

Life's Big Questions

Part 6 – What went wrong?

Genesis 3

Genesis chapter three records the most tragic event in human history. It is the account of man's first transgression; his fall into sin. When God created man and placed him in the garden there was one prohibition placed upon him. "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 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).

What was the purpose of that command? Why did paradise require a prohibition?

It is because the man and woman, having been given dominion over the rest of the earth, needed to be trained in how to properly relate to their Creator lest they begin to suspect that they were God.



They needed to be trained to understand that their proper relation to God was as creature to Creator, servant to Lord, earthly child to Heavenly Father. So God gave them a boundary in order to train them in this necessary relationship. The forbidden tree represented a kind of moral authority that belonged only to God. They were never meant to be the makers of their own morality. Rather they were to look to God as their moral authority. They were to embrace with gratitude the boundaries of protection and flourishing he had raised for them.

Instead the man and woman reached to have the one thing God had forbidden. They sought to be like God in a way that was not possible for them. At the heart of sin is this ancient drive to have what cannot be attained; to defy God-given boundaries; to be one's own God.

Main Idea: Through the sin of Adam all humanity bears the guilt and tragic consequences of rebellion against God.

1. Sin is lawlessness. (Vv. 1-6)

Genesis 3:6 – "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

- Sin is fundamentally lawlessness. It is deliberate rebellion against the law of God. This matters at least in part so that we do not reduce sin to merely its negative effects on us. Certainly sin yields terrible consequences upon God's image-bearers. It leaves us broken physically, emotionally, and spiritually. But before we can properly appreciate sin's consequences we must first understand its nature.

a) A misleading question (vs. 1)

b) A flawed answer (vv. 2-3)

c) A direct contradiction (vs. 4)

d) A vile accusation (vs. 5)

2. Sin always produces shame. (Vv. 6-7)

Genesis 3:7 – “Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.”

- Whereas once the man and woman had complete freedom to be entirely vulnerable before God and each other, they now hid from each other. Their innocence was replaced by shame.
- Their shame is appropriate and objective. It is the consequence of their guilt. Therefore they respond by trying to cover their shame with their own means. But they find out that their own efforts to deal adequately with their shame will not be sufficient. The fig leaf righteousness of man’s efforts can never cover the comprehensive shame of sin.

3. Sin breaks fellowship. (Vv. 8-13)

Genesis 3:8 – “And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

- For the first time the man and woman hid from God. The fellowship they once shared with God was severed. But not only that. Their fellowship with each other was marred. When asked to give an answer for his rebellion Adam places blame on the woman and, by extension God: “the woman you gave me...”

4. Sin brings death. (Vv. 14-24)

Genesis 3:24 – “He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”

- Because of their rebellion against God the man and woman were cut off from the tree of life. It was at that moment when decay and death entered the created order. Their access to the tree of life is removed. Since that time man has had to live with the bitter fruit of his own sin.
- But God was gracious. He preserved their lives and promised their ultimate redemption.
- The only hope for the sons and daughters of the first Adam is the person and work of the Second Adam. Where the first Adam failed, the Second Adam succeeded. Where the first Adam died as a consequence of his sin, the Second Adam died in the place of sinners. “But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many” (Romans 5:15).

*So simple an act; so hard its undoing. God will taste poverty and death before
take and eat become verbs of salvation.*

- Derek Kidner