

Genesis

Chapter 3



**Michael Fronczak
Bible Study Resource Center
564 Schaeffer Dr.
Coldwater, Michigan 49036**

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Genesis Chapter 3

The third chapter in Genesis is one of the most important in all the Word of God. What has often been said of Genesis as a whole is peculiarly true of this chapter: it is the “seedplot of the Bible.” Here are the foundations upon which rest many of the cardinal doctrines of our faith. Here we trace back to their source many of the rivers of divine truth. Here commences the great drama which is being enacted on the stage of human history, and which wellnigh six thousand years has not yet completed. Here we find the Divine explanation of the present fallen and ruined condition of our race. Here we learn of the subtle devices of our enemy, the Devil. Here we behold the utter powerlessness of man to walk in the path of righteousness when divine grace is withheld from him. Here we discover the spiritual effects of sin—man seeking to flee from God. Here we discern the attitude of God toward the guilty sinner. Here we mark the universal tendency of human nature to cover its own moral shame by a device of man’s own handiwork. Here we are taught of the gracious provision which God has made to meet our great need. Here begins that marvelous stream of prophecy which runs all through the Holy Scriptures. Here we learn that man cannot approach God except through a mediator. To some of these deeply important subjects we shall now give our attention.

The divine record of the Fall of man is an unequivocal refutation of the Darwinian hypothesis of evolution. Instead of teaching that man began at the bottom of the moral ladder and is now slowly but surely climbing heavenwards, it declares that man began at the top and fell to the bottom. Moreover, it emphatically repudiates the modern theory about Heredity and Environment. During the last fifty years socialistic philosophers have taught that all the ills to which man is heir are solely attributable to heredity and environment. This conception is an attempt to deny that man is a fallen creature and at heart desperately wicked. We are told that if legislators will only make possible a perfect environment, man will then be able to realize his ideals and heredity will be purified. But man has already been tested under the most favorable conditions and was found wanting. With no evil heredity behind them, our first parents were placed in the fairest imaginable environment, an environment which God Himself pronounced “very good.” Only a single restriction was placed upon their liberty, but they failed and fell. The trouble with man is not external but internal. What he needs most is not a new berth, but a new birth.¹

McGee: We come now to what some consider to be the most important chapter of the Bible. It is conceded, I believe, by all conservative expositors to be just that. Dr. Griffith Thomas called chapter 3 the pivot of the Bible. If you doubt that, read chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis, omit chapter 3, and then read chapters 4–11. You will find that there is a tremendous vacuum that needs to be filled, that something has happened. For instance, in Genesis 1 and 2, we find man in innocence; everything is perfection, and there is fellowship between God and man. But the minute you begin with chapter 4 of Genesis and read just as far as chapter 11, you find jealousy, anger, murder, lying, wickedness,

¹Pink, A. W. (2005). *Gleanings in Genesis* (33). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

corruption, rebellion, and judgment. The question is: Where did it all come from? Where did it begin? Where did the sin originate? Actually, I do not think it originated in chapter 3 of Genesis, but as far as man is concerned, here is where it began.

Let me quote for you the statement of another concerning chapter 3: "Here we trace back to their source many of the rivers of divine truth. Here commences the great drama which is being enacted on the stage of human history and which well nigh 6,000 years has not yet completed. Here we find the divine explanation of the present fallen and ruined condition of our race. Here we learn of the subtle devices of our enemy, the devil. Here we behold the utter powerlessness of man to walk in the path of righteousness when divine grace is withheld from him. Here we discover the spiritual effects of sin, man seeking to flee from God. Here we discern the attitude of God toward the guilty sinner. Here we mark the universal tendency of human nature to cover its own moral shame by a device of man's own handiwork. Here we are taught of the gracious provision which God has made to meet our great need. Here begins that marvelous stream of prophecy which runs all through the Holy Scriptures. Here we learn that man cannot approach God except through a mediator."²

Genesis 3:1

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

[Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?] Question number 1 in Genesis. Next question, Genesis 3:9.

[Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden] Misquoted from Genesis 2:16-17.

(Gen. 2:16-17) ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ¹⁷But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Step 1: Introduce Doubt

Not an allegory or fable... An actual event!

[Serpent] *nachash*, (H5175), *naw-khawsh*'; from (H5172) *nachash*; a snake (from its hiss) :- serpent. Hebrew root: "hiss," "mutter," "whisper," "enchanter." "The shining one". Chaldean root: "bright," "brass," "copper."

The serpent, in his Edenic or original form, is not to be thought of as a writhing reptile. That is the effect of the curse (Gen 3:14). The creature which lent itself to Satan may well have been the most beautiful as it was the most "subtle" of creatures less than man.

²McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

Traces of that beauty remain despite the curse. Every movement of a serpent is graceful, and many species are beautifully colored. In the serpent, Satan appeared “as an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14). Satan is called “serpent” in Rev 12:9, 14, 15; 20:2. For the record of the fall of Satan, see Isa 14:12-14, and read carefully note at v. 12.

With no introduction, **the serpent** appeared in Paradise. This is the first clue in Scripture of creation outside the one Adam and Eve experienced. The serpent symbolizes something both fascinating and loathsome. Yet neither Adam nor Eve saw the danger embodied in the serpent. The Hebrew word for **cunning** sounds like the Hebrew word for *naked* in 2:25. Adam and Eve were naked in innocence; the serpent was crafty and sneaky. In Eve’s innocence and naiveté, she showed no surprise on hearing a strange voice from the snake. **Has God indeed said:** Note that the serpent did not use the divine name Yahweh.³

Though Satan came to Jesus openly (cf. Matt 4:1-11), he approached the woman in disguise (cf. 2 Cor 11:3,14, 15). The “serpent” was considered an unclean animal by the Hebrews (Lev 11:42); it was the instrument of Satan, who was the source and author of evil and the one who inaugurated temptation. John confirmed the identity of the Serpent (Rev 12:9; 20:2). The exact nature of the Serpent (*nahash*, Heb.) is not known.⁴

[subtle] *`aruwm*, (H6175), *aw-room'*; passive participle of Hebrew 6191 (*`aram*); *cunning* (usually in a bad sense) :- crafty, prudent, subtil. The Hebrew word for **cunning** sounds like the Hebrew word for naked in 2:25. Adam and Eve were naked in innocence; the serpent was crafty and sneaky.

"Full of wisdom" (Ez 28:12); "prudent" (Prov 1:4; 8:12; 12:23; 14:8).

[beast] *chay*, (H2416), *khah'ee*; from H2421 (*chayah*); alive; hence raw (flesh); life (or living thing), whether literal or figurative; "living being": cf. *zoa*, Rev 4...

The great Jewish Rabbis and sages of long ago point to something kind of interesting in verse 1 about the serpent: the serpent was different from the wild animals God had created; he wasn't even **one of** the wild animals. He was NOT just craftier than wild animals, this thing could TALK!! Look carefully at the wording of the verses: our English language, Western Culture minds tend to read-in the word “other”...making the verse read “than any OTHER wild animal”. But, that’s not what the Scriptures say.....the verse says “than any wild animal”. Apparently the serpent was not even **categorized** as a wild animal. The serpent was unique.....a separate thing...in a very negative way. Now, did the spirit of Satan overtake and possess a poor, unwitting snake? Or was the snake a physical form that Satan took on, different and apparently appealing; a form willed by his own doing, in order to be visible and communicate with Adam and Eve? Satan is able to counterfeit anything.....and I agree with many of the ancient sages that the serpent could well have been Satan’s attempt to mimic God by creating life.....counterfeit life. Apparently, at first the serpent was even able to get around on legs.....because we see

³ The Nelson Study Bible

⁴ Believer’s Study Bible

that God cursed the serpent, with one result being he would have to crawl on his belly.

And, of course, it was that old serpent that led the woman, then the man, to rebel against God. Notice however that the serpent was located inside the Garden of Eden, a Holy Place.

This is one more example of the Garden, a physical, 4 dimensional place, being a parallel of Heaven....a non-physical, spiritual place OUTSIDE of our 4 dimensional Universe. Even what went on in the Garden is a parallel of what went on in Heaven. For, we know that Satan was at one time in Heaven; a special spiritual being, the most beautiful spiritual creature there was, next to God Himself. I don't want to call Him an Angel because there are many other heavenly spirit beings than angels. Cherubim and Seraphim are NOT angels.....they are different, and even MORE powerful, spirit beings than angels. And, Satan, called Lucifer in Heaven, rebelled against God and was cast down to earth when he rebelled. Right? So, here we have the same story, only instead of taking place in a spiritual setting (Heaven), it is taking place in a physical setting; the Garden of Eden. We have the serpent, a very special creature.....different than all the other Living Creatures..... walking up right in the Garden, living in the presence of God. Then, he rebels and his form changes, and he is expelled from the Garden. A complete parallel. The Reality of Duality.

McGee: In this first verse we are introduced to the serpent. Immediately the question can reasonably be asked, "Where in the world did he come from? How did he get into the Garden of Eden?" As far as I can tell from the Word of God, the serpent was not there as a slithering creature. Actually, we are not told how he came there; we are just told he was there. The Word of God leaves a great deal out. The serpent was a creature that could be used of Satan, and Satan used him. Isn't that exactly the method that Satan uses today? Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14). The book of Revelation says more about Satan than anywhere else in Scripture. "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12:9). This creature was not a slithering snake as we think of it today. That is not the picture that the Word of God gives of him at all. "And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years" (Rev. 20:2).

This is a creature with tremendous ability. There is no record of his origin here in Genesis at all. I believe that Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 give us the origin of this creature and also how he became the creature that he was.⁵

Genesis 3:2

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

[We may eat] Eve repeated the positive words of God (see 2:16 above).

⁵McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

In Eve's innocence and naiveté, she showed no surprise on hearing a voice from the snake.

Genesis 3:3

But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

[**God hath said**] Note that the serpent did not use the divine name Yahweh.

[**neither shall ye touch it**] Eve made an addition to Genesis 2:16-17.

