Genesis 3

As has been mentioned, Genesis is a greek word meaning "beginning," and the whole book of Genesis is basically setting up and introducing us to the plot, the setting, the characters, the fundamentals- of the rest of the Biblical narrative. There's a lot of details missing, but the basic idea is to introduce to us as the reader the basic framework that explains not only the rest of the Biblical story, but introduces us to the basic framework from which to understand why things are like they are *today*. And chapter 3, which we'll be studying this morning, is a super critical chapter in this Biblical framework introduction. There's so much that is set up in this single chapter, so much contained here in these verses that I had a really hard time nailing down an appropriate focal point title, so I went with the title of… *Genesis 3.* That's good, right? Probably a lot of your Bibles have a title something to the effect of "The Fall," or the "Fall of Mankind," and yeah, that pretty much sums it up, but there's so much more to gather from this passage, let's go ahead and just dive into it, look at **Verses 1-3** with me…

Ok, first of all, notice the phrase "the LORD God" in verse 1. This is a phrase that was first introduced to us back in chapter 2. The Hebrew words there are Yahweh Elohim. As I mentioned a few Sundays ago, Elohim is the name given to God, but it's actually a plural word that is also elsewhere translated as "gods" with a lower case "g," and thus this title *Yahweh* Elohim, seems to imply that there is a distinct God amongst the gods, an El amongst the other Elohim, the one who created all others, and His name is Yahweh. Yahweh Elohim- the *LORD* God, the God of gods, the Ruler of rulers, the King of kings, the Lord of lords. In the New Testament there is yet another name we learn of who is described in these same terms- any guesses as to who that is? *Jesus!*

And here we are introduced to one of the animals, the serpent, and it seems perhaps that talking animals was a normal thing at this time? I mean, we really don't know for sure- there doesn't seem to be any surprise from the woman, she just interacts like this is a normal conversation- but that also seems to be the same type case when we later read the story of Balaam in Numbers 22, when God causes a donkey to speak- Balaam just interacts like it's no big deal to have a conversation with a donkey. And then another thing we don't really know for sure, a subject that has been debated for almost 2,000 years, is the relationship between Satan the deceiver and the animal known as the snake. We at least have the connection that is mentioned in the book of Revelation- Revelation chapter 12 and chapter 20 both say that the dragon is the "serpent of old" who is the devil and Satan. **(Rev. 12:9, 20:2)** So these two passages in Revelation are the scriptures that tell us Satan, the devil, is somehow involved in this serpent scene, but the questions that are debated are in regard to if Satan temporarily possessed a literal snake, or if he just took on the *appearance* of a snake, or if rather the word "snake" is to be taken more figuratively/symbolically- and the reality is- we just don't know, we're not given that information here.

But what we *do* know, is that the woman here is questioned concerning what God had previously said. And the vibe that the language delivers is kind of like "Psst… did God say you couldn't eat from *any* of these trees? That's insane!" We previously read in chapter 2 verses 16 and 17 that God had actually said mankind *could* eat from *any* of the trees, they could eat from ALL the trees in the garden- *except* for just 1. The question is kind of like asking a 16 year old who just got their drivers license, "Are you really not allowed to go 55 mph per hour *anywhere*?" And the answer is: of course you can, you *can* go 55 mph pretty much *anywhere* except for within city limits and populated areas.

And notice that the response from the woman doesn't include the word "God" in verse 2, when all the trees that *could* be eaten from are mentioned, but God's name IS mentioned in verse 3 describing what *couldn't* be done. It almost gives the vibe of "We can do anything we want, but God, the mean one, won't let us do *this* thing." Instead of attributing to God the positive good things of being able to eat from 99 out of the 100 types of fruit trees, the one bad thing, the one prohibition, is what is directly attributed to God. We probably do the same type of thing unfortunately- I know I've been guilty of this- we have all these things that we could be thankful to God for, but instead we're frustrated with Him over this one thing that's not going like we want it to. Anyone else willing to admit they've done that before too? Along these same lines of negativity and disrespect, notice too that she doesn't say the LORD God here, it's not Yahweh Elohim, but rather just Elohim- God, "Elohim said"- so maybe there's a hint of rebellion or irreverence for the positional authority of Yahweh here as well.

