loss of Innocence (6b-7a)
 - 1. The Sin is Committed (6b)
 - a. Notice how the language is in rapid succession here
 - i. The temptation has come from outside and inside
 - ii. She has deliberated and listened to the words of the serpent
 - iii. Now in an instant she acts – in an instant the deed is done
 - b. The Woman Eats

- c. The Man Eats
 - i. Notice that the text says the man is “with her”
 - ii. Because of the plural pronouns throughout, it is obvious that he has been with her the entire time
 - d. The Reversal of God sanctioned Roles
 - i. Sin has corrupted the natural order and roles of creation
 - ii. The Man listened to his wife rather than God
 - iii. The Woman listened to a creature rather than her husband
- 2. The Shame of Nakedness is Revealed (7a)
 - a. They didn’t gain the type of knowledge they hoped for
 - b. Everything that had been right was now wrong
 - i. They realized their shame and rebellion
 - ii. They realized their nakedness and guilt
 - iii. They indeed gained knowledge of good and evil, but they realized they themselves were evil
- 3. Was The Serpent Right?
 - a. They didn’t actually die and they did receive knowledge just like the serpent said – was he right and God wrong?
 - i. Adam doesn’t physically die until he is 930 years old
 - ii. Notice that Satan’s temptation was filled with half-truths – They would be “like God” in knowing good and evil – but they would be evil. However, God was keeping nothing good from them.
 - b. There are Two Possible Answers (Both have truth in them)
 - i. They died spiritually the moment they ate
 - Death is separation – physical death is the separation of the soul and body, spiritual death is separation of man’s spirit from God, and eternal death is permanent separation
 - The Couple were separated spiritually from their God the moment they ate – they died
 - ii. They were given grace
 - They were supposed to have physically died
 - They were spared by God’s grace and their nakedness was covered to foreshadow the coming of Christ
- II. The First Attempt To Avoid Justice (7b-13)
 - A. The Couple Try To Conceal Their Sin (7b-8)

1. They Attempt to Cover Their Nakedness (7b)
 - a. They try by their own work to cover up their sin
 - b. Trying to work our way out of sin is in the very nature of man
 2. They Attempt to Hide From God (8)
 - a. They Hear The Lord Coming
 - b. They Hide Among The Trees
 - i. They do what all sinners do outside of the work of the Holy Spirit
 - ii. They try to get as far away from God as possible
 - iii. They do not want to face their guilt and shame
 - iv. The very trees God made for them are what they use to hide from him.
- B. The Man Avoids Confessing His Sin (9-10)
1. God Calls The Man Out (9)
 - a. This is a rhetorical question. God knows exactly where they are
 - b. God is giving the man an opportunity to come to him in repentance
 - c. This is proven by the answer man gives – he doesn't say, "here I am." Instead he explains why he is hiding.
 2. The Man Claims to Have Hidden Out of Fear (10)
 - a. Man does not readily confess his sin. Instead he claims to have hid because of fear
 - b. He claims to be afraid because he is naked
 - c. He doesn't have the nerve to lie to the creator, but he doesn't seem quite ready to confess his sin. He simply references the result of his sin as the reason he was hiding.
 - d. He plays the victim rather than the criminal
- C. The Couple Shifts Blame For Their Sin (11-13)
1. God Tries to Illicit Man's Confession (11)
 - a. God asks "Who told you you were naked? Have you eaten..."
 - b. Again a rhetorical question. God knows he ate from the tree. From God's perspective the case is clear.
 - c. God is giving man the opportunity to come clean and repent of his sin.
 2. Adam Casts Blame Away From Himself (12)
 - a. Adam blames God for his sin
 - i. He says the woman is who enticed him to sin
 - ii. He says it is the woman "whom YOU gave me"
 - iii. He blames the woman but implicitly blames God
 - b. In one sentence, Adam alienates himself from his God and the one companion God has given him
 - c. In the end, Adam must finally confess "I ate"

- d. God responds to Adam's blame shifting with nothing but silence
- 3. God Tries to Illicit the Woman's Confession (13)
 - a. Also a rhetorical question. She is also given an opportunity to confess
- 4. The Woman Casts Blame Away From Herself
 - a. She also shifts blame to the serpent
 - b. She also plays the victim
 - c. She however, must finally confess "I ate"