

Sent: Wednesday, October 3, 2018 10:35 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Genesis 3

As you'll remember, we ended last week's lesson on Genesis 2 on a high note--with a perfect Paradise! God had completed His work of creation and declared everything "very good"! The goodness of His creation was a reflection of the goodness of His nature!

Last nite--encountering Genesis 3--everything changed! It records God's inspired account of the Fall! It establishes the record of the origin of sin in our world, the dilemma of evil, and the need for restoration and the redemption of man!

MacArthur describes Genesis 3 "in many ways as the most defining chapter in the Bible--because it explains why things are the way they are today"! Why there is disease and decay and dysfunction and ultimately death and destruction!

Shepherd's Notes comments that it "provides an answer to the question: "Why is there sin and death in the world"?"

So, do you think God was caught off-guard by all this? By no means! In fact, He decreed that evil would be part of His divine plan! While He's not the source of evil, He allowed it, and used it for His purpose so that He might demonstrate His mercy and grace! And He had seen it all before, with the fall of Lucifer and one-third of the angelic host!

So who was the "serpent" identified in Genesis 3 and how did he get into the picture? We have to go to Revelation 12:9 to get a clear identification of who he was--and is! "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old, who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him!"

His rebellion in heaven is captured in Isaiah 14:12-15--"How are you fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn? You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations. But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne about the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north! I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High!' Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the Pit!" (His destiny is sure!)

We see him in Job 2--sometime after the Fall in Eden, sometime during the Patriarchal period! Listen as the drama unfolds! "Now there was a day when the sons of God (angels) came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came among them! The Lord said to Satan, 'From where do you come?'" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, 'From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it!' The Lord said to Satan: 'Have you considered my servant Job..' (But that's another great story!)

Where else do we see him?

Surely he was the one influencing Herod (in Matthew 2:13-8 and Luke 4:28-29) to try to slay the child Jesus, after His miraculous birth, in a general massacre of all male children under the age of 2 "who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity..." (Obviously to defeat God's plan for man's redemption!)

And then later, in Matthew 4:1-11, when Jesus was "led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil"--just prior to beginning His earthly ministry--again to thwart the plan of God! (We see there how Satan appealed to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--and how Jesus responded to, and fended off these attacks by quoting Scripture!)

Paul (writing in II Corinthians 11:3) later compared the danger facing the Corinthian church to Eve's deception by Satan--when he said: "But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ!"

In II Corinthians 4:4, He called Satan "the god of this world" and noted how he has "blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God!" And in Ephesians 2:2 he called him the "prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience"!

Jesus knew all about the deceptive workings of Satan and on at least three occasions (in John 12:31; 14:30 and 16:11) pictured him as the "ruler of this world"!

With all this background we return to the scene in Genesis to better understand how he deceived Eve--and why we are where we are!

He somehow embodied the "serpent"--the most beautiful creature that God had created (which should in itself tell us something about his tactics)!

Eve obviously didn't realize that she was dealing with a supernatural adversary of God--and naively believed he (it or whatever!) had her best interests at heart! It started with a question: "Did God really say you shouldn't eat of every tree of the garden?" Then, in response to Eve's comment about God's command, Satan's outright lie and malicious challenge to God's authority: "You shall not surely die!" Wow! Arnold writes: "These words echo through time as the serpent's voice can be heard throughout the rest of the Bible, and indeed the rest of history! This is also the choice all who read the Bible must face: the authority of God versus the challenge of the world, as sponsored by Satan"! (A reminder that one can never claim: "the devil made me do it!")

Verse 6 says: "When she saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise (the same three temptations Satan used on Jesus), she took from its fruit and ate! And she gave also to her husband with her (that would be Adam!), and he ate!" (So where was "the man" when she needed him?)

And that did it!

Interesting to see their reactions! "The eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings!" Willmington's Guide to the Bible calls this the "first example in history of man-made religion." (Trying to clothe ourselves apart from the righteousness of Christ!)

Then the "sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (as was apparently His custom in that beautiful relationship prior to the Fall)--and calling for Adam!

Romans 5:12 says that "...just as through one man (Adam!) sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned!"

We see the consequences in verses 14-19! The holy and just God won't allow sin to go unpunished! Arnold calls them "etiologies"--which explains why things are as they are! Why snakes are so unpleasant! Why woman endure pain in childbirth! Why the ground is cursed with "thorns and thistles,"--and why man has to sweat at their brow to till the soil, and "pray" for rain, to provide food for their tables! And why the second law of thermodynamics came into play and the clock of time began winding down!

The curse on Satan is particularly significant! God said: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He (presumably speaking of Christ by His death on the cross) shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel"!

We see a "promise" and a "picture" of God's redemptive plan--right from the start! The promise of a "seed" to conquer Satan (which Adam apparently took by faith, based naming his wife the "mother of all the living)! The picture of the "atonement" through the slaying of an animal and the shedding of blood to provide a "garment of skin" to clothe Adam and Eve!

But why did God drive them from the Garden--and station Cherubim with "the flaming sword to guard the way to the tree of life"? Turns out to be an act of God's mercy! Who would want to "live forever," after all--eating from the tree of life--as a wretched sinner, forever separated from God? God had (and has) a better plan! In the "fullness of time"! (We actually don't read or hear anything more about the "tree of life" until we get to Revelation 22--the last chapter of the Bible--where we next see it near the throne of God, in heaven where it will "bear twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month..." How great to realize that God has a wonderful plan for our redemption--beginning way back in Genesis! (In some ways returning to the way it was at the beginning--before the Fall!)

But meanwhile--back here on "planet earth"--we still have a problem with sin and temptation, and Satan and his angels "roaming" around in the world in which we live--a world over which Jesus called him the "ruler"!

So how do we deal with Satan? God's Word gives some guidance!

1 Peter 5:8-9 says: "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert! Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour! But resist him (like Jesus demonstrated), firm in your faith..."

James 4:7 says: "Submit therefore to God! Resist the devil and he will flee from you!"

And, best of all, 1 John 4:4--"You are from God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He who is in you, than he who is in the world!"

Well, so much for Genesis 4! Get the picture? Got the promise?

Lowell