

Osaka International Church

Date: March 16th, 2008

Daniel Ellrick

Series: Beginnings #9

Title: The Fall

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-13

I. Introduction

Good morning! When you watch the television news or read the newspaper, have you ever asked, “*How did we get into this mess?*” In this world, there are wars and diseases, divorce and child abuse, drug addiction and homelessness, murder and rape, poverty and despair, AIDS and abortion, and the list goes on. “*How did we get into this mess? And how can we get out of it?*” These are very important questions, and in the Bible we can find good answers.



In today's Scripture, we will find some answers. But first, let's remember where we were last week. Adam and Eve are in the Garden of Eden and everything is very good. They have complete freedom except that there is one thing that is forbidden. In **Genesis 2:17**, the Lord told Adam, “**but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.**” Adam was responsible to obey this one command, and he was also responsible to teach his wife, Eve, to obey as well. A few weeks ago we also talked about how Satan became the devil. Satan was once a beautiful angel, but then pride entered his heart and he rebelled against God. **Revelation 12:9** explains, “**The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.**” We don't know for sure when Satan fell, but it was after God created the earth and before Genesis 3. So then, Adam and Eve were living in the wonderful Garden of Eden, but the devil had come to earth also. With these things in mind, let's take a look at Genesis 3:1-6.

II. Scripture #1: Genesis 3:1-6 (NIV)

[1] Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" [2] The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, [3] but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'" [4] "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. [5] "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." [6] When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

III. Teaching #1

In 1808, William Blake painted the scene of the temptation like this. How did Adam and Eve do? Not so well. When the test came, they disobeyed God. What about us? How do we do when temptation comes? I am afraid that we also fall into sin far too often. The devil appeared to Eve in the form of a serpent, but the devil is also able to come to us in many ways. And far too often, we choose to believe the devil's lies instead of God's truth.



Some Bible scholars see the story of the temptation and fall given here as a figurative and representative story that teaches how all people fall into sin, starting with Adam and Eve. Other scholars view the story as absolutely literal. But either way, Genesis 3 answers the question, “*How did we get into this mess?*” All of the pain, sorrow, sickness, and death in this fallen world began with the sin of Adam and Eve. Our troubles began with the fall.



By the way, in Thailand, Mr. Lu, a wonderful Chinese-American man, told me this joke. *“If Adam and Eve had been Chinese we wouldn’t have all of these troubles.” “Why is that?” “If they had been Chinese, they would have eaten the snake.”* I like this joke, and it is good for us to have a sense of humor. But sin is a very serious matter, so we should try to understand the process of temptation, so that we can resist effectively. We don’t have the option of eating the snake, but we can learn how to avoid falling for the devil’s tricks.



Let’s take a closer look at the process of temptation. **Genesis 3:1, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?'”** Here, the devil introduces doubt about God’s Word. The devil asks, **“Did God really say?”** And then the devil says something God never said at all. The devil is trying to create doubt and confusion about what God has said.

Genesis 3:2-3, “The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'” Eve sees that the devil has misquoted God, and she tries to correct the statement. But she adds, **“you must not touch it,”** something that God did not say. We need to know God’s Word and be careful not to add to it or subtract from it, because that gives opportunities to the devil. Eve adds to God’s Word, and she also gets into a conversation with the serpent. Don’t do that! When the devil comes to tempt you, don’t chat with him! The devil is cunning and he will soon trap you with clever words.

Genesis 3:4, “‘You will not surely die,'” the serpent said to the woman. Now the devil is calling God a liar. The devil ignores the wide freedom God gave, focuses on the prohibition, and then directly contradicts God’s Word. But who is the real liar? It is the devil. **Genesis 3:5, “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”** After calling God a liar, the devil now questions God’s motives by suggesting that God is trying to keep something good from Adam and Eve. Notice also that the devil mixes in some half-truth. Eating from the tree will indeed cause Adam and Eve to know good and evil, but that is not a good thing, it is a terrible thing. In the Bible the idea of knowing includes the idea of experience. Do you think that Eve wanted to experience the pain and suffering that comes from evil? Of course not! But she is deceived by the devil.

Here we also see what I call, “the big lie.” The devil says, **“you will be like God.”** The devil spreads this same huge lie in many different forms. Many religious systems teach that you can become a god or a godlike superhuman. Non-religious people say there is no god, and therefore we can decide everything ourselves. Society says that if you were really rich, or really famous, or really powerful, that then you would be happy. But it is all basically the same lie, because in all of these things the lie appeals to your pride and says you will be on top, “like God.” Everyday, we are presented with the big lie that tempts us to abandon worship of the Creator God and to try to become gods ourselves. But the Creator God will not share His glory with others. Look out for the big lie; it is deadly.

