

The Book Of Genesis – Chapter Three

As we consider the events that take place in Genesis chapter three, we are certain to find things that are familiar to virtually everyone.

For instance, is there anyone who hasn't fallen victim to deception? Is there anyone who hasn't made a terrible mistake and lived to regret it? Is there anyone who doesn't know what it's like to fall into temptation and knowingly do something wrong? These things are common to the human experience and all of them occur here in Genesis chapter three.

Genesis chapter three also addresses some fundamental questions regarding the state of our world. For instance...

- Have you ever wondered why the world can be so harsh?
- Do you ever ask yourself why disease and death exist?
- Have you ever wondered why people deceive, steal, cheat, or kill one another?
- Do you ever wonder why life can seem so futile and meaningless?
- Have you ever contemplated how everything got to be this way?

Nevertheless, we can personalize these questions even further...

- *"What compels me to do things I know are wrong?"*
- *"Why do people act so insensitively?"*
- *"How did my life become so painful?"*
- *"Why does my work seem to serve no real purpose?"*

If we are honest with ourselves, we must admit that some things are very wrong in our world today. Most of us would likely agree that the world is not the way it should be, and if we are really honest with ourselves, we must admit that *we* are not the way we should be, either. Genesis chapter three addresses these questions by revealing the origin of the world as we know it. Thus, if we understand the root of our condition, we are better prepared to seek [God's remedy](#) for it.

If we were to think of Genesis chapter three in terms of a theatrical drama, this portion of Scripture would be resemble a play with four main characters. The first character enters with a plan to deceive someone else. Character number two is the target of that deception. Our third character knowingly does something wrong. The fourth Person then begins the process necessary to restore everything to its rightful state once again.

"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'"
(Genesis 3:1-5).

Many of us likely associate the image of a serpent with a snake-like creature. With that in mind, let's imagine that we are present in the garden of Eden when a talking serpent suddenly begins to engage us in a conversation. In that scenario, would you continue the conversation with a talking reptile as if it was nothing out of the ordinary? The answer is probably not.

This may indicate that the serpent mentioned here in Genesis chapter three was not like the serpents we know today. Of course, it's possible to read these verses and think, *"The earlier chapters of Genesis tell us that God saw that everything He made was good. The only thing that wasn't good was the fact that*

the man was alone, and God fixed that by making a woman. How is it that this serpent suddenly appears and begins telling lies?"

Well, it seems that the woman was having a conversation with a creature that was personified by the devil or the devil himself. We know this with certainty because the last book of the Bible identifies the entity who is behind the events that take place within this passage.

You see, the book of Revelation speaks of, "...***that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan...***" in [Revelation 12:9](#) and [Revelation 20:2](#). So we know this serpent in Genesis chapter three is Satan, or a creature he is using for this purpose. So how did this come to be? Where did this cunning, crafty, subtle liar in the Garden of Eden come from?

It seems that everyone has heard of the Devil, also known as Satan, Lucifer, Beelzebub, etc. Satan is often portrayed as a comic individual with a red suit, horns, and a pitchfork. Sometimes he is depicted as God's opposite, a kind of "anti-god" or evil god who is locked in an eternal struggle for people's souls.

In reality, the devil is neither a clown nor is he God's "anti-equal." The entity we know as "the devil" is actually a fallen angelic being. "Satan" is his name and "devil" is his occupation, or job description, so to speak.

The term devil is derived from a word that refers to a false accuser and identifies one who is prone to slander. ⁽¹⁾ The name Satan means "adversary," a term that signifies an opponent or enemy. ⁽²⁾ Contrary to what many believe, the Bible does not identify Satan as a myth or a legend, but as an actual being. For example...

- Satan can reason ([Job 1:9-10](#)).
- He has emotions ([Revelation 12:17](#)).
- He has desires ([Luke 22:31](#)).
- He has plans ([Ephesians 6:11](#)).
- He possesses the ability to carry out his intentions ([2 Timothy 2:26](#)).

The Scriptures also refer to Satan as...

- "The evil one" ([Matthew 6:13](#)).
- "The wicked one" ([1John 2:13](#)).
- "A liar and a murderer" ([John 8:44](#)).
- "A deceiver" ([Revelation 20:10](#)).
- "The ruler of this world" ([John 12:31](#)).

So where did Satan come from, and what led to his presence in the Garden of Eden? Well, two Old Testament passages offer insight into Satan's history and origin. We find those passages in [Isaiah 14:12-15](#) and [Ezekiel 28:11-19](#).

Ezekiel 28:12-13 tells us how God instructed the prophet Ezekiel to "***Take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre.***" But God's message to Ezekiel was much broader in scope, for it concerned a guardian angelic entity on the sacred mountain of God in Eden. As a result, Ezekiel did more than simply speak to the monarch of that city. Instead, he referred to the being who ultimately influenced the king's decisions.

