

Text: Genesis 3:1-24

Title: Sin and its Curse

Truth: Sin enters the world, and death through sin

Date/Location: August 4, 2022 at FBC

Introduction

I. The Beginning of Sin

Genesis is the book of beginnings. As we said in our introductory message, Genesis covers the *genesis* of evil. I could have said there *sin* just as well, for that is what we see in chapter 3. However, the history of sin has a very strange beginning.

A. People often ask why evil exists, and where it comes from. Those are very hard questions that come with a lot of mental entanglements. Often people expressing anger at God for the modern problems created by humanity. We can say this for sure:

1. **Sin did not originate in God.** God is light (holy) and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He himself tempt anyone (James 1:13). Our God is holy (Psalm 99:9).
2. **Sin did not originate firstly in humans.** Romans 5:12 says that sin entered the world through one man. I believe this indicates that sin was a pre-existing “thing” and that it came into the world of humanity through a person but did not ultimately originate with that person. This leaves us with few options if we are looking for “whodunit.”
3. **Sin did originate with Satan.** I understand Isaiah 14:12-15 to be an allusion to Satan, the power behind the king of Babylon. God pronounces woe on the King of Babylon as a human “front man” for Satan. The text indicates that the devil moved from ultimate beauty to terrible pride, desiring to take the place of God for himself. God expresses similar thoughts about the King of Tyre in Ezekiel 28:12-15, which indicates the origin of sin in this phrase: “till iniquity was found in you.” In both cases, the exalted descriptions seem to move beyond the mere human realm. Others disagree. But such disagreement does not change

the main point that Satan did something to introduce sin into the human race.

4. It was an eye-opener for me to realize—in the face the problems of evil and suffering in the world that have tripped up so many people—that **sin had a supernatural origin**. Its origin is not explicable by mere natural means. How exactly it came to be is beyond nature, beyond nurture, beyond the visible realm. It is somewhat inexplicable how sin entered a perfect creation. Why would people in a perfect creation want something else so badly that they would break the one command given by their creator? Why does Satan think it is ultimately profitable for him to sin and to induce others to sin? It's senseless. The explanation is "not of this world."
5. The origin of sin is like other supernatural events (miracles)—we cannot explain exactly *how* God created, or *how* He parted the Red Sea or *how* He raised the dead or gave you spiritual life. We can explain *what* happened and some of the means or attendant circumstances that came with the miracle. For example, God told Moses to hold out his staff over the sea and divide it (Exodus 14:16). Through the Bible and teaching of the Bible, God delivered the good news about Jesus Christ to you and opened your eyes to the desirability of Christ over sin; of forgiveness over guilt; of life over death. He did this through the word of God. But exactly how He wrought that change? I know not how God's Spirit moves, convincing men of sin...
- B. The sin of Satan was indicated in the prophets. But there is one more passage: 1 Timothy 3:6. A young Christian is not to be elevated to the place of elder for he may become proud and "fall into the condemnation of the devil." We can say then that the devil's judgment comes because of his pride. When he teaches his followers, they become like him, and thus sin is manifested very often—we could probably say exclusively—in pride. Sin is all about SELF, and that is what pride is about as well.
- C. The devil was an archangel created by God along with all the other holy angels. Iniquity was found in him for some inexplicable reason, and he thus fell into a fixed state of evil. He convinced

some other angels to come with him (Rev. 12:4?). These are the demons. There is no redemption for any of them.

- D. The only place the Bible uses the phrase “angel of light,” it refers to the devil. He is a clever creature for whom humans are no match. His servants run around portraying themselves as servants of righteousness. But they are not: they are themselves slaves of sin and can deliver you into only one state—more slavery to sin (2 Cor. 11:14-15).
- E. Therefore we must resist the devil (James 4:7) and watch out for him because he is running around out there causing all kinds of havoc (1 Peter 5:8; Job 1:7; Luke 22:31).

II. The Fall into Sin, 3:1-6

Focusing on all this origin-of-evil stuff is depressing. But alas, we need to know it so that we can understand the gospel and how God delivers His people from evil and the devil.

- A. The serpent (snake) is said to be cunning, more so than other land animals. The combination of the snake and its indwelling handler made it clever (shrewd, crafty). Satan chose to indwell it and this made it unusual among all the other snakes. God chose to punish the entire snake kind because of this transgression.
- B. Did Satan like the snake because it was already a perfect beast to display Satan’s character—and that is why many people do not like snakes? Or is it that we now associate the serpent with Satan because Satan chose the serpent, and *that* is why snakes get a bad reputation? The answer is insignificant in the big picture. Satan indwelt this reptile and *talked* through it.
- C. This passage shows us that Satan uses several techniques.
 1. He attacked the woman while she was (it seems) alone.
 2. He used a mental attack, not a physical one.
 3. He sowed doubt. “Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?” God did *not* say that—in fact, He said, “of every tree of the garden you may freely eat”—just with

one exception. But the question gets the woman to thinking that there is a limitation upon her that might be somehow bad.

