

GENESIS 3 – DON'T HIDE!

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

- Music changes! Genesis 3 introduces “the serpent” – not a god like the Lord, but a creature
- Deliberately given little info – not named (here), and very little said about him even elsewhere in Scripture
- The focus is not on the devil, but on mankind’s response
- Did God create evil?
 - No – not Star Wars – “balance in the force”! Dark is the absence of light.
 - But what about creating the choice for us to reject him?
 - God is better than us! The life he invites us into, the adventure he wants us to live in, is dependence on him! For that to be the wonderful experience it is intended to be, we need to have the option to choose independence. To experience God’s amazing trustworthiness, we need to have the choice not to trust – a bit like taking someone water-skiing and giving them a rope to hold:
- The slide into sin: doubting God’s words → doubting God’s goodness → forgetting the story (reality) → rebellion
- Doubting God’s words:
 - The questioning sounds innocent, but isn’t – it deliberately twists God’s words and misrepresents him
 - The answer shows that the question has worked – Eve’s response is devoid of God’s generosity (any / freely), and displays some signs of resentment / fear (don’t touch)
 - God’s motivation questioned: is God really for me? Is he really good?

Imagine being out on a lake, water-skiing. The tempter comes up alongside us disguised as a water-ski coach: tanned, muscular, the words “No fear” printed on his swim trunks. “Hey, how’s it going?” he says. “Do you like the boat driver? He says you have to hang on to the rope. Ever asked why? You do not see him hanging onto a rope, do you? Are you sure you can trust him? Nice enough guy. But can you trust him? Like, does he really care that you get the best ride possible? The first time he sees you really enjoying yourself, he will dump you. Besides, I am here to tell you that you do not need the rope. In fact, you do not need the boat!”¹

- Eve forgets the story – the fixed anchor at the start of reality: she is created by a good and loving God, to experience his goodness and the goodness of his creation, to live as a creature under her Creator.
- She forgets God’s generosity: she opts for her own story, in which she is the centre of her universe, and God is keeping something from her.
 - This is the first sin – not the taking of the fruit. It is the point where she moves from a place of total trust in God’s goodness to believing that he is somehow out to limit her.

The story also reveals the nature of sin. Sin is not just disobedience. Sin is not just rebellion. Sin is not just ungodly deeds. At its root, sin is unbelief. Sin is not believing that God is as good as he says he is. Every particular sin is but the fruit of the prior sin of unbelief.

Why do we steal? Because we no longer believe God can or will take care of us, so we think we have to take matters into our own hands. Why do we lie? Because we no longer trust God to take care of us, so we take matters into our own hands.

Every act of sin is therefore an insult to the character of God: “Sorry God, but this time you cannot be trusted, so I will have to be god right now.”²

- Where’s Adam?
 - He received the command – seemingly not Eve
 - She was the one originally tempted by the serpent
 - Adam abdicates responsibility even before they eat

¹ Darrell Johnson, *The Story of All Stories*, p 68

² *ibid*

THE EFFECTS OF SIN

- The serpent's promise proves empty. "You will become like God" – not true. God is morally independent, and lives unselfishly in **generous independence**, using his knowledge and power to create and bless – see previous chapters. We become self-centred and live in **selfish independence**, which proves to have none of the benefits of independence. We don't become more like God, but less. **We were made to worship.**
- A note on wisdom: Eve thinks that knowing good and evil is "desirable for wisdom", but she misunderstands wisdom. Knowledge and experience alone are **not** wisdom. What is wisdom? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."
- There are things in every culture that we think are wisdom, and we set out to achieve them – but in so doing we seek to be morally independent of God.
- "Fear of the Lord" speaks of a right kind of fear: an awe, an honouring, a right understanding of the place of Creator and creature – beautifully illustrated in *The Horse and His Boy* with Hwin.
- Sin causes a different kind of fear: self-defensive, self-protective fear.
 - Sin robs us of the **sweetness** of the presence of God – it becomes a terror
- Shame then prevents Adam and Eve from coming close to the God who can restore them.
- So – don't hide!
 - 1 John 1:6-7 – "if we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."
 - If you are tempted at the moment, renew your mind – remind yourself of the true story! We are made by a loving, good Creator, to enjoy a good world, and to enjoy right relationship with God.
 - But if you are caught in sin, whether it's an obvious "vice" like alcohol addiction or pornography, or a less obvious one like judging others or having a critical spirit, don't hide – not from God, and not from people.
 - Come and be healed, come and be restored.

THE MERCY OF JUDGMENT

- What gets cursed? Ground, snake, but not humanity. Work is harder – things that were made to be a glorious part of our identity become harder, but not cursed.
- Male-female relationships suffer, and take on a new form:
 - Whatever we make of headship prior to the fall, and of the order of creation, this new expression is fallen
 - Domineering ("he will rule") / manipulating ("your desire will be for your husband")
- Can judgment be good?
 - We think – "poor Adam & Eve, destined to die for one little sin". Actually, death brings hope.
 - A bit like bankruptcy – be free of past debt, stop racking up more; painful and costly, but the only way out.

"What some people say on earth is that the final loss of one soul gives the lie to all the joy of those who are saved."

"Ye see it does not."

"I feel in a way that it ought to."

"That sounds very merciful: but see what lurks behind it."

"What?"

"The demand of the loveless and the self-imprisoned that they should be allowed to blackmail the universe: that till they consent to be happy (on their own terms) no one else shall taste joy: that theirs should be the final power; that Hell should be able to veto Heaven."³

- God's grace in the midst of it: "Evil will come of that evil, but I will see to it that the worst falls upon myself." (Aslan)
- Hope:
 - You will strike at his heel but he will crush your head – foretelling Christ's victory.
 - Clothes of skin – God making allowance for the effect of our sin.
 - Cherubim – from Gen 3 onwards always the guardians of God's glory, keeping us from drawing close – on the tabernacle coverings, wings above the altar, embroidered on the curtain of the Holy of Holies. Rent in two at Jesus's death.

³ C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*