It might be worth mentioning too in verse 3 that she adds to what God had originally said- she says God had said not to touch it, which according to what chapter 2 records, it doesn't look like God had said that- but perhaps that was something the first man and woman *added* for themselves to help them keep what God had originally said. Now, it's probably debatable on whether that's a general good thing to do or not, but it is worth noting that this *is* what ended up happening through the course of history, even up until today, that mankind came up with rules for keeping the rules that help you keep the rules. In modern-day Judaism, the Talmud is the central book that is studied, and the majority of what is contained in it is what Rabbis have said to do in order to fulfill the Law of Moses. And of course even in our own governments, for better or worse, this seems to be at least the American human nature evolution, that as time moves forward, there is generally more regulation, more rules created, to "help us" follow the original rules declared in the U.S. Constitution. **Verses 4 and 5…**

The serpent first asked a question seemingly to illicit some doubt, but now the serpent just flat out lies and tells her that she won't die. The serpent wants for the woman to feel like the LORD God is hiding something from her, acting like it is actually the LORD God who is a deceiver, who would be jealous of someone else having something that He and the other Elohim possess; but there is also a little bit of truth mixed in there as well- she would become "like God" in that she would "know" good and evil- unfortunately she would gain this "knowledge" through having to *experience* evil, instead of, up until this point having only experienced good in her life. This tactic of mixing a lie with some truth seems to be the standard method of operation for Satan that we see throughout the Bible, and that we still see even today. Temptations, false religions, false theology typically all have in common a mix of lie and truth- if there was no truth mixed in and these things were presented to us in obvious, pure falsehoods- then we all would easily recognize the lies for what they are, and no one would ever be deceived. It absolutely grieves my heart when I read a book from a Christian author, who is attempting to defend a certain theological position, and a lot of the argument is based in truth, supported with scripture, but then there are several other verses completely ignored, and then there is mixed in verses taken out of context that thus serve as the linch pins in supporting an incorrect, unbiblical, theological position. In like manner, it grieves my heart when I hear someone justify something wrong they're doing, with a truth such as "God wants me to be happy." Yes, that is truth, ultimately God wants joy, peace, blessing, happiness, contentment for you- but that truth doesn't allow for the disregarding of verses that say God is not pleased with adultery, or gluttony, or whatever. There is a constant battle for our minds, and we each need to get into the habit of recognizing where lies are getting mixed into the truth we believe. We need to be alert to separate out lie from truth, and take every thought captive to the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. **Verses 6-7…**

Verse 6 seems to define pretty well what we now know to be programmed into human nature- she saw that the fruit appeared good for food- in other words good for her body, good for her physical needs; it was attractive to her eyes, entertaining to look at; and it could give her something to level up, it could elevate her, make her wise. These are the same categories that draw our attention- things that will, or that we think will- make our bodies feel good, things we desire because of their attractiveness, things that can give us a leg up- those all speak directly to our human nature. Now, at this point it's worth mentioning that these things are *not,* of themselves, bad things. We've already seen that man and woman were created different than the rest of creation- God's intent was for them to indeed be like Him and experience good things. So the serpent saying that she would become like God- well, perhaps she should have realized that she was *already* like God in the ways that were appropriate, but at the very least it's not a bad thing for a human to want to be like God- since that was God's intent, in some way, from the very beginning. And it's not bad to experience things that make our bodies feel good, to eat good food, to admire things of beauty, to seek wisdom- no, these are all good things. The problem here, and the problem we also encounter in today's day, is when we seek to be like God, or to satisfy cravings, or admire beauty, or seek to level up- in ways that God has deemed inappropriate. God wanted these good things for mankind, God wants these good things for us- but we are to pursue these things within *His* boundaries. Within right relationship with God, these are all great things. Seeking these things outside of right relationship with God, apart from Him- will ultimately end up harming us.

Now, in the woman's defense, this was probably the first lie she had ever heard. Typically, from birth, our minds are programmed to believe every statement is true, until we learn through *experience* that not every statement is true. It's easy for us to read this now and think, I would have seen through this deception, but the reality is, without

having any experience with falsehood, we would have all done the same thing here in this situation.

And many have pointed out Adam's role in this, was he there present with her when the serpent came and he was just passive and went along with it? Was he *not* there present with her, and if not, what was he doing- where was he; and did he not give any hesitation or ask any questions when she came and gave the fruit to him? Others have pointed out too that this story gives us a little insight into some general pitfalls of men and women- men can have a tendency to be more passive than we should be, and women can be a bit more emotional, eager, excitable than men.