[**lest ye die**] Misquoted from Genesis 2:17, implying doubt as to whether the penalty would be executed. Yet the first sin was not lying, it was eating the fruit that God had forbidden. Her words reflected the original command well enough and indeed they would have ensured that the command would be kept.

There was one tree Eve knew to be off limits. This tree was in the middle of the garden.

[**nor shall you touch it**] Some interpreters suggest that the woman was already sinning by adding to the word of God, for these words were not part of God's instructions in 2:17. Yet the first sin was not lying, it was eating the fruit that God had forbidden. Her words reflected the original command well enough and indeed they would have ensured that the command would be kept. Eve had not been created when these instructions were given to Adam. She received her information second hand. This instruction may have been added by Adam to emphasize and make sure Eve did not eat the fruit.

(Gen. 2:16-17) ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: ¹⁷But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Neither shall ye touch it—Did not the woman add this to what God had before spoken? Some of the Jewish writers, who are only serious on comparative trifles, state that as soon as the woman had asserted this, the serpent pushed her against the tree and said, “See, thou hast touched it, and art still alive; thou mayest therefore safely eat of the fruit, for surely thou shalt not die.”⁶

Genesis 3:4

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

⁶ Adam Clarke's Commentary

[**Ye shall not surely die**] The first direct lie in Scripture (John 8:44).

For the first time (here), Satan lied: **You will not surely die**. Lying was Satan's craft right from the beginning (John 8:44). The serpent boldly denied the truth of what God had said. In essence, the serpent called God a liar.

(John 8:44) Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Satan starts by telling Adam and Eve that God is a liar; verse 3, after God has instructed Adam that if he eats from the Tree of Good and Evil he will die, the serpent says ***"It is not true that you will surely die....."***. As a result, the Serpent is cast out of the Garden. More than that, he is cast down into the dust, that he must crawl on his belly. Satan was cast out of Heaven, and exiled to earth, in Hebrew "Adam-ah". The serpent was cast out of the Garden, and exiled to crawl on his belly in the "Adam-ah", the dust of the ground. Another exact parallel. Reality of Duality. This event of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is what Christianity calls the Fall of Man, the Fall from Grace, or simply "The Fall". Now, very interestingly, the Jewish Rabbis of old look at this event with a little different slant.

As Christians, evangelical Christians (because not all denominations see it this way) we see The Fall as the place where man's relationship to God was broken and evil came alive. Where sin didn't just enter into the world, it became part of man's very nature, part of our fiber and perhaps even genetic material. And, as a result of our sin nature, we die.....not just physically, but spiritually, and therefore, eternally. Therefore, we need a Savior. One who will rescue us, restore us to a condition equal to what Adam was BEFORE he sinned.

The Jews, on the other hand, see what happened in the Garden as a sort of liberation. That is, man was now given the ability, and responsibility, to make choices. Prior to Adam and Eve's act of rebellion, they simply did what God said.....almost robotically in these Sages' view.....because there was no other choice. Why? Because there existed **for Adam and Eve** nothing but good, and good was a single pathway laid out by God. But, with the introduction of evil by the serpent, mankind gained a kind of freedom: we could now choose for ourselves whether to love God and obey Him; or, we could choose to follow our own deceived ways, and do as we wished. And, to a degree, mankind could even choose just **how** to follow God.....that is, each could work out their own "salvation".

As a result of this view, for the Jews a Savior has not generally been about a person being restored, individually, to a right relationship with God. Nor has it been about having our sin natures destroyed, and then our being recreated with a new nature.

For the Jew, a Savior, their Messiah, has always been about making the Hebrews the dominant world culture.... a culture of God, the Kingdom of God, that revolved around the ways of the one true God. Salvation was seen as a more or less national issue, and the Savior as the national leader of the cause. But, this Savior would be a man....in fact, he'd be an offspring of the greatest warrior-king Israel ever had: King David. It's no wonder that so relatively few Hebrews/Jews accepted Jesus as their Messiah; because He simply didn't fit the mold *or the purpose* that the ancient sages had built for the Messiah.

Genesis 3:5

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

[eyes shall be opened] See Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 4:3-4.

(Acts 26:18) To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

(2 Cor. 4:3-4) ³But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: ⁴In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

[ye shall be as gods] One of Satan's most effective appeals to man—to make a god of himself.

[gods] *Elohiym* (H430), plural of *Elowah* (H433), Gods.

[knowing good and evil] God knows evil only as He has seen it in rebels. He couldn't know sin experientially, because there is no higher Law or Being than God.

By arguing that God had an ulterior motive, the serpent appealed to Eve's sense of fair play. **you will be like God:** God's fullness of knowledge was only one of the superiorities that set Him apart from the woman. But the serpent combined all of God's superiority over the woman into this one audacious appeal to her pride.

The Book of Enoch: Evil Angels

69.6 And the name of the third is Gadreel; this is the one that showed all the deadly blows to the sons of men. And he led astray Eve. And he showed the weapons of death to the children of men, the shield and the breastplate, and the sword for slaughter, and all the weapons of death to the sons of men.⁷

Your eyes shall be opened—Your understanding shall be greatly enlightened and improved; and ye shall be as gods, *kelohim*., like God, so the word should be translated; for what idea could our first parents have of gods before idolatry could have had any being, because sin had not yet entered into the world? The Syriac has the word in the singular number, and is the only one of all the versions which has hit on the true meaning. As the original word is the same which is used to point out the Supreme Being, Genesis 1:1, so it has here the same signification, and the object of the tempter appears to have been this: to persuade our first parents that they should, by eating of this fruit, become wise and powerful as God, (for knowledge is power), and be able to exist for ever, independently of him.⁸

Genesis 3:6

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

[saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise] Threefold temptation of man:

1. Lust of the flesh (Genesis 3:6; 1 John 2:15-17)
2. Lust of the eyes (Genesis 3:6; 1 John 2:15-17)
3. The pride of life (Genesis 3:6; 1 John 2:15-17)

[husband with her] Adam was with her and therefore without excuse (cp. 1 Tim. 2:14). He should have spoken up and protected his mate and his dominion.

(1 Tim. 2:14) *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.*

Adam was not deceived, Adam was joining her, he knew that she was lost he was still ok. He loved her so much he decided to join her rather than to spend eternity without her. Adam gave himself to join her. What Adam did for Eve, Jesus Christ did for us. Jesus loved us so much he gave himself that he could spend eternity with us.

^{7 7} The Book of Jasher, Published by J.H. Perry & Company , 1887

⁸ Adam Clarke's Commentary

Since Adam is a prophetic figure of Jesus Christ, then Eve, his bride, must be a type of New Testament Christianity, the bride of Christ. Adam gave life to Eve, Christ gave life to us. Adam died for Eve, Christ died for us.

Life Application: Why does Satan tempt us? Temptation is Satan’s invitation to give in to his kind of life and give up on God’s kind of life. Satan tempted Eve and succeeded in getting her to sin. Ever since then, he’s been busy getting people to sin. He even tempted Jesus (Matthew 4:11). But Jesus did not sin!

How could Eve have resisted temptation? By following the same guidelines we can follow. First, we must realize that *being tempted* is not a sin. We have not sinned until we *give in* to the temptation. Then, to resist temptation, we must (1) pray for strength to resist, (2) run, sometimes literally, and (3) say no when confronted with what we know is wrong. James 1:12 tells of the blessings and rewards for those who don’t give in when tempted.⁹

Temptation: The Two Adams Contrasted		
1 John 2:16	Genesis 3:6 First Adam	Luke 4:1-13 Second Adam—Christ
“the lust of the flesh”	“the tree was good for food”	“command this stone to become bread”
“the lust of the eyes”	“it was pleasant to the eyes”	“the devil...showed Him all the kingdoms”
“the pride of life”	“a tree desirable to make one wise”	“throw yourself down from here”

Notice the parallel to 2:9; this tree was like the other trees. It was **good for food**. These words imply that this was the first time Eve considered disobeying God’s command. After all, there was nothing in the tree that was poisonous or harmful, and it was **desirable**. The issue was one of obedience and disobedience to the Word of God. **She took:** The first step. **She ate:** The final step. Once she disobeyed God, all the world changed. (Note, however, that Rom. 5:12 speaks of the sin of Adam rather than the sin of Eve.) Because she did not die, she **gave it to her husband**. **And he ate:** Adam sinned with his eyes wide open. He did not even ask a question. He knew as well as she that the fruit was forbidden. Adam and Eve had now broken faith with the Lord, and the world was forever changed.

The three areas of Eve’s self-deception are in the same categories of temptation as those found in 1 John 2:16. Eve was deceived; Adam ate knowingly (cf. 1 Tim. 2:14). Their sin was more than merely eating forbidden fruit; it was disobeying the revealed word of God, believing the lie of Satan, and placing their own wills above God’s. Sin, with all its dreadful consequences, now entered the human race and the world in general.

⁹ Life Application Bible Notes

(Rom. 5:12) *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:*

Nachmanides

1. *That the tree was god for food*, she [Eve] had thought that the fruit of the tree was bitter and poisonous and this was why He admonished them against eating thereof, but now she saw that it was good and sweet food.
2. *And that it was a delight to the eyes*, i.e., that by means of its fruit, one attains desire and goes about after his own eyes.
3. *And that the tree was to be desired to make one wise* for by means of its fruit, one becomes wise to desire. Now she ascribed “delight” to the eyes and “desire” to the mind. The principle is that [by eating the fruit of the tree], one can will and desire a thing or its opposite.¹⁰

The Book of Jasher: Jasher 1:9-11

9 And the serpent, which God had created with them in the earth, came to them to incite them to transgress the command of God which he had commanded them.

10 And the serpent enticed and persuaded the woman to eat from the tree of knowledge, and the woman hearkened to the voice of the serpent, and she transgressed the word of God, and took from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and she ate, and she took from it and gave also to her husband and he ate.

11 And Adam and his wife transgressed the command of God which he commanded them, and God knew it, and his anger was kindled against them and he cursed them.¹¹

FFOZ:

We now come to the critical moment. The serpent confused the woman into thinking that perhaps it would be all right to eat the forbidden fruit. Verse six reveals how her thinking took a downward spiral. It reveals that, for the first time, her thinking began to change and she started to view the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil from a perspective other than God’s. We are told she began to think three things about this tree, which previously she had not allowed herself to consider.