In addressing that entity, these prophets speak of a being who was "***...the model of perfection, full of wisdom and exquisite in beauty***" ([Ezekiel 28:12 NLT](#)). He was blameless in all his ways until he became proud of his beauty. Wickedness was subsequently found within him and he grew corrupt because of his splendor ([Ezekiel 28:15-17](#)). Finally, he sought to usurp God's place of authority, saying, "***...I will raise my throne above the stars of God... I will make myself like the Most High***" ([Isaiah](#)

14:13, 14).

(1) G1228 diabolos *Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries* <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g1228/kjv/tr/0-1/>

(2) H7854 satan *Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries* <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h7854/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

We can gain a better understanding of Satan's origin with a closer look at Isaiah 14:13-14...

“For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’”

These statements have been called the five “*I will's*” of Satan. Let's consider each of these assertions and see what they tell us regarding Satan's origin and purpose.

- ***“I will ascend to heaven.”*** It appears that Satan desired to ascend to a rank of equal or greater prominence than God in Heaven.
- ***“I will raise my throne above the stars of God.”*** “Stars” typically refer to angelic beings when used in this context. This suggests that Satan wanted to gain authority and jurisdiction over other angels.
- ***“I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.”*** Isaiah 2:2 tells us, “...*the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it*” (NIV). So another of Satan's objectives involved supplanting God's authority so all would direct their reverence toward him.
- ***“I will ascend above the tops of the clouds.”*** This is a poetic way of saying that Satan aspired to become the highest being in the universe.
- ***“I will make myself like the Most High.”*** Satan's ultimate aim involved securing the power, authority, and worship that belongs to God alone.

Satan's name was subsequently changed from Lucifer (which means shining one or morning star) to Satan (adversary) in light of his attempt to usurp God's place. He was also thrown out of heaven according to Isaiah 14:12, but apparently maintains some sort of limited access (see [Job 1:6-10](#)).

The Scriptures do not tell us when these events took place. However, they must have occurred prior to the creation of the Garden of Eden because Satan approached Eve in the person of the serpent there.

The Bible depicts Satan as an intelligent, cunning, resourceful, and persistent entity. [Revelation 12:10](#) tells us that Satan relentlessly accuses the people of God, thus demonstrating his unwavering ambition and malicious nature. His power is apparently formidable enough to contend with Michael the archangel ([Jude 1:9](#)).

The Scriptures also characterize Satan as a master of deceit who can assume different forms to achieve his objectives ([2 Corinthians 11:14](#)). That may explain why this being in the Garden of Eden is identified as a serpent. It also may explain why the woman was seemingly unconcerned with the prospect of a conversation with a talking serpent; he may have altered his appearance to appear non-threatening

It's also interesting to note the strategy employed by the serpent in this passage. He simply opened a conversation with an apparently innocuous question: ***“Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?”*** ([Genesis 3:1 NLT](#)).

While that may seem like an innocent question, it is considerably less innocent than it seems. You see, the question wasn't, “*What did God say?*” The question was, “*Did God really say that?*” It's almost as if the serpent had heard something so incredible that he couldn't believe it: “*God really said that?!?*”

You can't eat the fruit from any tree in the garden?"

To fully comprehend the events that take place in Genesis 3:1-5, it is important to observe some crucial details. We can look to the great fictional detective Sherlock Holmes to serve as our inspiration in this regard.

You see, details are important, both to criminal investigators and serious students of God's Word. Holmes unraveled many baffling cases by seizing upon details that others failed to observe. Dr. John Watson (Holmes' friend and investigative associate) once commented upon his ability to see what others did not...

"When I hear you give your reasons," (Watson) remarked, "the thing always appears to me to be so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive instance of your reasoning, I am baffled until you explain your process. And yet I believe that my eyes are as good as yours."

"Quite so," (Holmes) answered, lighting a cigarette, and throwing himself down into an armchair. "You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear. For example, you have frequently seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room."

"Frequently."

"How often?"

"Well, some hundreds of times."

"Then how many are there?"

"How many? I don't know."

"Quite so! You have not observed. And yet you have seen. That is just my point. Now, I know that there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed." ⁽¹⁾

In light of this, we would do well to adopt Holmes' investigative method as we seek to see and observe the events that transpire within these verses.

For instance, did you take note of the way the serpent cleverly rephrased what God said in Genesis 2:16-17? That portion of Scripture records God's instruction to Adam: ***"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil..."*** (NIV). This was an affirmative statement that granted Adam virtually unlimited freedom with one trivial prohibition.

However, the serpent turned that positive affirmation into a negative statement by maneuvering the woman into a response that focused upon that single limitation: ***'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'***"

So, the serpent's question was not intended to secure a more accurate understanding of God's command. Instead, it was designed to subtly suggest to the woman that God was withholding something from her. It also implied that He was wrong to put any restrictions in place.