4. He outright lied and denied God's word. Verse 4 records him saying, "You will **not** surely die." But God said in 2:17, "you **shall** surely die." Satan quickly moved from doubt to denial by confidently stating the opposite was true.
5. He gave an alternate explanation which was another lie: instead of dying, verse 5 records, the idea is that God himself knows that when you eat, you will understand more, and you will be like God because you will know good and evil.

But that is clearly *not* the case—look at the results! Are we like God? No. Do we know good and evil like God does—innocently, as matters of fact rather than as personal behavior? No. Eve should have understood that. She was thrown off center with the doubting question and then went into a very bad place with only three sentences from the evil one.

6. This playbook is the same today—get them while vulnerable, start in the mind, cast doubt, lie by saying the opposite of God's word, and give false explanations. Our sinful nature, which is just like Satan, though not directly controlled by him, does the same thing. Watch out for these things. Stop and think before you swallow some idea or doctrine. The world says, "people are basically good." God's word says, "there is none good" (Eccl. 7:20, Psalm 14:1, Rom. 3:12). Not all worldly philosophies boil down so easy to a direct opposite, but many do—particularly if you know the Bible well. Others require a bit of thinking to simmer them down to their essence. "Love is love." No—God is love (1 John 4:8). Can you think how to rightly address similar ideals, like "religion is the cause of the world's problems"? Are there others you would like to discuss? People are listening to the serpent all the time in our day. How about you?

D. To Satan's initial sentence, a question, the woman answered more or less correctly. She recounted how she and her husband had freedom to eat of every tree in the garden except one, the one in the middle of the garden. Actually, there were two trees in the middle of the garden: the tree of life, and the tree of the

knowledge of good and evil. Perhaps they were placed next to one another as an emblem of two ways to live, two choices to make. It was the latter tree that Eve knew was forbidden to them.

She said, “nor shall you touch it.” Sometimes interpreters raise criticism against Eve because she supposedly added to God’s word. That may be, but I will give a charitable interpretation, that she was told by her husband to “just stay away from it, don’t touch it” to put a little distance between themselves and the temptation. If it was deadly to eat, to touch it was too close for comfort. I do not believe the sin of Eve consisted in her “adding” to God’s word. Her sin was elsewhere.

She understood the penalty for disobedience—“lest you die.”

- E. Eve saw the tree was—in her estimation—good for food, desirable, and able to make one wise. The woman had now fallen into sin by entertaining doubt about God’s goodness and His word—before eating the fruit. The act that showed her heart sin was a moment later: she ate.
- F. She convinced her husband to eat, and he did so. Please do not characterize Adam’s action as act of mercy toward Eve. “Oh, it was because he loved her so much that he ate the forbidden fruit so that he would face the same fate she did.” It sounds like something Satan would say: “If it is wrapped in love, it is OK. Go ahead and do it.” Nonsense. Do you find that sappy stuff in God’s word? We have an objective responsibility toward God, not an emotionally driven responsibility toward our loved ones. Adam’s behavior was an act of sin. It was disobedience to God. It was *not* merciful to his wife for him to sin, nor was his sin merciful to the race of billions of souls after him. As a sinner, he could not help her better!
- G. Some principles for life: check with your spouse first before making significant decisions. Do not agree your spouse invites you to sin. Do not isolate yourself. Fill your mind with God’s word so you can fight off Satan’s attempts through the world and flesh to get you to fall. Be skeptical of ideas until you can prove them in the Word.
- H. Notice that in Romans 5:12-21, Paul pins the blame for the imputation of sin to humanity on Adam. He was the God-assigned

representative of the race. The serpent deceived Eve (2 Cor. 11:3, 1 Timothy 2:14). Adam was not deceived. He sinned willfully. He receives the full brunt of the blame for sin in the human race.

III. The Consequences of Sin on the World, 3:7-24

The amount of text given over to the consequences is 75% of the chapter. The sin is only 25%. And that is kind of symbolic for what sin does to you. The pleasure lasts a short time, and the pain lasts a long time—in this case thousands of years so far. The good feelings are for time, but the bad consequences roll out in time (and, for the lost, in eternity).