First, she “perceived that the tree was god for eating.” In this, we learn that she began to think of the tree in a physically appealing way. What once was not even to be considered as food, she now began to entertain thoughts of consuming.

Second, she saw “that it was delight to the eyes.” Before, she would not even have considered this tree as something upon which her eyes should dwell. She only

¹⁰ Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, pg 80

¹¹ The Book of Jasher, Published by J.H. Perry & Company , 1887

concentrated on the Tree of Life. Now, however, she was beginning to think that perhaps something other than the Tree of Life was something good upon which to focus her eyes.

Last, she began to think, “the tree was desirable as a means to wisdom.” The Hebrew word translated “a means to wisdom” is really one word. It is a verb in the hiphil family, which gives it a causative sense. Its basic meaning is “cause one to become prudent” or “cause one to have understanding.”

Hamilton suggests the following rendering of this phrase,

...when the woman saw that the tree...was desirable in order to become wise...

Up to this point, she had the wisdom of God, lacking nothing. Now the thought is introduced into her mind that maybe she is lacking and missing something.¹²

Notice what Eve did: She looked, she took, she ate, and she gave. The battle is often lost at the first look. Temptation often begins by simply seeing something you want. Are you struggling with temptation because you have not learned that looking is the first step toward sin? You would win over temptation more often if you followed Paul’s advice to run from those things that produce evil thoughts (2 Tim. 2:22).¹³

The method of temptation used by Satan established a pattern according to which he would deal with man: (1) Questioning God, i.e., distorting or casting doubt on the word of God, is the beginning of every temptation. Satan is powerless without man’s assent and consent (v. 1). (2) Contradicting God, i.e. denying His word outright, is the inevitable result of questioning it (v. 4). (3) Surpassing God is that satanic device in which some imaginary good is sought, above and beyond what God has offered (v. 5). (4) Disobeying God is the final result (v. 6). The areas of testing were threefold: (1) appetite, (2) beauty, and (3) ambition or pride (cf. 1 John 2:16). Every temptation by Satan falls into one of these three areas. Temptation is primarily an attempt to get one to act independently of God by implanting a desire for self-assertion or a determination to go one’s own way (cf. Prov 14:12, note; Isa 53:6).¹⁴

McGee: Notice that the appeal the serpent made is quite an interesting one. It was an appeal to the flesh—“the tree was good for food”—but that is not all; that is not the thing that is really important. “It was pleasant to the eyes”—it was an appeal to the flesh but also an appeal to the psychological part of man, to his mind. “And a tree to be desired to make one wise”—this is an appeal to the religious side of man.

You will find that this is the exact temptation that Satan brought to the Lord Jesus in the wilderness (see Matt. 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4). First of all, he said to our Lord, “Make these stones into bread”—this was the appeal to the flesh, as the tree was good for food. Then Satan showed the Lord the kingdoms of the world and offered them to Him—that was an appeal to the mind, as the tree was pleasant to the eyes. Then finally he said, “Cast Yourself down from the temple”—this was an appeal to the religious side of man, as the tree was to be desired to make one wise. I do not think that the devil has changed his tactics today. He uses the same tactics with you and me, and the reason that he still

¹² First Fruits of Zion, Torah Club, B’reisheet, pg. 12

¹³ Life Application Bible Notes

¹⁴ Believer’s Study Bible

uses them is that they work. He hasn't needed to change his tactics, for we all seem to fall for the same line.

John wrote: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16). "The lust of the flesh"—that is, the tree was good to eat. "The lust of the eyes"—the tree was good to look at. "The pride of life"—the tree was to be desired to make one wise. These things are not of the Father, but of the world. Jesus said that these sins of the flesh come out of the heart of man, way down deep. This is where Satan is making his appeal. This is the method that he is using in order that he might reach in and lead mankind astray. And he succeeded. They were told that they would know good and evil—and what happened? We now have the results of the fall of man.¹⁵

Genesis 3:7

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

[eyes of them both were opened] The opening of their eyes gave a different sight from what was expected (cp. Genesis 3:5).

[knew that they were naked] They knew before mentally, but now by experience. They lost God-consciousness and gained self-consciousness. They lost the power to do good and gained the power to do evil. Instead of becoming like God they became unlike Him, in that He has power to do only good. It is morally impossible for Him to sin. Adam lost that glorious sinlessness and innocence.

[sewed] Compare Eccles. 3:7; Job 16:15; Ezekiel 13:18.

[aprons] *chagorah* (H2290), a belt or girdle. Translated gird (Isaiah 32:11) and girdle (1 Samuel 18:4; 2 Samuel 18:11; 2 Samuel 20:8; 1 Kings 2:5; Isaiah 3:24). These man-made aprons of leaves don't compare to the warmth, protection, comfort and durability of the skin coats God made (Genesis 3:21).

[knew] Man had now sinned (3:6-7), the first promise of redemption was to be given (3:15), and our first parents were to be expelled from Eden (3:22-24). Man's sin was a rebellion against a specific command of God (2:16-17) and marked a transition from theoretical to experiential knowledge of good and evil (3:5-7, 22). Man sinned by entering the realm of moral experience by the wrong door when he could have entered by doing right. So man became as God through a personal experience of the difference between good and evil, but also unlike God in gaining this experience by choosing the wrong instead of the right. Thus God placed him under the stewardship of moral responsibility whereby he was accountable to do all known good, to abstain from all known evil, and to approach God through blood sacrifice here instituted in prospect of

¹⁵McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

the finished work of Christ. The result is set forth in the Adamic Covenant (Gen 3:14-21, see v. 15, note). Man failed the test presented to him in this dispensation (witness Gen 6:5), as in others. Although, as the specific test, this time-era ended with the flood, man continued in his moral responsibility as God added further revelation concerning Himself and His will in succeeding ages (e.g. Acts 24:14-16; Rom 2:15; 2 Cor 4:2).

The serpent was right—they knew good and evil (v. 5). This is the awful truth about a skilled liar—the deception comes mixed with truth. Their eyes **were opened**. They discovered that **they were naked**. All of a sudden with no one around but the two of them, they were ashamed (see 2:25). Their lovely naiveté was now replaced by evil thoughts, and they covered themselves with **fig leaves**.

Nachmanides

And the eyes of them both were opened. Scripture speaks here with reference to intelligence, and not with reference to actual seeing. The end of the verse proves this: and they knew they were naked. [Even a blind person knows when he is naked! It must therefore refer to intelligence], as explained in the words of Rashi. In a similar sense is the verse:¹⁶

(Psalm 119:18) *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold
wondrous things out of thy law.*

The Book of Enoch: The Tree

- 32.3 And I came to the Garden of Righteousness, and I saw beyond those trees many large trees growing there, sweet smelling, large, very beautiful and glorious, the Trees of Wisdom, from which they eat and know great wisdom.
- 32.4 And it is like the carob tree, and its fruit is like bunches of grapes on a vine, very beautiful, and the smell of this tree spreads and penetrates afar.
- 32.5 And I said: “This tree is beautiful! How beautiful and pleasing is its appearance!”
- 32.6 And the Holy Angel Raphael, who was with me, answered me and said to me: “This is the Tree of Wisdom, from which your ancient father and ancient mother, who were before you, ate and learnt wisdom; and their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they were driven from the garden.”¹⁷

CHART: SATAN’S PLAN

Doubt	Makes you question God’s Word and his goodness
Discouragement	Makes you look at your problems rather than at God
Diversion	Makes the wrong things seem attractive so that you will want them more than the right things
Defeat	Makes you feel like a failure so that you don’t even try

¹⁶ Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, pg 81

¹⁷ The Book of Jasher, Published by J.H. Perry & Company , 1887

Delay

Makes you put off doing something so that it never gets done

McGee: “And they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.” Have you ever noticed that the fig tree is the only tree that is specifically mentioned? (The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is not an apple tree. I do not know what it was, but I am almost sure it was not an apple tree.) These fig leaves concealed but did not really cover. Adam and Eve did not confess; they just attempted to cover up their sin. They were not ready to admit their lost condition.

This is the same condition of man today in religion. He goes through exercises and rituals, he joins churches, and he becomes very religious. Have you ever noticed that Christ cursed the fig tree? That is quite interesting. And He denounced religion right after that, by the way; He denounced it with all His being because religion merely covers over sin.¹⁸

Genesis 3:8

And they heard the voice 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 amongst the trees of the garden.

[they heard] No doubt they expected God as usual. In their guilt they tried to hide.

[voice of the LORD God] The voice may have had anger, causing fear (Genesis 3:10; Psalm 29; Rev. 10:4) which also came from a guilty conscience.

[cool] *ruwach* (H7307), spirit, breath, or wind. In the East a cool breeze comes up in the evening.

[hid themselves] It is impossible to hide from God (Psalm 139:7-12; Jeremiah 23:24; Amos 9:2-3). Hiding alone was evidence of guilt.

[presence] *pane* (H6440), the face, presence (Genesis 4:16; Genesis 27:30; Genesis 41:46; Genesis 45:3).

The scene is pathetic and sad. Here comes the Lord for an evening walk and a cozy chat. But Adam and Eve, who have “become wise,” cower in the trees to avoid being seen by the Creator of the universe. What had been a perfect, shameless fellowship has turned into dreadful fear of God—not fear in the sense of true piety, as with Abraham, Moses, David, and Solomon—but the raw terror of being discovered in the wrong.

Nachmanides

And they heard the voice of the eternal G-d walking in the garden. The Rabbis have said in Bereshith Rahbah: “Rabbi Chilfi said that from here we may learn that a voice “walks”, for it is said, And they heard the voice of the Eternal G-d walking.” And so did

¹⁸McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

the Rabbi [Moshe ben Maimon] write in Moreh Nebuchim. And so is the opinion of Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra that “walking” refers to “the voice”, just as in the verse:

(Jer 46:22) *The voice thereof shall go like a serpent; for they shall march with an army, and come against her with axes, as hewers of wood.*

And Ibn Ezra further says that the meaning of toward *the cool of the day* is that they heard the voice towards evening. And he mentioned in the name of And he mentioned in the name of Rabbi Jonah ibn Ganach that the meaning of the verse is: “and man was walking in the garden toward the cool of the day,” [the sense of the verse thus being that while man was walking in the garden, he heard the voice of G-d.