(1) *A Scandal In Bohemia* <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1661/1661-h/1661-h.htm>

In retrospect, it's easy to say that the woman shouldn't have spoken to the serpent at all. Nevertheless, it's clear that she could have managed this situation more effectively. When questioned about this limitation on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she might have responded by saying, *"God makes His own decisions. I've seen enough to trust God's judgment, even if I don't fully comprehend the rationale behind His decision."*

But even so, she began well in her response: ***“God said we could eat fruit from any tree in the garden...” (CEV)***. Perhaps it might have been better if she said, *“We can freely eat from the trees in the garden...”*. That would have been an accurate representation of what God actually said, but this seems to be a good start.

But we should also note the way she identified that tree. She described it as, ***“...the tree that is in the middle of the garden...” (NIV)*** and not as the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Perhaps she assumed this tree was comparable to the other trees in the Garden of Eden; the only difference was that she was not permitted to eat any fruit from it. In any case, it doesn't seem as if she associated it with the knowledge of good and evil. It may be that Adam simply told her, *“Don't eat anything from that tree.”*

Unfortunately, things went quickly off course from there: ***“...but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” (NIV)***. Notice that the woman included something that God had not said in her response. Here is what God said to Adam concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil...

“...’Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die’” (Genesis 2:16-17).

God said nothing about coming into contact with the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil within His directive. He simply instructed Adam not to eat fruit from it. While it might have been a wise precaution to avoid contact with that tree, there is a large disparity between a practical safeguard and the assertion that God said something when He really didn't.

This served to demonstrate Eve's point of vulnerability: she had a limited grasp of God's Word. First, she omitted the word “freely” from her response to the serpent. Then she added something that God had not said regarding contact with the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The reality is that Eve could have made a hammock or built a tree house there without violating God's directive. As long as she refrained from eating any of its fruit, she would have been safe.

Of course, Eve isn't the only one who has ever added something to God's Word. For example, there are many common expressions that are assumed to be Biblical but do not appear within the Bible. For instance, which of the following sayings are Biblical and which ones aren't...

1. God helps those who help themselves.
2. God is love.
3. Money is the root of all of evil.
4. Trust your heart.
5. Do to others as you would have them do to you.
6. Let go and let God.
7. Live and let live. ⁽¹⁾

These examples demonstrate why it is important to know God's Word. Eve failed in that regard, and that helps explain why she was about to get into trouble...

“but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You will not surely die’” (Genesis 3:3-4).

Here is a direct and straightforward denial: *“You won't die.”* The serpent thus implied that God was untrustworthy, since this contradicted what God had earlier told Adam in [Genesis 2:16-17](#). This exchange also held some other negative implications as well...

- It meant that God was lying.
- It implied that God did something wrong because He didn't tell the truth.

- If God wasn't truthful when He said eating that fruit was wrong, then the opposite must be true- it had to be something beneficial.
- If eating the fruit was good, then why didn't God want her to have it?

Therefore, if God was being deceptive (as the serpent alleged), then why did he seek to mislead her? That part comes next...

“For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:5).

So the serpent alleged that God was lying because He was afraid. As what was the basis of His fear? The serpent's premise was this: God was fearful that Eve would discover that she could become like God, too. This wasn't true, of course, and given what we've already learned about Satan, it seems he was accusing God of the same thing he was guilty of ([Isaiah 14:14](#)).

Now it's one thing to recognize that something is wrong. But it is something very different to understand that something is wrong through personal experience. God had already shown Adam and Eve what was wrong, so there was no need for them to learn for themselves. This principle also holds true today. We can often avoid the pain that may accompany experience when we familiarize ourselves with the Biblical Scriptures and allow God to distinguish right from wrong.

Unfortunately, it's unwise to believe everything we're told, and we'll soon find out why.

(1) Number 2 ([1 John 4:16](#)) and number 5 ([Luke 6:31](#)) are Biblical quotes. Number 3 is a common misquotation of [1 Timothy 6:10](#). The accurate quote is “...*the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.*” The other examples are not Scriptural -especially number 3 (see [Jeremiah 17:9](#))

“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise...” (Genesis 3:6).

This passage outlines four significant events that took place within this interaction. First, we're told that the woman “*saw... the fruit of the tree.*” (NIV). While Eve was certainly aware of the tree and its fruit prior to her conversation with the serpent, she now “saw” it in the sense that she actively considered the tree and its fruit from the wrong perspective.

What followed was a masterful piece of rationalization. “Rationalization” can be defined as “*a way of describing, interpreting, or explaining something (such as bad behavior) that makes it seem proper, more attractive, etc.*” (1)

Then, as now, the danger lies in our thought process. Once we begin to contemplate an inappropriate behavior, it is a relatively short step from thought to action. Eve rationalized that transition from thought to act in three ways: “...*the woman saw that the tree produced fruit that was good for food, was attractive to the eye, and was desirable for making one wise*” (NET).