But both of them end up eating the fruit, both of them make the conscious decision to disobey God, and in that moment everything changes. As we'll see in the verses that follow- shame, fear, guilt now enters the world of these first humans. That's kind of a terrifying thought. Does mankind's choice today to obey or disobey God, also alter the physical world we live in, in such drastic ways?

On a side note, there's another debate that has existed maybe not for 2000 years, but at least for hundreds of years concerning God's sovereignty verses man's free will. And people attempt to defend viewpoints that lean a little more towards *God* choosing what happens in this life and in the life to come, and then there are others who lean a little more towards *mankind* choosing what happens in this life and in the life to come. Now what's interesting about this whole debate is that these two sides are in fact *the very dynamic* that the Bible sets up for the story line from the very beginning. Almighty, Sovereign God who creates everything, who can cause anything to happen using His words alone- forms mankind who He gives freewill to and then limits His hand in controlling outcomes. That's the whole plot from the beginning! There doesn't need to be an argument or choice between these two camps-

both of them existing together is exactly the entire plot of the whole Bible. God is Sovereign; and He has given man the freedom of choice. That's how Genesis sets it up, and that dynamic and tension is consistent through every verse that follows. **Verses 8-13…**

So after eating of the fruit, the man and woman feel ashamed of their nakedness- they feel exposed, and they attempt to cover themselves, as if realizing that all of creation is looking at them with condemning eyes because of what they did- but then when they hear the LORD God walking nearby they go deeper into covering themselves, to the point of hiding from God. Of course God knows where they are, but He asks the question "Where are you?" Why does God ask that question when He already knows the answer? Well, again, we have to remember that Genesis is setting up for us the plot, the characters, the setting, the dynamics- all the fundamentals in order for us to understand the rest of scripture, and I think what is already being set up here is the idea of *repentance*. God knows what they did, where they are, what has happened- but He is aiming for *them* to admit it. God's giving them prompts, so that they can realize and admit what has happened, confess it, come clean- and is that what happens? Well, not exactly. We get a small part of the story in verse 10- Adam says he was hiding because he was afraid and because he was naked, but he refrains from mentioning what he had done, and he doesn't even directly answer the question of "where." He's still trying to hide, and not give all the details. So God asks Adam further questions in an attempt to get him to fully come clean- He asks who told him that he was naked, and had he eaten from the forbidden tree. Adam avoids answering the "who told you you were naked part," but then *does* admit to eating the fruit, but does so in a way that attempts to cast blame on the woman instead of taking responsibility himself. The way he answers even seems to cast a little blame on God- "the woman You gave me God…" We probably are tempted to react in the same way at times- God I'm struggling with this because this is the way *You* made me, this is the

career *You* gave me, this is the spouse *You* led me to, this is the child *You* gave me- we wrongfully put God on the hook for areas *we're* not handling well.

After Adam somewhat grudgingly admits his disobedience, God then turns to the woman and asks *her* a question in order to prompt *her* coming clean. Like Adam, she admits she ate, but *like Adam*, she does so only after passing the blame to someone else. Adam basically says it's the woman's fault, and the woman basically says it's the serpent's fault. We, for sure, are prone to do this as well. It's programmed into our DNA to blame someone else rather than admit our own weaknesses and wrongdoing. But I don't think that's what God wants for us. God's questions here, and what we see from the rest of scripture, is that God wants us to repent, to confess, take responsibility, and make right the things we have done wrong.

Now, I had never thought about this until this week- but I'm kind of curious if Adam and Eve had come fully clean and had a sincere, real repentance moment, admitting their wrongdoing, asking God for forgiveness- maybe He would have given them a second chance, and they wouldn't have received the consequences that we're about to read about? I don't know, I mean that is the type of character of God we see displayed throughout the rest of the story (extreme grace to the repentant)- but either way, that was *not* the posture of the first man and the first woman, and what we see in response from the character of God not only here, but also in all the pages that follow, is that God does not look favorable towards rebellion against Him; and He definitely does not look favorable towards those who are unrepentant, or disrespectful, or calloused against Him. He wants to dwell with mankind that He has created- that was His goal from the beginning and that is *still* His goal, but He is perfect and will not dwell with those who set themselves against Him, nor will he allow those who want to live for Him and with Him to be jeopardized by those who *don't* want to live for Him and with