Genesis 3:6, “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” Eve believed the devil instead of God. She focused her attention on the forbidden fruit, and it was not long before she ate. But sinners don’t want to be the only one disobeying God, so Eve gave some to Adam and encouraged him to eat as well. What happened next?

IV. Scripture #2: Genesis 3:7-13 (NIV)

[7] Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. [8] Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. [9] But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" [10] He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." [11] And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" [12] The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." [13] Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this

you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

V. Teaching #2

Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. And they learned that they were naked and for the first time they felt shame. This speaks not only of their lack of clothing, but also of their sudden awareness that they have sinned. They gained knowledge of evil by experiencing the pain and guilt that come from sin. Then they had the urge to hide from God and they became afraid. In **Genesis 3:9**, it says, **"But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"**" Why did God ask this question? God certainly knew where Adam and Eve were hiding. But God asks because He wants Adam and Eve to understand. Where are they? They are away from God, hiding from Him, afraid of Him, spiritually dead in their sins. Not a good place to be.



Hiding their bodies didn't work, so next they try to hide their guilt by playing the blame game. **Genesis 3:12-13**, **"The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."**" The man blames it on the woman and even on God Himself, saying, **"the woman you put here with me."** Eve blames the serpent. Does any of this sound familiar to you? Have you heard it before? *"It's my wife's fault."* *"It's God's fault."* *"The devil made me do it."* Notice that there is no confession of sin and no repentance in any of these statements. Everyone recognizes that something bad has happened, but no one says, *"I did wrong. I'm sorry and I won't do it again."*

Sin destroys our innocence. Sin destroys our relationship with God and with people. Sin destroys our character. Sin destroys our happiness and robs us of peace. And, sin blinds us so that we are no longer able to see that we need to repent. God said that Adam and Eve would die when they ate the forbidden fruit. Did Adam and Eve die as soon as they ate? Yes they did. They did not die physically at that time, that came later; but they died spiritually immediately. Spiritual death is the loss of our relationship with God: it is separation from our heavenly Father.

In this life, we will probably never be completely free from sin. But there are some steps that we can take to resist sin and to defend ourselves against the devil's attacks. From the story of the fall, we can see some of these steps that will help us to protect ourselves from temptation.

1. Study: Know God's Word - know what God has and has not said.
2. Faith: Believe God's Word - don't believe the lies of the devil, believe God.
3. Love: Love God and Trust in God's Love - don't question God's motives, remember that God loves you.
4. Share: Tell People about God - this blesses others and it helps you to remember.
5. Fight: Resist the Devil - don't listen to him, stand firm on God's Word.
6. Flee: Leave the Place of Temptation - don't stare at the forbidden fruit, get away!
7. Pray: Call out to God for Help - don't hide from Him.

If we do these things, we will be able to avoid many sins. But we live in a fallen world and we are human, so sometimes we may fall into sin even though we strive to do well. What should we do then? When we are in a mess, how can we get out of it?

Take a closer look at Genesis 3:8. **"Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden."** Adam and Eve heard the sound of the Lord God walking. How is this possible? I can think of only one reasonable answer. It must have been Jesus¹ who was walking in the garden. Many people think that the story of Jesus starts in the New Testament. But Jesus is God the Son, eternal, and not confined by time and space. Jesus can appear at any time and place that He chooses, and I think that the Bible reveals that Jesus appeared many times in the Old Testament.

When Adam and Eve sinned, the Lord God, that is Jesus, came into the garden. When they heard the sound of Jesus walking, they hid themselves. As a result, instead of getting out of the mess they were in, they just got into a bigger mess. But here is what I want to suggest to you. When you have messed up and you are

in trouble, you can be sure that Jesus will come looking for you also. When He comes, don't hide or run away. Run to Jesus and kneel at His feet and confess your sins and ask for forgiveness. And Jesus will forgive you and lift you up and enfold you in His love. This is how you can get out of the mess. Instead of hiding, run to Jesus and confess your sin. **1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."**

VI. Closing

On the day when Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they died spiritually. The spiritual life that God had given them and the close relationship with the Lord that they had enjoyed was lost. They were dead in their sins. All of us have been in the same situation, and some of us are still dead in our sins. But there is a solution. Run to Jesus and confess your sins. Place your trust in God's love and your faith in Jesus and in His finished work on the cross. And He will lift you up and give you new life. Run to Jesus and trust in Him, and you will be saved from your sins. Let's pray.



VII. Closing Prayer

ⁱ See <http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/theophany.html> for more discussion about this.