This train of thought was highly implausible because the Garden of Eden was an ideal environment. As such, it must have been filled with wonderful things to eat- and she was free to eat as much as she desired. Unfortunately, Eve chose to focus on what she didn't have instead of the abundant blessings that God had already given her.

So why did she pursue the fruit from this tree if she had no need of it? That part comes next: it was “...*pleasing to the eye*” (NIV). This should be another familiar concept for modern-day audiences, for we are often lured by the appeal of something that looks attractive but is really something else.

Those with the benefit of life experience often realize that its possible for something to *look* good, but not *be* good. For example, we may purchase a vehicle because it looks appealing, but later regret that decision when it begins to break down.

Or perhaps we may begin a relationship with someone who is seemingly attractive, only to discover

that he or she is actually something else. These modern-day examples illustrate what can happen when we make choices that are based strictly on what is “... *pleasing to the eye.*”

Finally, we’re told that she saw that this fruit was “...*desirable for gaining wisdom*” (NIV). Perhaps Eve considered this fruit and thought, “*This will make me wise; I don’t want to be foolish.*” Like so many others, Eve was influenced and led astray by someone who seemingly held a degree of expertise and authority.

So the woman saw that the fruit of this tree was good for food, pleasing to the eye, and desirable for gaining wisdom. This is reminiscent of what the New Testament will later describe as, “...*the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*” (1 John 2:16).

The “lust of the flesh” relates to how the fruit of the tree was good for food, even though she had other desirable things to eat. The “lust of the eyes” is straightforward: she saw that the fruit of the tree was pleasing to the eye. Finally, the “pride of life” was based on the appeal of gaining wisdom, even at the expense of circumventing God’s will.

So this situation was much like a speeding automobile that is heading for a cliff. But there was one remaining person with the ability to apply the brakes and navigate to safety. We’ll see what that person does next.

“So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate” (Genesis 3:6).

The first five verses of Genesis chapter three might lead us to believe that Eve was having a private conversation with the serpent in the Garden of Eden. However, a closer look at this passage reveals something else.

You see, there was someone else present while that conversation took place. That “someone else” was Adam. We know from our text that Adam was in the vicinity of that discussion because Genesis 3:6 tells us, “*She also gave some [of the fruit] to her husband, who was with her...*” (emphasis added).

Thus, it appears that Adam was present with his wife during this incident, but apparently said nothing. When Eve made the decision to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Adam evidently joined her without objection. Unfortunately, this “non-action” on Adam’s part will lead to serious ramifications.

Adam’s legacy is among those ramifications. For example, the Scriptures hold Adam accountable for what took place in the Garden of Eden, even though Eve was the first to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. We find one such example in the Biblical book of Romans: “*Adam sinned, and that sin brought death into the world*” (Romans 5:12 CEV). We find another instance in the Old Testament book of Hosea: “*Like Adam, they have broken the covenant — they were unfaithful to me...*” (Hosea 6:7 NIV).

So why did Adam take the blame? The answer lies in Adam’s duty and obligation. First, God provided Adam with His instructions regarding the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Thus, it was Adam who was entrusted with the responsibility to fulfill God’s directive. Unfortunately, Adam failed to take the initiative and neglected to ensure that he and his wife adhered to God’s command.

If Adam had intervened during Eve’s discourse with the serpent, the world might be very different today. But Adam chose to remain silent and thus failed to ensure that he and his wife maintained a God-honoring relationship. So while Eve was *responsible* for her transgression, Adam was *accountable* as well- that’s why he gets the blame.

“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed

fig leaves together and made themselves coverings” (Genesis 3:7).

We spoke earlier regarding the concept of “nakedness” in the Garden of Eden and how that concept involved more than just a lack of clothing. From Adam and Eve’s perspective, “nakedness” also involved the idea of being open and exposed as individuals.

Prior to the fall, Adam and Eve were open and vulnerable to one another, both physically and emotionally. There were no secrets, cover-ups, or facades in their relationship. They *had* nothing to hide from one another because there *was* nothing to hide. Adam and Eve had the freedom to explore and enjoy everything their relationship could offer with complete sincerity.

But now things were different in light of their transgression. Before, there was nothing to hide. Now they were no longer free to be open and exposed to one another. Before, no cover-ups were necessary. Now there were things they wanted to hide and conceal from each other.

But Adam and Eve weren’t only hiding from one another...

“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself’” (Genesis 3:8-10).