Him. So in the verses that follow, the next concept that is presented to us in order for us to understand the rest of the Bible and to understand the world we live in today, is the concept that there are consequences for actions in this world. **verses 14-19…**

So the Serpent looses it's legs, arms, wings- we don't know what all it had beforehand, but the serpent would now be marked as an animal that slithers on it's belly, and verse 15 tells us there would no longer be friendly interaction between snakes and mankind as it seems there once was, rather they would become enemies, and the descendants of each- that word "offspring" and "Descendant" are both really just the Hebrew word for *seed*- it's the same word used previously in chapter 1 for describing the plants each yielding seed according to their kind; and the general idea is that the descendants of snakes and the descendants of the first humans would not be friends. But many Christians throughout history have believed this verse ultimately points to a seed of mankind (Jesus) who will be bruised by this particular Satan Serpent (crucified on the cross), but will end up bruising to death the Satan Serpent (Revelation chapter 20 Lake of Fire). Here we see a foreshadowing of Jesus, the one who would come to end the deceiver and reverse the effects of mankind's sin.

The resulting consequence of disobedience for the woman is that she would experience pain through the childbirth experience, and that man would rule over her. Now, Pastor Dave made it very clear last Sunday that the idea of a Christian husband is NOT one who dominates over his wife. What we have to consider after reading this verse is that God seems to have shown mercy after these pronouncements- by the time we get to the New Testament- this idea seems to have been redeemed from "rules" to "roles." The New Testament is filled with language stating that the husband has the *role* of leading, and in that role of leading, he is to love His wife as Christ loved the church and gave His life for her. (Ephesians 5:25)

Now, there's a 3rd consequence that I didn't mention- verse 16 says that woman's desire will be "for" her husband. What's really tricky about this is the Hebrew word for "for" here, is a word that can mean "for," as in towards, in favor of; or… it can actually also meant "contrary," or "against," and which way it goes can only be determined by the context- to which we don't really have a lot to go off of here. The ESV Bible, which is a great, literal, word for word translation comparable to the NASB Bible that we read here on Sundays- it actually reads "Your desire shall be *contrary* to your husband, but he shall rule over you." When I first read that translation, it kind of made me mad. I didn't like it. But, with what little context we have, that reading actually sounds a little bit more like a negative consequence than "your desire will be *for* your husband," and it actually seems to be more the reality that we live in- men and women see, process, work through, feel through things- often in extremely different, *contrary* ways. The result of this moment in history, seems to have implanted within mankind an inherent rub between man and woman. Now again, when we keep reading, we later see that a huge part of Jesus Christ's mission in coming to earth, dying on the cross, resurrecting from the dead- is redeeming this very moment. Jesus initiates what will end up fully breaking this curse upon the world. And a large portion of the New Testament speaks towards living life in such a way that demonstrates to the world that Jesus is the redemption, the rescuer, for what happened here in Genesis 3- and as a result, His followers are to attempt to display in their marriage relationships unity, love, humility, submission to one another that forecasts some of the Kingdom dynamics that will one day exist in the New Paradise, instead of displaying the dynamics of this world that currently exist as a result of what happened here in Genesis 3.

For the man, as Pastor Dave mentioned last week, there had always been work- man was created to accomplish things, but now *that* work would become more difficult. Instead of walking around in a tropical garden paradise picking food from different trees, man would