In my opinion, the sense of walking in the Garden of Eden is similar to that of the verses:

(Lev 26:12) *And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.*

(Gen 18:33) *And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.*

(Hosea 5:15) *I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.*

All these verses indicate a revelation of the Divine Presence in that place or the departure from the place wherein He was revealed. The sense of the expression, toward the cool of the day, is that with the revelation of the Divine Presence comes a great and strong wind, even as it says,

(1 Kings 19:11) *And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake:*

(Psalm 18:10) *And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.*

(Job 38:1) *Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,*

Therefore Scripture says here that they heard the voice of G-d as the Divine Presence was revealed in the garden approaching ehm in the wind of the day, that is, in the garden, like

the wind of ordinary days, not a great and strong wind as in the vision of other prophecies, in order that they should not be frightened or terrified.¹⁹

I don't want to belabor what might seem like a trifling point, but I can assure you that what I'm about to put before you has kept many a Rabbi and many a Christian Scholar awake at night trying to discern: and that is: was God actually, physically walking in the Garden? Better yet, does God have any of the *physical* human characteristics that allow him to "jump for joy", "weep bitter tears", "swing a sword", and other attributes that we recognize as needing a physical body to perform? What are we to make of words like these that are used so often in the Bible?

In general, evangelical Christians have a ready answer every time a physical attribute of God is spoken of as making an appearance: we say it must have been Jesus. Perhaps. If one read only the NT, and ignored the OT, then most certainly Jesus would be a logical, though not entirely satisfactory, answer.

The Jews have alternative points of view as to what these human emotions and characteristics ascribed to God mean. I'm not here to convince you of any particular answer, because I have no problem accepting some things as simply mysteries beyond the human intellect's ability to ponder. Quite the opposite, actually, because more and more I have a LOT of problems with the very simplistic answers that we so easily accept; answers to some complex and often times vague statements we find in the Bible. Man has a real tendency to "fill in the blanks" when something in the Bible isn't made readily apparent, and that can really be dangerous.

While there is no single Jewish point of view on much of anything, what I'm about to give to you is of general agreement among Rabbis and Jewish sages, with only a smattering of dissenting views.

Maimonides was perhaps one of the greatest and most revered Jewish scholars of all time. He lived in the 12th century AD. Rather than paraphrase his thoughts on this matter, his view is concise enough that I prefer to simply quote it: *"Since matters concerning bodily experience are such, then all words connected to this mentioned in the Torah and in the Prophets are all exemplary and figures of speech. Examples of this are: "He who sits in the Heavens, laughs", and "...that they provoked me (Elohim) to anger", and "...as the Lord rejoiced", et cetera. The Sages of old said that the Torah is phrased in our terms. In Jeremiah 7:9 it says: "Do they provoke me to Anger?", whereas in Malachi 3:6 it says: "For I am the Lord, I do not change". If God really was sometimes angry and sometimes joyful, then He would be changing. Such characteristics are found only in the dark and gloomy existence of having a body, which lives in huts of mud and created from dust, but God is higher and raised above all this."*

He continues in another commentary: *"These phrases are in line with the level of understanding of people (humans) who can ONLY comprehend physical existence (NOTE < me>: the 4 dimensions of our Universe), and so the Torah speaks in terms that we can understand. For example, when it says: "If I whet my glittering sword....", does God really have a sword? Does it actually glitter and does He actually use a sword*

¹⁹ Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, pg 82

to kill? Such phrases are figurative.”

I'll let you wrestle with that for yourselves. The point is, we need to be very careful that we don't go around subscribing to God OUR human attributes. God is not a man, He is spirit. Yet, how else is a being so far above us, who operates outside our realm of time and space, supposed to communicate with us, if it's not in OUR terms? And, yes, of course, somebody is now going to say well, Jesus was God, and He was certainly a physical being....that is, he was God with human attributes. Yes, that is true. But, Jesus was also a real flesh and blood man.....born from a woman, a very specific woman, Mary, who had to come from the line of King David. Although Jesus' Father was God, Christ was 100% human; yet 100% God.....He wasn't a 50/50 Bar. That is, He wasn't part man and part God, nor was He sometimes man, and at other times God. I don't know about you, but I can't quite get my mind to picture or comprehend just what that all means or how all that works.....yet, I know its true. This is just one of those mysteries that is not explainable in any term that a human can understand. It's a God thing. And, the Bible is chocked full of these difficult God-things.

And, here's yet another one of those difficult God-things. The Midrash Rabba makes a very interesting point by making a connection between some words of King Solomon and what happened regarding the eating of the forbidden fruit in Genesis. In Ecclesiastes 1:18, the Holy Scriptures tell us this: ***NAS Ecclesiastes 1:18 Because in much wisdom there is much grief, and increasing knowledge results in increasing pain.***

The Midrash Rabba goes on to explain that in Genesis 3:6, Havah discloses that there were 3 things about that tree that caused an irresistible attraction to well up in her: 1) the fruit on it apparently looked delicious to eat, 2) that the tree itself was beautiful, and 3) that partaking of the tree would made one wise. That is, what she was seeking MOST was wisdom. Look at the NAME of the tree; the tree of KNOWLEDGE of good and evil. Her act was largely about acquiring knowledge. And, as we grow older in life, we indeed find Solomon's statement to be true; that the more you know, the more you wish you DIDN'T know. When we talk about seeing life through the eyes of a child, we mean that most children have not yet learned about the bad things of life; they still believe that if you just work hard enough, or dream big enough, or behave good enough, that nothing but good things will happen to you. Children have not yet learned that people don't always do what they say they'll do. Or that some people, for no discernable reason, will hurt you...even take your life and freedom from you. We call this the innocence of childhood. How is that innocence taken from them? Knowledge. So, knowledge and wisdom brings with it it's own set of problems. Yet, it is a human desire...as with Eve...to seek knowledge and wisdom.

This Midrash goes on to explain that there was another fundamental at work here: Havah distorted God's instructions to her husband, Adam.....OR.....Adam ADDED to God's command about not eating from the forbidden fruit when HE instructed Havah. Because when we look in Gen 2:17, we see God say this to Adam: ***NAS Genesis 2:17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die."***

But, when the serpent asked Havah why it was she was not to eat of that particular tree she responded in Gen. 3:3 with: ***NAS Genesis 3:3 but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'"*** Where did the notion of "you can't touch it" come from? Somebody, either

Adam or Havah added it to God's Word. The Midrash points out this saying of Proverbs 30:6 *NAS Proverbs 30:6 Do not add to His words Lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar.* This is exactly the situation here with Eve, or both Adam and Eve; because some words were added and it proven them liars.

Man has a real tendency to add to God's Word even more than subtracting from it. And, the old serpent knew the instant Havah (or perhaps Adam) lied.....by embellishing what God's instruction actually was.....that once they lied, he had them. It is really dicey to add to God's Word. The Hebrews did it. The Church does it. And, it has all come to no good.

Genesis 3:9

And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

[called] *qara* (H7121), to call out; address by name (Genesis 1:5,8,10; Genesis 2:19; Genesis 3:9,20; Genesis 4:17,25).

[Where art thou?] Question number 2 in Genesis. Next question, Genesis 3:11. Compare the first question in the New Testament (Matthew 2:2).

God, in His mercy, did not destroy both of them immediately. He even called out to them and interacted with them (see vv. 10–12). God's mercy reaches further than we usually believe—or else we would all be destroyed.

Genesis 3:10

And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

[I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.] Fourfold confession:

1. I heard: acknowledgment of God
2. I was afraid: guilt discovered
3. I was naked: effect of sin
4. I hid myself: result of guilt

I was afraid, because I was naked—See the immediate consequences of sin. 1. SHAME, because of the ingratitude marked in the rebellion, and because that in aiming to be like God they were now sunk into a state of the greatest wretchedness. 2. FEAR, because they saw they had been deceived by Satan, and were exposed to that death and punishment from which he had promised them an exemption. How worthy is it of remark that this cause continues to produce the very same effects! Shame and fear were the first fruits of

sin, and fruits which it has invariably produced, from the first transgression to the present time.²⁰

Genesis 3:11

And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

[Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?] Questions number 3 and 4. Next question, Genesis 3:13.

The Lord carried the interrogation to its sad ending by posing one question after another.

[I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat] Genesis 2:16-17; Romans 5:12-21.

Genesis 3:12

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

[The woman] Adam tried to cover his sin by blaming the woman (Job 31:33; Proverbs 28:13). Adam wasn't deceived (1 Tim. 2:12-15).

[thou gavest] He implied blame on God also, because if God hadn't given him Eve he wouldn't have sinned. Blaming others is a trait of the natural man.

A guilty man's first line of defense is blame. Adam blamed **the woman**, and then he blamed God for having given her to him (for David's contrasting response to Nathan, see 2 Sam. 12:13).

[with me] "With me" shows that Adam may have been present when Eve was tempted but didn't protect her because he himself wanted to eat (note, Genesis 3:6).

[she gave] As if he had been forced.

[I did eat] Further confession. Eating caused the first sin (cp. Luke 21:34; Phil. 3:19).