It is noteworthy to observe what God did *not* do in this situation. First, this passage tells us that Adam and Eve heard God’s presence as He walked in the Garden. It doesn’t say that God immediately appeared to them in a rage as soon as they ate the forbidden fruit. It doesn’t say that God incinerated them with a lightning bolt from heaven for what they had done. It doesn’t say, “*Then the LORD God appeareth to the man and the woman to visit His vengeance upon them for their act of disobedience*” or something like that. We’re simply told that God was walking in the Garden in the cool of the day..

With this in mind, let’s compare Adam and Eve’s response. We’re told that God called to Adam, but he and his wife attempted to conceal themselves behind the trees in the Garden. This reflects one of the fundamental effects of sin; when we do something wrong, it leads to separation from God. God sought Adam (and Eve by extension), but they had withdrawn from Him because of their sin.

A spiritually indifferent person might ask several questions related to our text from Genesis 3:9: “*What prompted God to ask Adam where he was? Didn’t He already know? If God is supposed to be omniscient, then why didn’t He proceed directly to Adam and Eve’s ‘hidden’ location?*” These may seem to be valid questions (at least initially), but they fail to give this passage the attention it deserves.

Let’s consider God’s question for a moment: “***Where are you?***” God might have asked that question because He didn’t know the answer. But the Scriptures tell us that God is omniscient or “all-knowing” (see [Psalm 147:5](#)). So it’s not as if God needed information that He didn’t already possess.

So if God did not ask this question for His own benefit, then why did He ask it? The answer is that God asked this question for *someone else’s* benefit. You see, some questions are not meant to gather information. For instance, the question “where are you” may imply that someone is not where he or she is supposed to be.

Let’s say that someone arranges to meet another person at a later time. If the first person arrives at the designated time and place and the second person isn’t there, what is the first person likely to do? Well, person number one is likely to contact person number two and say, “*Where are you?*” That question stems from the fact that person number two is not where he or she is supposed to be.

In a similar way, “***Where are you?***” told Adam that he was not where he was supposed to be. Remember that human beings were created to enjoy a loving relationship with their Creator (see [Matthew 22:35-38](#)). But Adam and Eve had now distanced themselves from the relationship that God intended for them. In other words, they were no longer in the place with God where they were

supposed to be.

In any event, the answer to God's question comes in verse ten...

“So he said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.'” (Genesis 3:10).

Adam and Eve had no cause to conceal themselves from God prior to their act of disobedience. Now they did. They had no previous reason to feel apprehensive about their relationship with God. Now they had a reason. There was no need for Adam and Eve to feel self-conscious about their appearance prior to the fall. Now there was.

So Adam responded to God with an honest answer, but it wasn't long before the two people involved in this mess began to shift the blame.

“And He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?'” (Genesis 3:11).

So Adam and Eve's choice to disobey God led to consequences that He traced back to the source: ***“Have you eaten fruit from the tree I warned you about?” (TLB)***. As previously mentioned, this question did not provide God with any information that He didn't already possess. Instead, that question was posed for Adam's benefit.

Adam was presented with two alternatives in responding to God's question. He could accept responsibility for his choice or he could choose to respond to God in some other way. Unfortunately, Adam decided to go with option number two...

“Then the man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.'” (Genesis 3:12).

We should note that Adam didn't respond by saying, *“I did something wrong and I take full responsibility for my actions.”* Instead, he first tried to suggest that it was really Eve's fault, and then implied that God was partly to blame as well.

Instead of accepting responsibility for what he had done, this passage tells us that Adam attempted to shift the blame for his act of disobedience to his wife. He then continued by saying, ***“The woman you put here with me...” (NIV, emphasis added)***. That statement implied that God was at least partially accountable for Adam's act of disobedience, since He had elected to present him with a wife.

“And the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'” (Genesis 3:13).

To her credit, Eve answered God's question with greater integrity. She said, *“The serpent led me astray. I was tricked into doing what I did.”* So in her response, Eve put the responsibility where it really belonged: ***“The serpent deceived me...”***

So, having listened to their explanations (which weren't really necessary), God will next address the consequences associated with their decision. But first, He has a message to deliver to the instigator of this catastrophe...

“So the Lord God said to the serpent: 'Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life'” (Genesis 3:14).

As discussed earlier, the serpent of Genesis chapter three is Satan himself, or a creature employed for his purpose. So what caused him to take such action? What could he possibly gain from lying in this manner? Well, based on what we know about Satan from the Biblical Scriptures, there's at least one possibility to consider.

First, we should recognize that the Bible refers to Satan as “...*the god of this world...*” (2 Corinthians 4:4 KJV). Satan acquired that designation through the events that transpired here in Genesis chapter three. Genesis 1:28 tells us that humanity was bestowed with the God-given responsibility to care for His creation. But Satan has now enticed the first human couple to turn from God to follow him instead. That decision separated Adam and Eve from their Creator and subjected them to an alternative leader along with the responsibility that had earlier been entrusted to them.