- A. Shame, v. 7. Adam and Eve immediately saw themselves differently, as naked. They tried to cover their shame with some hastily prepared and undoubtedly ill-functioning coverings.
- B. Broken fellowship with God, v. 8-11. Instead of warmly welcoming God as He entered their space, they hid themselves. They tried to hide in their room when dad came home—to avoid seeing him.
 - 1. God well knew where Adam was, but the question “Where are you” served as a diagnostic for Adam’s benefit, not God’s. Adam gave the answer—he was afraid because he was naked. He did not have that fear the day before.
 - 2. God then asked how Adam knew he was naked. Someone told him—perhaps an angel? You ate from the forbidden tree? Adam could plainly see before how he looked, but it had not dawned on him that there was another state that was more desirable, i.e., to be clothed. Because of their pure innocence before, it was not necessary and thus did not come into his mind. Now, he knew there was another state, and he found it intolerable to be naked with other people looking. His shame was exposed.
- C. Blame shifting, v. 12-13. Adam did admit that he ate, but not before he said that “the woman whom You gave to be with me” was to blame. The woman offered another weak excuse by blaming the serpent for deceiving her, but she did say “I ate.” God did not bother to ask the serpent anything because He already knew the snake indwelt by Satan was the end of the blame line.

D. Curse on the serpent, v. 14-15.

1. God cursed the serpent—the animal—more than all land animals. The rest of the animals were cursed as well. The entry of sin into the world dirtied the whole thing under Adam’s charge. We might not understand this, but God saw fit that this was the way things would be (Romans 8:20). The snake family would be consigned to dwell on the ground—and probably *in* holes of the ground as well. Perhaps the snake had small legs and feet before like other reptiles, but God cursed him to travel on his belly. He was going to eat the dust all his days. This cursed condition is *more* than all the cattle. Part of that “more” is that this curse continues into the millennial kingdom when the rest of animal creation is restored (Isaiah 65:25). The snake represents what is evil and unpleasant.
2. The serpent was the vehicle of Satan, so in verse 15 God turns to announce the punishment of Satan. There will be constant enmity between Satan and the woman, and between his seed and her seed. Satan’s “seed” consists of unbelievers. The woman’s “Seed” is Christ. He will crush Satan while Himself receiving a blow to the heel. The first is fatal; the second is non-fatal. This is a well-known passage called the “first gospel.”

E. Curse on the woman, v. 16. This judgment is two-fold:

1. Pain in childbirth. This pain is a cross-generational reminder of the sin of Eve bringing sin into the race. 1 Timothy 2:15 says that the woman will be “saved” in childbearing. She is delivered from the curse (but not born again) when she bears and then raises children in a godly way. By that means, she is lessening the effect of bringing another sinful person into the world.
2. Chafing at the headship of her husband. Being ruled over by her husband is God’s assignment for her. Before the fall, this was not a problem at all because everything would be entirely harmonious. Now, it was going to be a struggle. Women want to run the home, but God has assigned the man to do so (see Gen. 4:7). The husband becomes exasperated when she attempts to reverse the God-assigned roles. We need God’s help!

- F. Curse on the man, v. 17-19. This includes an extensive curse on the earth. He receives the brunt of it because he was responsible—to avoid sin and help his wife avoid sin. As the representative of the race his failure was far bigger than just himself. (A good principle to remember: your sin affects far more than just yourself.)
1. The ground is cursed because of Adam. It will take difficult work, and a battle against thorns and thistles.
 2. It will be laborious to eke out a living from the ground.
 3. You will die and return to the earth from where you were taken.
- G. Clothing, v. 20-21. Adam called his wife’s name Eve, which was significant to him because she was the mother of all other humans. Then God made appropriate coverings for them out of skin. Many have noted that these skins probably came from animals that God killed, thus foreshadowing sacrifice. No great theology can be derived from this because the text is silent about it. But the point here was to cover their shame, not to atone for their sin, because clothing does not atone.
- H. Banned from the tree of life, v. 22-24. The final verses of the chapter foreclose the possibility that the first humans could live forever in their sinful state. If they (continued to) eat of the tree of life, they would live forever in that state, and this was not acceptable to God. So, he banished them from the area around the tree. Instead of having fellowship with God, the man was driven out of the garden by God and prohibited by the force of angels from re-entering it. I believe the garden was wiped out by the flood and is no longer anywhere to be found on the earth. The man and woman “knew” good and evil in a similar but much poorer way than God does. They knew it now by experience, with its pain, not how Satan promised them.

Conclusion

Thus was the beginning of sin and evil in the world. God planned for it with redemption in Christ. Anyone who turns away from sin and turns to Christ in faith, seeking His pardon, will be delivered from sin and its curse. You can to—today.