And the man said, etc.—We have here some farther proofs of the fallen state of man, and that the consequences of that state extend to his remotest posterity. 1. On the question, Hast thou eaten of the tree? Adam is obliged to acknowledge his transgression; but he does this in such a way as to shift off the blame from himself, and lay it upon God and upon the woman! This woman whom THOU didst give to be with me, עִמָּדִי *immaḏi*, to be my companion, (for so the word is repeatedly used), she gave me, and I

²⁰ Adam Clarke's Commentary

did eat. I have no farther blame in this transgression; I did not pluck the fruit; she took it and gave it to me. 2. When the woman is questioned she lays the blame upon God and the serpent, (*nachash*). The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. Thou didst make him much wiser than thou didst make me, and therefore my simplicity and ignorance were overcome by his superior wisdom and subtlety; I can have no fault here, the fault is his, and his who made him so wise and me so ignorant. Thus we find that, while the eyes of their body were opened to see their degraded state, the eyes of their understanding were closed, so that they could not see the sinfulness of sin; and at the same time their hearts were hardened through its deceitfulness. In this also their posterity copy their example. How few ingenuously confess their own sin! They see not their guilt. They are continually making excuses for their crimes; the strength and subtlety of the tempter, the natural weakness of their own minds, the unfavorable circumstances in which they were placed, etc., etc., are all pleaded as excuses for their sins, and thus the possibility of repentance is precluded; for till a man take his sin to himself, till he acknowledge that he alone is guilty, he cannot be humbled, and consequently cannot be saved. Reader, till thou accuse thyself, and thyself only, and feel that thou alone art responsible for all thy iniquities, there is no hope of thy salvation. ²¹

Nachmanides

The woman whom thou gavest to be with me. The sense of it is to say: “The woman whom Thy Honor Himself gave me for a help, she gave me of the tree, and I thought that whatever she says to me is a help and benefit to me.” This is why He said when meting out his punishment, Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife, meaning “You should not have transgressed My commandment on account of her advice.” Our Rabbis have called Adam “ungrateful” for this remark. By this they mean to explain that the sense of his answer was: “Thou caused me this stumbling for Thou gavest me a woman as a help, and she counseled me to do evil.”²²

Genesis 3:13

And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

[What is this that thou hast done?] Question number 5. Next, Genesis 4:6. Cp. Genesis 31:26; Genesis 44:15; John 18:35.

[the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.] It is natural for both women and men to blame others. Eve acknowledged eating, but claimed she was not to blame.

[serpent beguiled me, and I did eat] Note, Genesis 3:1; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:13-15. A simple statement of fact.

²¹ Adam Clarke’s Commentary

²² Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, pg 83

Nachmanides

What is this thou hast done. To transgress My commandment? For the woman was included in the admonition given to Adam since at that time she was yet bone of his bones, and similarly she was included in his punishment. The reason why G-d did not say to the woman, “and thou has eaten of the tree,” is that she was punished for both her eating and her advice. This is why she said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat, as the punishment for the beguiling was greater than that for the eating. [Hence as soon as she mentioned that the serpent beguiled her, G-d meted out his punishment immediately, as is stated in the following two verses.] Thus we may derive from here the principle of punishment for those that cause people to sin in any matter, just as our Rabbis have derived it from the verse,

(Lev 19:14) *Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumblingblock before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the LORD.*

Genesis 3:14

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

[Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.] The 1st prophecy in Genesis (Genesis 3:14-15; part has been fulfilled, part is being fulfilled, and part will be fulfilled in all eternity). Next prophecy is Genesis 3:16. [upon thy belly shalt thou go] This indicates that the serpent walked upright before the fall.

[dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life] This expresses the utter humiliation of the creature that helped cause the fall of man. Of all the beasts of the field, the serpent writhes in the dust (cp. Psalm 72:9; Micah 7:17). Even in the Millennium the serpent will bear the curse after it is removed from other animals (Isaiah 65:25).

[to the serpent] The Lord turned first to the serpent and brought His judgment upon him. God did not excuse the woman because she was deceived, but He did bring the harsher judgment on the one who deceived her. The language in these verses is poetry, something that adds solemnity to them. The word translated as cursed in this verse is used only of the curse on the serpent and on the ground (v. 17). The woman and the man faced harsh new realities, but they were not cursed (God had already blessed them; 1:28). The text suggests that the serpent became a creature that slithers on the ground and appears to eat dust. This implies that before this the serpent had some other bodily form.

The entire animal kingdom was affected by man’s fall (cf. Jer. 12:4; Rom. 8:20), but the serpent’s very form and movements were altered, and he was humbled (*dust shall you eat* is a symbol of humiliation, not an item of diet; cf. Mic. 7:17; Isa. 65:25).

Nachmanides

From among all cattle, and from among all beasts of the fields. From a study of this verse, Rabbi Yehoshua the son of Chananya derived the fact that a serpent gives birth once in seven years; this they investigated and found to be so. For the Midrashic interpretations of Scripture and their allusions are all traditional, and they found in them profound secrets on procreation and all matters.²³

And the Lord God said unto the serpent—The tempter is not asked why he deceived the woman; he cannot roll the blame on any other; self-tempted he fell, and it is natural for him, such is his enmity, to deceive and destroy all he can. His fault admits of no excuse, and therefore God begins to pronounce sentence on him first. And here we must consider a twofold sentence, one on Satan and the other on the agent he employed. The *nachash*, whom I suppose to have been at the head of all the inferior animals, and in a sort of society and intimacy with man, is to be greatly degraded, entirely banished from human society, and deprived of the gift of speech. Cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field—thou shalt be considered the most contemptible of animals; upon thy belly shalt thou go—thou shalt no longer walk erect, but mark the ground equally with thy hands and feet; and dust shalt thou eat—though formerly possessed of the faculty to distinguish, choose, and cleanse thy food, thou shalt feed henceforth like the most stupid and abject quadruped, all the days of thy life—through all the innumerable generations of thy species. God saw meet to manifest his displeasure against the agent employed in this melancholy business; and perhaps this is founded on the part which the intelligent and subtle *nachash* took in the seduction of our first parents. We see that he was capable of it, and have some reason to believe that he became a willing instrument.²⁴

Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

The Law of Double Reference

Here we have the first occurrence of the law of double reference (cp. Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:11-17; Matthew 16:22-23; Mark 5:7-16; Luke 4:33-35,41). In these and many other passages a visible creature is addressed, but certain statements also refer to an invisible person using the visible creature as a tool. Thus, two persons are involved in the same passage. The principle of interpretation in such passages is to associate only such statements with each individual as could refer to him. The statements of Genesis 3:14 could apply only to the serpent and not to Satan. The first part of Genesis 3:15 could apply to both the seed of the serpent and Satan. The last part of Genesis 3:15 could only

²³ Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, pg 84

²⁴ Adam Clarke's Commentary

refer to Satan and Christ. A simple example of this law is the case of Christ addressing Peter as Satan. When Peter declared that he would never permit anyone to crucify his Lord on the cross, Christ rebuked him saying, "Get thee behind Me, Satan" (Matthew 16:22-23). Both Satan and Peter were addressed in the same statement, and both were involved in the rebuke. Peter, for the moment, was unknowingly being used as a tool of Satan in an effort to keep Christ from going to the cross. Satan was the primary one addressed, and so it is in Genesis 3:15. A literal serpent is addressed, but the primary reference is to Satan. We have other examples in Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:11-17 where the kings of Babylon and Tyre are addressed, but the statements mainly apply to Satan—the invisible king of Babylon and Tyre. There are some statements in these passages which could not possibly refer to an earthly man.

[enmity between thee and the woman] There is a natural enmity between snakes and men, and between children of Satan and God (Matthew 10:34-38; John 15:18-19; James 4:4; 1 Peter 4:12-19; 1 John 2:15-17; 1 John 3:8-12; 1 John 4:1-6).

Enmity As the English word “enmity” comes from the same root as “enemy,” so also the Greek word used in the Septuagint at this verse, and the Greek word in the N.T. commonly rendered “enemy,” derive from the same root. Our Lord specifically designates Satan as the “enemy” (Mat 13:25, 28, cp. v. 39; probably also Luke 10:19). All men outside of Christ are enemies of God (Rom 5:10; Col 1:21; James 4:4); the carnal mind is at enmity with God (Rom 8:7). This enmity, which is particularly manifested in those who are “the enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil 3:18), will develop in great intensity in the end times (Rev 12:13-17).

[thy seed] Matthew 13:38; John 8:44; 1 John 3:8-10.

[her seed...] The Seed of the Woman

Genesis 3:15 refers to the seed of the woman, not the seed of man. This could only refer to the coming of the Son of God through Mary (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 11:1; Matthew 1; Luke 1:31-35; John 1:14; Romans 1:1-3; Romans 8:3; Galatians 3:16,19; Galatians 4:4; Phil. 2:5-11; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 2:8; Hebrews 1:1-8; Hebrews 2:9-18; 1 John 4:1-6; Rev. 5:5). The virgin birth is one of the most essential doctrines of the whole plan of God. Without faith in it and in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ one cannot be saved (1 Cor. 15:1-8; 1 John 4:1-6).

The Messiah—Seven Figures in Genesis

1. The Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15)
2. The Son of Abraham (Genesis 22:18; Matthew 1:1; Luke 3:23-34; Galatians 3:16)
3. The Son of Isaac (Genesis 21:12; Genesis 26:4; Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:23-34; Romans 9:6-9)
4. The Son of Jacob (Genesis 28:13-14; Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:23-34)
5. Shiloh (Genesis 49:10)
6. The Shepherd of Israel (Genesis 49:24; cf. Zech. 13:7; John 10:1-18)
7. The Stone of Israel (Genesis 49:24)

[bruise thy head] Christ shall utterly crush and eternally defeat Satan (Romans 16:20; Galatians 3:13; Psalm 72:9; Ephes. 2:14-18; Col. 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 12:7-12; Rev. 19:11-20:10).

[thou shalt bruise his heel] Satan was to inflict only temporary sufferings on Messiah (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 53; Acts 2:25-26; Hebrews 2:14-15; Rev. 1:18).

[her seed] Isa. 7:14 *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

(EDLS) The Hebrew word for virgin is *almah*, from the letter mem counting 17 letters three times from right to left spells, *Mashiach*. If you continue counting 17 letters three times to the right of the mem, you will have *kav'van* which means, something prepared, like a sacrificial wafer. Put the statement together and it is *kav'van Mashiaach*, which means, Messiah, the sacrificial wafer (bread).

(Matt. 23:33) *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*

The satanic enmity with the woman can be seen to play itself out in the account of Gen 6 when Satan had some of his demons intermarry with human women for the purpose of perverting womankind in an attempt to nullify the first Messianic prophecy.