So what would Satan want with two relatively insignificant human beings on a small planet in a gigantic universe? Well, the answer was less about who these humans were and more about what they could do. You see, these two human beings possessed one capability he lacked; they could reproduce themselves.

Under his guidance and influence, these two human beings could eventually produce untold numbers of other human beings who would conform to the example set by the first human couple in following his lead. And what would that accomplish? Well, we saw the answer to that question earlier in our look at Isaiah chapter fourteen...

“...I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God... I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:13, 14 NIV).

That passage tells us that Satan ultimately seeks a position of authority, power, and worship that is equal to, or greater than God. An army of human beings under his guidance and direction could help achieve that goal. In fact, [Revelation 20:7-9](#) tells us he will attempt to gather such an army in the future. But for any of that to occur, everything would have to start with the first man and woman here in Genesis chapter three.

However, there was one significant flaw in that plan: God wasn't having any of it.

It's interesting to note that when God finally spoke to the serpent in the Garden of Eden, He didn't ask any questions, as He did with Adam and Eve. God didn't call for the serpent to provide an explanation or give his side of the story. There were no discussions, excuses, or debates of any kind. Instead, God rendered an immediate verdict...

“So the Lord God said to the serpent: 'Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life” (Genesis 3:14).

While pigs, sheep, cattle, and other forms of livestock may not be the most dignified animals, they at least possess the ability to stand on their own legs. But God had now executed a sentence that condemned the serpent to live and crawl on the ground in the dust below everything else; even the livestock.

But that wasn't all...

“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15).

The word “enmity” refers to a feeling of hatred or hostility towards someone or something else. ⁽¹⁾ It also conveys a sense of antagonism, dislike, and mutual opposition between two or more people.

Of course, it's easy to understand how a feeling of enmity between the woman and the serpent might develop. Since Eve was a victim of the serpent's deception, it's not difficult to understand why she might harbor an attitude of antagonism and opposition towards him.

But what about that reference to “...*your offspring and her offspring*”? (ESV). What does that allude to? Well, this reference to “your offspring” implies that the serpent will have descendants of some sort. We can understand this to mean that the serpent's offspring will share his attitude towards God.

This “offspring” might include the type of person who wants nothing to do with God, or others who

choose to live as if He didn't exist. It encompasses those who show open hostility toward God and those who are apathetic toward Him. Those who travel such paths are following the same pattern established by the devil here in the Garden of Eden, even if they are not conscious of doing so.

(1) See <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/enmity>

With that, let's consider this reference to the woman's offspring. It's worth noting that this passage from Genesis 3:15 is one of the most significant portions of Scripture in the entire Bible: ***"He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."***

The word "he" tells us that God is speaking of a specific individual who will come through the lineage of the woman. This person will also take a definitive action: ***"...he will crush your head"*** (NIV). In other words, he will ultimately inflict a fatal injury upon the serpent.

However, there is another reference to an action taken by the serpent: ***"...you will strike his heel"*** (NIV). One way to grasp this analogy is to think of it in terms of a prizefight. A fighter with an injured heel may continue to challenge an opponent in the boxing ring. However, a boxer who sustains a traumatic head injury cannot continue the fight.

This illustrates the idea behind ***"...He will crush your head, and you will bruise his heel"*** (GW). The woman's offspring will be wounded (as in, ***"you shall bruise His heel"***), but He will ultimately strike the final blow that permanently ends the fight.

Biblical scholars refer to this portion of Scripture as the *protoevangelium*. The prefix "proto" means "first" as seen in familiar words such as "prototype." The root of "evangelium" is "evangel," a word that means "good news" and forms the basis word like "evangelism." So when taken together, "proto" and "evangelium" represent the first example of the "good news" within the Scriptures.

From a historical perspective, this passage refers to Jesus' ultimate defeat of Satan. In taking on a human nature, Jesus assumed a position where the enemy could strike Him in the form of the cross. But through His death and resurrection, Jesus dealt a crushing blow that permanently ended the conflict between Satan and humanity that began in the Garden of Eden.

"To the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you.'"

There are consequences to every decision, and bad choices usually lead to bad consequences. Those who deliberately choose to engage in behaviors that God says are wrong are likely to reap such consequences. That was the experience of the first human couple here in Genesis 3:16, as God addressed Adam and Eve concerning the repercussions of their sin.

God addresses the woman first, explaining to her that she will experience two consequences. The first will be physical: ***"I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children"*** (ESV). But there would be an emotional consequence as well: ***"Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you"*** (NIV).

In the context of Genesis 3:16, the word "desire" means to desire or long for something. ⁽¹⁾ But what did that mean for Eve? How would she express that yearning and what significance did it hold?