now have to grow plants on his own, in a field, sweating… until his death. Here in verse 19 man and woman learn that they will indeed die, that they were totally lied to by the serpent- they learn here that their physical bodies will return to dust. It's directed to the man, but the same principle applies to the woman. And there's an interesting poetic Hebrew nuance here that we don't pick up on in English- the word used for *man* in all these chapters is "adam" (from which we get the name Adam)- anytime you see the word "man" here in these 3 chapters, it's the Hebrew word "adam." Sometimes it says the man, sometimes it says "Adam," but in Hebrew, it's the same word. And then anytime we read the word ground, or earth in these 3 chapters, the Hebrew word is "adamah." It's actually the same word as Adam, but just the feminine form of it. It's like Buena and Bueno in Spanish. They both are the same exact word, they both mean good, Buena is just a feminine version and Bueno is the masculine. Adam and adamah. So basically what we have been told so far, from chapter 1 up to verse 19 of chapter 3, is that Adam was formed from the adamah, Adam was the caretaker of the adamah, but the consequence for disobedience would be that Adam's adamah would be cursed, that Adam's adamah work would be difficult, and that Adam would die in the adamah. His name is directly associated with his origins, his responsibility, the curse, the toil of living, and the place he would never escape from. That sounds horrible, right? It makes me think of what Paul says in **Romans chapter 7**, he says "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? **25** Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Paul nails it, Jesus is the answer, Jesus is the rescuer, Jesus is the curse breaker- the one who sets Adam free from the chains of the cursed adamah. **Verses 20 and 21…**

Eve, or Khawwah in Hebrew, means life giver. And in verse 21 we see yet another affect of Adam and Eve's disobedience. God, in His care for mankind, made clothes to cover Adam and Eve- but these clothes were made not from leaves, but from *skins*. In other words,

animals died in order to cover the shame of mankind. The sin that had made them feel exposed, embarrassed- the sin that made them feel like they needed to hide, and cover themselves up- was addressed by the sacrifice of another life. Here we have the basic message of the Gospel of Jesus- who serves as the ultimate, final sacrifice- who serves as the covering over our sin, guilt, shame, exposure, and embarrassment. OK, last 3 verses… **(v22-24)**

Again here is presented the idea that Yahweh Elohim is amongst other Elohim, and its seems an act of mercy that He would send mankind away from the tree of life, so that no one who has been corrupted by sin would make that corruption permanent and eternal by eating from it. A little bit of hope is foreshadowed here- the Garden is not destroyed, mankind is not destroyed, there's a chance that mankind could change, could possibly be allowed back in to the garden of God's presence. But, for the time being, mankind is expelled from the Garden of Eden. Instead of just caring for and tending to a beautiful garden paradise already created, mankind now has to cultivate and create from scratch his own attempts of a garden. And Yahweh Elohim places other Elohim creatures- Cherubim- along with a flaming sword, to guard the entrance to the garden.

Now, on a quick note- I've stated that Yahweh Elohim, the LORD God, is the ultimate supreme creator being, who seems to be surrounded by other Elohim- spiritual, godly type beings. Cherubim would fit under this category of general Elohim, as well as Seraphim, as well as the Malakhim, which is translated to us in English as *angels*. These different Elohim are described in different places throughout the Bible, and they seem to have different roles, purposes, and appearances. Cherubim seem to be described as guardians, the Seraphim as fiery attendants to God's throne, and the Malakhim (angels) as messengers to mankind as well as spiritual warriors. And then we're also presented in scripture with the term "the Angel of the

Lord," and a lot of scholars present the case that this term could quite possibly be describing God Himself appearing in human form- Jesus.

Now, as I mentioned, there's a little bit of hope foreshadowed here in this account, but over all, this chapter pretty much ends on a depressing note, right? We *do* want to absorb the heaviness and significance of what took place here in Genesis 3, but throughout our study in Genesis we want to be placing our focus on the work of Jesus that would be coming. Again, this book is setting up for us the very fundamentals of the Gospel, it is describing to us why the world is the way it is, and as we saw in the book of Revelation, and as Pastor Dave pointed out over the past 2 Sundays- the story doesn't end here. The rest of the Bible describes God's work that took place and is taking place in order to get the world back to how it was *before* Genesis 3, when Almighty Sovereign God lived with mankind, who was free and living unashamedly in a bountiful paradise garden. That day of re-creation is coming because of Yahweh Elohim's work through Jesus Christ. **1 Corinthians 15:21-22** says this: "For since by a man [Adam] death *came*, by a Man [Jesus Christ] also *came* the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive."

That access to Christ, who grants access to the new paradise, is available though our belief in Him and our attitude of humble repentance before Him. Let's not be like Adam and Eve, let's not be deceived by lies, let's not blame others, let's not blame God; but let's live life taking responsibility for our actions, thankful for all God has given us, pursuing good things within His boundaries, living in obedience, and fully placing our trust in Jesus Christ who has provided covering for us and who will restore us to face to face fellowship with our Sovereign Creator.