From this passage it can be deduced that Satan will try to counterfeit the Virgin Birth and will someday impregnate a woman who will give birth to Satan's seed - the Antichrist. Through this means the Antichrist will have a supernatural origin.

That this verse was taken to be messianic is clear from the "Targums of Jonathan" and the "Jerusalem Trgums." Furthermore, the Talmudic expression, "Heels of the Messiah," seems to have been taken from this verse. But Genesis itself does not explain how or why this Redeemer can be labeled "seed of the woman" when it goes contrary to the biblical pattern.

Birth of Isaac was another miraculous birth.

enmity between you and the woman: This is not just about snakes; it is about the enemy of our souls, Satan. **your seed and her Seed:** The language is ambiguous, but still contains the promise of a child. The term *seed* is exceedingly important. It may be translated *offspring* (as in 15:3) or *descendants* (as in 15:5, 13, 18). The term may refer to an individual (Gal. 3:16) or a group of people. This means, among other things, that Eve would live—at least for a while. The Seed of the woman is the Promised One, the coming Messiah of Israel. *Seed* continues to be used throughout the Bible as a messianic term (see Num. 24:7; Isa. 6:13).

The meaning of the phrase **your seed** as it applies to the serpent is uncertain (but see John 8:37–47). The reference may ultimately be to the Antichrist.

In verse 15, we get this very messianic, very prophetic....but if we're honest, also very vague..... statement. *NAS Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."*

Yet, here we have, so very early on in the Bible, just a peek at God's plan for restoring humanity to Himself. I have to say, if this was all I had to go on in Moses' or David's day, I don't think I'd ever have even remotely seen it as a messianic prophecy.....just confusing. It's an awful lot easier in hindsight, and with Jesus having come and gone, to recognize these, and other, verses of the OT for what they are....a prophecy of the coming of Christ. Sometimes the Church likes to criticize or look down on the early Hebrews for not understanding what God's plan was. But, it is absolutely typical of man, then as now, to only believe God after the fact. No matter how many prophets God sent to Israel, few Israelites ever believed what those men had to say, and the consequences were terrible.

In fact, look at us, the Church, today. God has told us unequivocally that when Israel returns as a nation, and when Jerusalem is retaken from the gentiles (things which have both occurred rather recently), that is the indication that we are living in the last of the last days. We are told that Jerusalem and the Land of Israel will become a "cup of trembling" for the whole world, and it most certainly is so. When, in all of history, was Jerusalem at any other time a cause for *anybody* but the Israelites to tremble in fear? Oh, the Jews aggravated the daylights out of the Babylonians, the Greeks, the Egyptians, and the Romans. But, never was Jerusalem the center of something that others feared would destabilize the globe. But, it most certainly has become that way in our lifetimes. We are told that when we see all these things, look up, for our Salvation, and the end of the world as we know it, is near. We have watched these events unfold before our very eyes; we have been forewarned in our own Holy Scriptures that this time in history would come, and yet only a few within the Church have paid much attention. Let us not be blind any longer to the incredible day in which we live.....and what it means.....and how we should respond. In general, when we turn a blind or disinterested eye towards these events, we're behaving just like the Hebrews of old when Yahweh forewarned them of what was coming, and they just sniffed at it and went on about their lives as usual. The results were devastating for millions of Israelites.

I will put enmity between thee and the woman—This has been generally supposed to apply to a certain enmity subsisting between men and serpents; but this is rather a fancy than a reality. It is yet to be discovered that the serpentine race have any peculiar enmity against mankind, nor is there any proof that men hate serpents more than they do other noxious animals. Men have much more enmity to the common rat and magpie than they have to all the serpents in the land, because the former destroy the grain, etc., and serpents in general, far from seeking to do men mischief, flee his approach, and generally avoid his dwelling. If, however, we take the word *nachash* to mean any of the simia or ape species, we find a more consistent meaning, as there is scarcely an animal in the universe so detested by most women as these are; and indeed men look on them as continual caricatures of themselves. But we are not to look for merely literal meanings here: it is evident that Satan, who actuated this creature, is alone intended in

this part of the prophetic declaration. God in his endless mercy has put enmity between men and him; so that, though all mankind love his service, yet all invariably hate himself. Were it otherwise, who could be saved? A great point gained towards the conversion of a sinner is to convince him that it is Satan he has been serving, that it is to him he has been giving up his soul, body, goods, etc.; he starts with horror when this conviction fastens on his mind, and shudders at the thought of being in league with the old murderer. But there is a deeper meaning in the text than even this, especially in these words, it shall bruise thy head, or rather, **הוּ** hu, HE; who? the seed of the woman; the person is to come by the woman, and by her alone, without the concurrence of man. Therefore the address is not to Adam and Eve, but to Eve alone; and it was in consequence of this purpose of God that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin; this, and this alone, is what is implied in the promise of the seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent. Jesus Christ died to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and to destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil. Thus he bruises his head—destroys his power and lordship over mankind, turning them from the power of Satan unto God; Acts 26:18. And Satan bruises his heel—God so ordered it, that the salvation of man could only be brought about by the death of Christ; and even the spiritual seed of our blessed Lord have the heel often bruised, as they suffer persecution, temptation, etc., which may be all that is intended by this part of the prophecy.²⁵

Pink: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15). Here again we behold the exceeding riches of God’s grace. Before He acted in judgment He displayed His mercy; before He banished the guilty ones from Eden, He gave them a blessed promise and hope. Though Satan had encompassed the downfall of man, it is announced that One shall come and bruise his head. By woman had come sin, by woman should come the Saviour. By woman had come the curse, by woman should come Him who would bear and remove the curse. By woman Paradise was lost, yet by woman should be born the One who should regain it. O what grace—the Lord of glory was to be *the woman’s Seed!*

Here we have the beginning and germ of all prophecy. It would be outside our province now to attempt anything more than a bare outline of the contents of this wonderful verse. But three things should be carefully noted. First, it is announced that there should be enmity between Satan and the woman. This part of the verse is invariably passed over by commentators. Yet it is of profound importance. The “woman” here typifies *Israel*—the woman from whom the promised Seed came—the woman of Revelation 12. The children of Israel being the appointed channel through which the Messiah was to come, became the object of Satan’s continued enmity and assault. How marvelously this prediction has already been fulfilled all students of Scripture know full well. The “famines” mentioned in Genesis were the first efforts of the enemy to destroy the fathers of the chosen race. The edict of Pharaoh to destroy all the male children; the Egyptian attack at the Red Sea; the assaults of the Canaanites when in the land; the plot of Haman, are all so many examples of this enmity between Satan and “the woman,”

²⁵ Adam Clarke’s Commentary

while the continued persecution of the Jew by the Gentiles and the yet future opposition by the Beast witness to the same truth.

Second, two “seeds” are here referred to—another item which is generally overlooked—“thy seed” and “her seed”—Satan’s seed and the woman’s Seed—the Antichrist and the Christ. In these two persons all prophecy converges. In the former of these expressions—“thy seed” (Satan’s seed) we have more than a hint of the supernatural and satanic nature and character of the Antichrist. From the beginning the Devil has been an imitator, and the climax will not be reached until he daringly travesties the hypostatic union of the two natures in our blessed Lord—His humanity and His Deity. The Antichrist will be the Man of Sin and yet the Son of Perdition—literally the “seed” of the serpent—just as our Lord was the Son of Man and the Son of God in one person. This is the only logical conclusion. If “her seed” ultimates in a single personality—the Christ—then by every principle of sound interpretation “thy seed” must also ultimate in a single person—the Antichrist.

“Her seed”—the woman’s Seed. Here we have the first announcement concerning the supernatural birth of our Saviour. It was prophetically foretold that He should enter this world in an unique manner. “*Her seed*”—the woman’s seed, not the man’s! How literally this was fulfilled we learn from the two inspired records given us in the New Testament of the miraculous conception. A “*virgin*” was with child and four thousand years after this initial prediction “God sent forth His Son, *made of a woman*” (Gal. 4:4).

In the third item of this marvelous prophecy reference is made to a double “bruising”—the woman’s Seed shall bruise the Serpent’s head, and the Serpent should bruise His heel. The last clause in this prediction has already become history. The “bruising” of the heel of the woman’s Seed is a symbolical reference to the sufferings and death of our Saviour, who was “wounded for our transgressions and *bruised* for our iniquities.” The first of these clauses yet awaits fulfilment. The bruising of the Serpent’s head will take place when our Lord returns to the earth in person and in power, and when “the dragon, that old *serpent*, which is the Devil and Satan shall be bound for a thousand years (the Millennium) and cast into the bottomless pit” (Rev. 20:2, 3). Again, we say, what a remarkable *proof* this verse furnishes us of the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures! Who but He who knoweth the end from the beginning could have given such an accurate outline of subsequent history, and packed it within the limits of this one verse?²⁶

Genesis 3:16

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

[I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children] The 2nd prophecy in Genesis (Genesis 3:16, fulfilled and being fulfilled). Next prophecy is in Genesis 3:17. Having children was not the curse, for this

²⁶Pink, A. W. (2005). *Gleanings in Genesis* (42). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

was commanded before the fall (Genesis 1:26-28); but it was in multiplied sorrow and conception (Genesis 3:16). Children will be born in all eternity after the Millennium (Genesis 8:22; Genesis 9:12; Isaiah 59:21; Daniel 7:13-14; Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 11:15; Rev. 21:24). With the curse removed in the New Earth, there should be no pain in childbirth for the coming generations (Rev. 21:3-7).

[sorrow] *etseb* (H6089), sorrow (Genesis 3:16; Psalm 127:2; Proverbs 10:22). The words pain and travail are used many times in reference to childbirth (Psalm 48:6; Isaiah 13:8; Isaiah 21:3; Isaiah 26:17; Isaiah 54:1; Isaiah 66:7; Jeremiah 4:31; Jeremiah 6:24; Jeremiah 22:23; Jeremiah 30:6; Jeremiah 50:43; Romans 8:22; 1 Thes. 5:3; Rev. 12:2).