Earlier in Genesis 2:18, we read, ***"The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'"*** The word "suitable" refers to a person who is comparable and equipped to be a fitting partner. That person turned out to be the woman God created in [Genesis 2:21-23](#).

"Your desire will be for your husband..." tells us that Eve will continue to yearn for specific qualities in her husband. It also implies that she would continue to pursue the relationship she enjoyed with him when everything was perfect.

Eve would persist in seeking the companionship that she had previously enjoyed with her husband. But now, things would be different. Her husband would no longer be a partner like he was before. Now he would be a ruler. Her husband would no longer be someone who was suitable as he was before- now he would become someone who would govern her.

(1) H8669 teshuqah Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h8669/kjv/wlc/0-1/>

We should clarify something important from this passage before proceeding any further. Before we interpret this verse as a validation of male dominance, we must remember that God created men and women as equals in His image. As we read earlier in Genesis 1:27, “...**God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them**” (NLT). So God fashioned two distinct yet [equal components of humanity](#), each bearing the divine image, and both formed in the likeness of God.

We should also note that the Scriptures do not endorse this change in Adam and Eve's relationship. While other portions of Genesis declare, “...**God saw that it was good...**”, Genesis 3:16 does not say that it was good or right that “...**he will rule over you.**” Instead, the verse communicates one specific outcome that resulted from Eve's decision to disregard God's warning. Moreover, it signals a significant departure from God's original intent for male/female relationships.

So the consequences of what happened in the Garden of Eden can be seen in male/female relationships that no longer align with God's original design. Men and women often receive less than they desire in such relationships, but there were more ramifications to come.

“Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: 'Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.'”
(Genesis 3:17-19).

Adam was previously responsible for tending the Garden of Eden and caring for it ([Genesis 2:15](#)). That work must have been pleasurable and rewarding for Adam prior to his act of disobedience because now everything had changed: “**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**” (Genesis 3:17 GNB).

There's another aspect of this verse that may be easy to overlook. Notice God's initial statement to Adam: “**Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you...**” So did Adam make a mistake in listening to what his wife had to say? Well, the issue wasn't primarily related to the words she spoke; it was what he did with what he heard.

You see, the problem was not that Adam listened to her; it's that he listened to her. Here's the difference- Adam *listened* to his wife instead of taking the proper course of action. Remember that God had previously cautioned Adam against eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Therefore, Adam should have intervened when the serpent suggested to his wife that she should follow a different course of action.

Adam should have taken steps to address the situation and ensure that both he and his wife followed God's command. Instead of listening to her, he should have taken the initiative to act upon God's command.

Adam's decision to disregard God's warning affected more than just his relationship with his wife. This seemingly inconsequential decision had an effect upon the entire planet, as well as all who followed. For instance, imagine if you were Adam, and you had to live the rest of your life with the memory of

these words: “...***the ground is cursed because of you***” (NLT, *emphasis added*). This reminds us that a decision to disregard God’s Word may lead to consequences that reach further than we ever imagined.

Earlier in our look at Genesis chapter three, we asked several important questions that every thinking person must eventually face. For example, why do so many things appear to have no purpose or meaning in life? Why does it seem as if we work so much but accomplish so little? Why do we invest so much but often get so little back? Well, Genesis 3:19 provides us with answers to some of those questions.

The aftermath of Adam and Eve's disobedience included a continuing cycle of futility that endures to this day. “Futility” means “useless and without purpose,” and Genesis 3:19 tells us how that cycle was manifested in Adam’s life...

- Adam came from the dust.
- He would spend the rest of his life trying to grow things to eat out of the dust in order to survive.
- His work would be difficult and produce a poor return on his investment.
- He would return to that dust following his physical death.
- After his death, Adam’s lifeless body would decay and serve the next generation that was trying to grow things to eat out of the dust.

This cycle of futility was far different from God’s original design for humanity. In the first two chapters of Genesis, we saw life, growth, and progress. Here in Genesis chapter three, we now see death, deterioration, and regression. Everything was now subject to death due to the actions of two individuals. So despite its apparent insignificance, this act had profound consequences that continue to this day.

You see, virtually everyone grasps the underlying truth of Genesis 3:17-19. For instance, we recognize that everything breaks down, wears out, or stops functioning over time. This is true for living beings and immaterial things alike. For instance, batteries run out of power, metallic surfaces rust, buildings suffer structural failures, bridges and roads decay, and all living things eventually die.

These things all follow the same basic cycle Adam brought about when he ignored God’s warning: “...***you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return***” (Genesis 3:19 NIV).

“And Adam called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20).

Until now, Adam’s partner has been called a female ([Genesis 1:27](#)), a helper ([Genesis 2:18](#)), a woman ([Genesis 2:23](#)), and a wife ([Genesis 2:24](#)). Although we have referred to Eve by name several times throughout our study of this chapter, she is never identified as such until Genesis 3:20.