[children] *ben* (H1121), sons, but includes daughters (Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 3:20; Genesis 5:4; Genesis 6:1).

[desire] *teshuwqah* (H8669), longing (Genesis 4:7; Song 7:10). Your desire shall be subject to your husband, perhaps implying she learned her lesson and would consider him in her future actions.

[he shall rule over thee] Man is now the head of the woman (1 Cor. 11:3-12; Ephes. 5:22, etc.).

your sorrow and your conception: These two words mean “your sorrowful conception” (see 1:2; 4:12; 9:2; Ps. 9:2). That is, the woman’s joy in conceiving and bearing children will be saddened by the pain of it. The word **desire** can also mean “an attempt to usurp or control” as in 4:7. We can paraphrase the last two lines of this verse this way: “You will now have a tendency to dominate your husband, and he will have the tendency to act as a tyrant over you.” The battle of the sexes has begun. Each strives for control and neither lives in the best interest of the other (see Phil. 2:3, 4). The antidote is in the restoration of mutual respect and dignity through Jesus Christ (see Eph. 5:21–33).

Unto the woman he said—She being second in the transgression is brought up the second to receive her condemnation, and to hear her punishment: I will greatly multiply, or multiplying I will multiply; i.e., I will multiply thy sorrows, and multiply those sorrows by other sorrows, and this during conception and pregnancy, and particularly so in parturition or child-bearing. And this curse has fallen in a heavier degree on the woman than on any other female. Nothing is better attested than this, and yet there is certainly no natural reason why it should be so; it is a part of her punishment, and a part from which even God’s mercy will not exempt her. It is added farther, Thy desire shall be to thy husband—thou shalt not be able to shun the great pain and peril of child-bearing, for thy desire, thy appetite, shall be to thy husband; and he shall rule over thee, though at their creation both were formed with equal rights, and the woman had probably as much right to rule as the man; but subjection to the will of her husband is one part of her curse; and so very capricious is this will often, that a sorer punishment no human being can well have, to be at all in a state of liberty, and under the protection of wise and equal laws.²⁷

Nachmanides

²⁷ Adam Clarke’s Commentary

The correct interpretation appears to me to be that He punished her that her desire for her husband be exceedingly great and that she should not be deterred by the pain of pregnancy and birth or that he keeps her as a maid-servant. Now it is not customary for a servant to desire to acquire a master over himself, rather his desire is to flee from him. Thus her punishment is measure for measure; she gave the fruit of the tree of knowledge also to her husband and he ate at her command, and He punished her that she should no longer command him, but instead he should command her entirely at his will.

Now if the fruit of the tree were good for food and he desired it to become wise, why did He withhold it from him? Indeed, G-d is kind and dealth kindly; He will withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly! The serpent, moreover, has today no speaking faculty, and if it did have it at first, He would surely have mentioned in His curse that its mouth become dumb, as this would hve been the most grievous curse of all. But all these things are twofold in meaning, the overt and the concealed in them both being true. ²⁸

Genesis 3:17

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

The 3rd prophecy in Genesis (Genesis 3:17-19, fulfilled and being fulfilled). Next prophecy in Genesis 4:12. The curse upon the ground will be removed in the New Earth (Rev. 21:1-7; Rev. 22:3).

The Twofold Sin of Adam

1. Hearing his wife's plea to eat the forbidden fruit. What form her arguments took, how Adam met them, or to what extent he resisted is not known. The theory that he would have been required to separate from her is not mentioned in the Bible. If he had lived true to God, his children would have been born sinless, because sin passed through the father, not the mother (Exodus 20:5; Ezekiel 18:2-4; Romans 5:12-21). The mother would merely have been the means of bringing sinless children into the world, just as Christ was born sinless by a sinful mother and a sinless Father (Romans 8:3).
2. Eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 2:17; Genesis 3:6,17; Romans 5:12-21).

[cursed is the ground] The curse was not only on man, but also on animals, the ground, and all it produces (Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:19-23; Rev. 21:4; Rev. 22:3).

Unto Adam he said—The man being the last in the transgression is brought up last to receive his sentence: Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife—“thou wast not deceived, she only gave and counseled thee to eat; this thou shouldst have resisted;” and that he did not is the reason of his condemnation. Cursed is the ground for thy sake—**from henceforth its fertility shall be greatly impaired; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it—be in**

²⁸ Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, pg 84

continual perplexity concerning the seed time and the harvest, the cold and the heat, the wet and the dry. How often are all the fruits of man's toll destroyed by blasting, by mildew, by insects, wet weather, land floods, etc.! Anxiety and carefulness are the laboring man's portion.²⁹

Genesis 3:18

Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

[**Thorns**] Thorns are a sign of desolation (Proverbs 24:31; Isaiah 5:6; Isaiah 7:24; Isaiah 34:13). They were used as awls (Job 41:2), fuel (Psalm 58:9; Psalm 118:12; Eccles. 7:6), fences (Hosea 2:6; Micah 7:4), and to make the crown of Christ (Matthew 27:29; Mark 15:17; John 19:2,5). They symbolize evils in the heart choking the Word (Matthew 13:7,22), and human suffering (Numbers 33:55; 2 Cor. 12:7).

[**thistles**] Thistles were noxious plants representing all forms of poisonous weeds that were part of the curse (Job 31:40; Hosea 10:8). See parables of thistles in 2 Kings 14:9; 2 Chron. 25:18; and Matthew 7:16.

[**herb**] Hebrew: *eseb* (H6212), all manner of herbs, vegetation, and fruits (Genesis 1:11-12,29-30; Genesis 2:5; Genesis 3:18; Genesis 9:3; Psalm 104:14).

Genesis 3:19

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Man's Curse

This foretells the hard labor which man would endure under the conditions of the curse. The very elements would be adverse, making him suffer for his sin. Hard labor would break him down physically, finally resulting in his death (Eccles. 3:20; Eccles. 12:7; Psalm 103:14; 1 Cor. 15:21-28). Deserts, barrenness, weeds, poisons, germs and every other form of curse were to add to man's punishment until he would finally return to the cursed ground himself. The planets were affected so that weather conditions would become a problem (Isaiah 30:26; Isaiah 35:1-8; Rev. 7:16). Until the final restoration of all things, man's whole existence was to be one of constant hardships, sufferings, and trials (Genesis 31:42; Genesis 35:16; Psalm 90:10; Psalm 107:12; Eccles. 1:8; Eccles. 2:18; Eccles. 4:8; Matthew 11:28; James 5:4). In the New Earth there will be no more curse. Everything will be as it was before Lucifer's rebellion in the pre-Adamite world, and before man's rebellion in the Adamite world (Acts 3:21; Rev. 22:3). Christ's purpose in the millennial reign will be to rid the earth of all rebellion and curse so that man can

²⁹ Adam Clarke's Commentary

carry out his original assignment of helping God administer the affairs of the universe (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Ephes. 1:10; Rev. 20-22).

[for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return] See Genesis 2:7,19; Eccles. 3:19-21.

Adam got his share of blame, even though he tried to escape it (v. 12). **Cursed is the ground:** Though the curse was not directed at the man, it is trouble for the man. Now his life will be marked by **toil, thorns and thistles, sweat**, and finally death. These words imply that before the Fall the ground was not filled with noxious weeds and work would have been more pleasant (2:15). **to dust you shall return:** Death will now come to humankind, whereas there had been the possibility of living forever (see Rom. 5:12–14). The word of God was sure: God had stated that they would certainly die (2:17). Now they were served notice concerning the process of aging and decay that was already at work (see 5:5; 6:3).

Genesis 3:20

And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

[Eve] Hebrew: *Chawah* (H2332), life, living, life-spring. See Acts 17:26.

[mother of all living] Where Did Cain Get His Wife?

Adam and Eve were the only people on earth immediately after the six days' work of re-creation. They were commanded to multiply and replenish the earth (Genesis 1:26-28), and they had sons and daughters (Genesis 4:1; Genesis 5:4; Genesis 6:1). The first marriages had to be between brothers and sisters in order to get the race started. Later, marrying close relatives was forbidden (Leviticus 18).

Cain was over 100 years old when he took his wife and started his family in the land of Nod where enough people already lived to build a city (Genesis 4:16-26). Genesis 3:20 says Eve was "the mother of all living"—proof enough that she was responsible for both Cain and his wife.

The name **Eve** is related to the verb meaning "to live." Eve is our common mother, just as Adam is our common father. This is Adam's second name for her. The first was *woman*, the feminine complement to his own masculinity (2:23).

Genesis 3:21

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

[make coats of skins] Made from animals God taught Adam to offer as sacrifices in looking forward to the promised Redeemer (cp. Genesis 4:1-7; Hebrews 9:22).

[skin] *owr*, (H5785), *ore*; from (H5783) *ʾuwr*; skin (as naked); by implication hide, leather :- hide, leather, skin.

[**skin**] *owr* (EDLS) from the letter *ayin* counting every seventh letter from right to left spells, *Yeshua*.

[**skin**] God will later tell Moses to use skins of animals in the covering of the Tabernacle.

This is the first place the Bible mentions the killing of animals for human use—this time for tunics.

Note in vs. 24 that God made animal skins for clothing for Adam and Eve. Why? They had already made clothing out of vegetation for themselves, and it must have done the trick. But, it wasn't good enough as far as God was concerned. Primarily, because **THEY** did it, and not God. Here we see the end results of the first blood sacrifice in the Bible. Where do you get an animal skin? From a dead animal. Was there death of ANYTHING up to now? No...these animals used to clothe Adam and *Havah* (Eve) didn't die from old age...they had to be killed. Here we have another fundamental set down for all time that we **MUST** pay attention to: the only suitable payment for sin is the shedding of innocent blood. God had to let one of His own created and innocent creatures die, to pay for Adam and Eve's rebellion. Living Creatures, created from the same dust of the earth as humans.....given animation and life from God's own breath just as were humans.....are now having to die to atone for the rebelliousness of human beings, so that humans can have **some** relationship with God, though not to the extent that Adam and *Havah* originally did.

We hear the term "covering" in this vein: that is, that shed blood was a covering for man's sin. This is where the notion of blood being a covering comes from: those animals skins "covered" Adam and Eve's nakedness...their sin.....and the sin it covered was their rebellion of stealing from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and now sin lived in them.

And, yet, when *Havah* lied and told the old serpent that she was not allowed to even **touch** that tree, she had not yet eaten the fruit. She had not yet gained the knowledge of good and evil. So, whether it was Adam's lie or *Havah*'s lie, where did their notion to lie come from if the Fall of Man...the eating of that fruit...had not yet occurred? Well, the ancient Hebrews' take on this is that God **CREATED** man with both a good and an evil inclination. In Hebrew the phrases are *yetzer hatov* and *yetzer harah*...the good inclination and the evil inclination. So, according to this view, *Havah* or Adam or both were just acting out their evil inclinations when they, first, added to God's command by including the words "and not to touch it", and then second, by blatantly disobeying His command by eating the fruit that God had unambiguously told them not to. Yes, *Havah* says the serpent "tricked her"...but is that really the case? All the serpent did at first was ask a question, and *Havah*'s response was not truth. Once she told a lie, the gate was open and the evil one took her to the next step...disobedience. This really stings most Christian doctrine on the subject, but it is hard not to see that, at the least, the Hebrew sages have a point. After all, if God created everything, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was His creation, put by Him into the Garden He created, then evil predated mankind. Did evil just pop-up on it's own? Or was it actually part of Creation?

We're not going to debate that headache-producing subject today, but if we are honest about what Scripture tells us (and what it does **NOT** tell us), then the pre-existence

of evil cannot be taken as a simple, cut and dried, easy on our conscience, doctrine-ized matter.

McGee: Man must have a substitute between himself and God's wrath. That is important even in these days for man to consider. The hardest thing in the world is for man to take his rightful position before God. This anonymous poem on prayer reveals the necessity of this even in our own hearts:

He prayed for strength that he might achieve;
He was made weak that he might obey.
He prayed for health that he might do greater things;
He was given infirmity that he might do better things,
He prayed for riches that he might be happy;
He was given poverty that he might be wise.
He prayed for power that he might have the praise of men;
He was given infirmity that he might feel the need of God.
He prayed for all things that he might enjoy life;
He was given life that he might enjoy all things.
He had received nothing that he asked for—all that he hoped for;
His prayer was answered—he was most blessed.

Salvation comes when you and I take our proper place as sinners before God.³⁰

Genesis 3:22

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

[as one of us] This emphasizes the fact that there is more than one distinct person in the Godhead. Man has become "as one of Us" in knowing good (Hebrew: *towb* (H2896), to be good), and evil (Hebrew: *ra* (H7451), bad, calamity, wretchedness as a result of sin).

[live for ever] There must have been an inherent virtue in the tree of life to preserve life indefinitely. If man was created to live forever should he not sin, then he lost eternal life in the fall. Christ brings it back to him (2 Tim. 1:10). The tree of life would have caused even sinful man to live forever physically; hence, the action of Genesis 3:22-24.

become like one of us: By means of their rebellious act, the man and woman now shared something with God. But they were also at enmity with Him because of their sin. Adam and Eve's knowledge of good and evil had made them not wise but foolish. The fruit of the **tree of life** stopped aging. To eat of this tree was **to live forever**. One day this tree will be planted anew and its fruit will be for the healing of the nations (Rev. 22:2).

³⁰McGee, J. Vernon, *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 2000, c1981.

In verse 22, we get another piece to the puzzle of who God is; and what His attributes consist of. For we get the statement *NAS Genesis 3:22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"*— Which corresponds with the statement back in Genesis 1:26 *NAS Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*

So, here we have 2 places in the Bible, early on, in which God speaks of Himself as “us”. Note also that Adam and Eve were removed from the Holy place of the Garden of Eden. Mankind was now separated from God...physically and spiritually. And, God put an angelic guard on the approach to the Tree of Life to keep Adam and Eve away from it.....they had already proven they were not trustworthy, and God couldn't allow them near it. In fact, they couldn't even be allowed to stay in the Garden anymore. God cannot allow uncleanness and sin anywhere near His perfect holiness.

Now, notice again that direction, east. God placed his angelic guard at the eastern part of the Garden.... apparently, there was an entrance into the Garden from the east. So, we now have the Garden in the eastern part of the Land of Eden, and the angel in the east end of the Garden. We'll see a whole bunch more “east” as we move along.

Genesis 3:23

Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

[send ... forth] *shalach* (H7971), to send away, cast out (Genesis 21:14; Genesis 25:6; Genesis 28:5; Genesis 45:7).

[till] *abad* (H5647), to work, serve (Genesis 2:5; 2 Samuel 9:10; Jeremiah 27:11).

[the ground] The body consists of various chemicals, including iron, sugar, salt, carbon, iodine, phosphorus, lime, calcium, and others.

The man had been formed by God outside the **garden** (2:5–8, 15) and had been given the task of tending and keeping it. Now he was removed from the garden and sent back to till the soil **from which he was taken** (see 2:5; 3:17–19).

Genesis 3:24

So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

[drove out] *garash* (H1644), drive out from a possession, expel (Genesis 4:14; Exodus 2:17; Exodus 6:1; Exodus 23:28-31; Exodus 33:2; Exodus 34:11). Could it be that man hesitated to leave and had to be driven?

[placed] *shakan* (H7931), to place in a tabernacle or to dwell (Deut. 14:23; Deut. 16:2,6,11; Deut. 26:2; Joshua 18:1; Psalm 78:60).

[Cherubims] Heavenly beings (Ezekiel 1:8-28; Ezekiel 8:1-4; Ezekiel 10:1-22). Angels who guard the holiness of God. Ezek. 1:5, and Rev. 4:6.

[flaming] *lahat* (H3858), a blaze, enchantment (Exodus 7:11).

[sword] Numbers 22:23-31; Joshua 5:13; 2 Samuel 24:16; 1 Chron. 21:12-30; Isaiah 37:36.

[keep] Man's duty was to cultivate and keep (preserve) the garden from all intruders. "Keep" is from the Hebrew *shamar* (H8104), to hedge about, guard, protect (Genesis 3:24; Genesis 6:19-20; Genesis 7:3; Genesis 17:9-10; Genesis 18:19; Genesis 28:15,20; Psalm 17:8). This is the first hint of an enemy of God and man. Adam failed to "keep" the garden, so sin entered and Satan became the pseudo-ruler of the restored earth (Matthew 4:1-11; Matthew 12:24-25; Romans 5:12-21; 2 Cor. 4:4; Ephes. 6:10-18). His final defeat is pictured in Rev. 12:7-12; Rev. 20:1-10.

[way] *derek* (H1870), a road. No doubt God had made a beautiful way of approach to the tree. Its position in Rev. 2:7; Rev. 22:2 may suggest where it was in the garden.

Even though Eve sinned first, this section (vv. 22–24) focuses on the man, Adam. This is the first reference to holy angels or the cherubim in the Book of Genesis. The creation of the angels (including those who rebelled against God; see 6:1–4) preceded the creation activities described in the chs. 1; 2. A cherub (pl., cherubim) is an angel who takes on a particular form (see Ex. 25:18–22; compare Ezek. 1:5–28). Cherubim, like all angels, are spirit beings, but they can take on physical bodies. Adam and Eve were barred from the garden that God had planted for their enjoyment with a flaming sword. There was no way back in. The fact that the tree of life remained, even though guarded by angels and a sword, was a ray of hope. Is it not possible that the very fact He guarded it, but did not uproot it, signify that one day its fruit may be eaten again? Indeed, one day we will see it again (Rev 22:2). Adam and Eve were no longer welcome in God's presence, but they had the hope that one day Paradise would be regained.

3:22-24 Driving Adam and Eve from the garden was both a punishment and an act of mercy, lest they should eat of the tree of life and live forever in a state of death and alienation.

This is how Adam and Eve broke their relationship with God: (1) they became convinced their way was better than God's; (2) they became self-conscious and hid; (3) they tried to excuse and defend themselves. To build a relationship with God we must reverse those

steps: (1) we must drop our excuses and self-defenses; (2) we must stop trying to hide from God; (3) we must become convinced that God's way is better than our way.

PROFILE: EVE

We know very little about Eve, the first woman in the world, yet she is the mother of us all. She was the final piece in the intricate and amazing puzzle of God's creation. Adam now had another human being with whom to fellowship—someone with an equal share in God's image. Here was someone alike enough for companionship, yet different enough for relationship. Together they were greater than either could have been alone.

Eve was approached by Satan in the Garden of Eden, where she and Adam lived. He questioned her contentment. How could she be happy when she was not allowed to eat from one of the fruit trees? Satan helped Eve shift her focus from all that God had done and given to the one thing he had withheld. And Eve was willing to accept Satan's viewpoint without checking with God.

Sound familiar? How often is our attention drawn from the much which is ours to the little that isn't? We get that "I've got to have it" feeling. Eve was typical of us all, and we consistently show we are her descendants by repeating her mistakes. Our desires, like Eve's, can be quite easily manipulated. They are not the best basis for actions. We need to keep God in our decision-making process always. His Word, the Bible, is our guidebook in decision making.

Strengths and accomplishments:

- First wife and mother
- First female. As such she shared a special relationship with God, had co-responsibility with Adam over creation, and displayed certain characteristics of God

Weaknesses and mistakes:

- Allowed her contentment to be undermined by Satan
- Acted impulsively without talking either to God or to her mate
- Not only sinned, but shared her sin with Adam
- When confronted, blamed others

Lessons from her life:

- The female shares in the image of God
- The necessary ingredients for a strong marriage are commitment to each other, companionship with each other, complete oneness, absence of shame (Genesis 2:24, 25)
- The basic human tendency to sin goes back to the beginning of the human race

Vital statistics:

- Where: Garden of Eden
- Occupation: Wife, helper, companion, co-manager of Eden
- Relatives: Husband: Adam. Sons: Cain, Abel, Seth. Numerous other children

Key verse:

“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him’ ” (Genesis 2:18).

Eve’s story is told in Genesis 2:19-4:26. Her death is not mentioned in Scripture.