In the original language of this verse, the name Eve means *life giver*. So why would Adam select this name when his wife had no children?

To answer that question, we should remember what God said to the serpent earlier in Genesis chapter three: “...***I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel***” (Genesis 3:15 NIV). The word “he” in this passage (as in “he will crush your head”) tells us that God was speaking of one specific individual.

That Person would eventually come through the lineage of the woman Satan deceived. That individual would also take a specific action: “...***he will crush your head.***” In other words, He would ultimately inflict a fatal injury upon the serpent.

So by referring to his wife as “life-giver,” it appears that Adam recognized the significance of what God said in Genesis 3:15. Even though Adam and Eve would eventually die because of what they had

done, humanity would continue through his wife's offspring. This name also expressed Adam's belief that God would make good on His promise to send One who would eventually crush the serpent and fix what he had done wrong.

“Also for Adam and his wife the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21).

There is always a price to pay when we ignore God and do something wrong. We see the first example of that price here in Genesis chapter three. Genesis 3:21 tells us that “...***the Lord God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife***” (NLT). This particular type of clothing suggests something of great importance.

If Adam and Eve were given animal skins to wear, then it means that whatever was originally wearing that skin wasn't wearing it any longer. So Genesis 3:21 tells us that something had to sacrifice its life so they could be clothed.

Remember that God warned Adam about the death penalty that would arise if he disregarded God's warning (see [Genesis 2:16-17](#)). Now that penalty was executed in the death of an innocent animal to cover the effects of their sin. Later, we'll see the death of an innocent Person whose death would pay for their sins, along with the sins of those who followed.

This simple act of making clothes for Adam and Eve should tell us much about the character of God. God could have obliterated Adam and Eve for what they had done, but He declined to do so. Instead, He chose to make clothes for them.

God obviously knew that things would be difficult for Adam and Eve going forward, for their sin would lead to their eventual exile from the Garden of Eden. But before He sent them out into the world, God graciously provided them with clothing that would allow them to survive outside the protected environment of the Garden. Fig leaf clothing would be insufficient for life outside the Garden; God knew that Adam and Eve needed something better, and He made certain to provide it for them.

“Then the Lord God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil...'” (Genesis 3:22a).

Genesis 3:22 quotes “***the LORD God***” in saying, “***The man has now become like one of us...***” (emphasis added). This use of these singular and plural forms offers further insight into the nature of God.

Earlier, we spent some time looking at the phrase “LORD God” as found within the Scriptures. For example, the word translated “God” here in this verse is the Hebrew word *Elohim*. *Elohim* is a two-part word; the first part, “*El*” means “*strong, great or mighty*.” The “*im*” portion indicates a plural quantity. However, the Scriptures use *Elohim* singularly when speaking of God.

Ordinarily, this might seem to be an inconsistency unless we acknowledge that God is one in *substance* (or essence) and one or more in *persons*. This also explains how the LORD God (singular) can say that the man has now become like one of us (plural).

So Adam and Eve had become “like God” in the sense that they now had direct knowledge and experience with good and evil. This means there was an element of truth in what the serpent told the woman earlier: “***You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil***” (Genesis 3:4-5).

Of course, it's one thing to know about right and wrong as an idea or a concept; it's something very different to know about right and wrong through personal experience. Through their disobedience, Adam and Eve became aware of good and evil in a way they hadn't known before.

“Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever’— therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken” (Genesis 3:23-24).

What prompted God’s concern regarding Adam and this tree of life? Well, consider God’s earlier warning to Adam regarding the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil: “...***you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die***” (Genesis 2:17). We’ve already witnessed one aspect of that death in Adam and Eve’s separation from God.

But what if Adam and Eve were to eat from this Tree of Life and achieve physical immortality? That would lead to eternal separation from their Creator in a physical body that would likely grow old, but never die.

So in saying, “***He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever...***” (NIV), God delivered these first human beings from an eternity of separation from Him. Despite their estrangement, this gracious gesture showed that God did not intend for humanity to remain in that state forever.

“So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life” (Genesis 3:24).

So Adam and Eve lost the paradise of Eden and were barred from returning. Nevertheless, we might wonder if it is possible for modern-day archaeologists to discover the place where the Garden of Eden once existed.

Well, the answer is probably not. For instance, the earth’s topography was heavily impacted by the great flood that will occur later in Genesis chapter seven. It seems highly unlikely that the Garden of Eden could have survived the devastating effects of that event, at least not in the form that Adam and Eve knew it.

But even if the Garden of Eden was unaffected by the flood, it was certainly influenced by the deteriorating effects of the fall. The chances seem good that the Garden eventually began to break down and decay, just like everything else that surrounded it. So even if the Garden of Eden survived to our present day, it would probably be unrecognizable from the remaining landscape.