

The Book of Genesis

Genesis 2:25 – Genesis 3:7

“The Dialogue of Descent”

17th Message in The Book of Genesis

Sunday 15 March 2020

Glenvista Baptist Church

Genesis 2:25 – Genesis 3:7 (ESV) “²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 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 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.”

Introduction

- a) Seven days of creation and all is done, all is perfect. The glory of God seen in unparalleled splendour, majestic brightness and overall grandeur. Man has now a companion for himself; one after the likeness of God and in so many ways so much like him as well. A companion in whom he delights and with whom he now can share the beauty and brilliance of all that God has made. All things in heaven and on earth testified to the goodness and greatness of God. Everything Adam and Eve could see was irrefutable proof of the power and honor of God. The earth and all that was made was full of God’s praise. God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature (**Rom 1**) – were clearly seen, and could be understood from what God had made, and therefore the first man and woman on planet earth was completely and utterly without excuse. And even though the serpent was whispering in Eve’s ear telling her lies, the whole of creation was testifying to the truth. And in so doing the love of God was all around Eve, even though the crafty serpent was tempting her.
- b) At this stage, before the Fall, Adam and Eve had listened only to God. There were no other voices; there were no other influences. Up until this point God has provided

everything Adam and Eve had needed and now in the Garden a test of their loyalty to God arises. And their conscious decision to disobey God has disastrous consequences on Adam and Eve, on their relationship with God, on all who will come from their seed and on all of creation. **Destruction**, **disaster** and **death** enters upon the **disobedience** of the first man and his wife.

- c) The verses we have just read (**Gen 3:1-7**), are among the most important in the Bible, as they record the great tragedy of man's fall from his created state of innocence and fellowship with God, to his present state of sinfulness and alienation. And the tragic fact is that Adam sinned and brought ruin and misery upon all of creation. Yet, in the beginning it was not so.

Point 1 – “A Slippery Slope: From Innocence and Intimacy, to Guilt and Estrangement” (Gen 2:25-3:1)

Genesis 2:25 (ESV) “²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”

- a) **V25** So, if it had not been so in the beginning, one needs to realize that Adam and Eve had embarked on a slippery slope that had led to the destruction, ruin and misery of all we see around us even today, and as clearly portrayed in the unfolding narrative of the Book of Genesis. In actual fact we see so clearly in **2:25** that Adam and Eve found themselves in a complete state of innocence, something utterly incomprehensible for you and me, from a human vantage point, and we see their innocence depicted by their nakedness in the Garden prior to the Fall.
- b) R. Kent Hughes states, “As we come to the third chapter of Genesis, Adam and Eve are living in unparalleled splendour amidst the crystal waters and green forests of Eden in delightful concert with each other and with the animals God had placed in the Garden. The magnificent couple shared the same bones and same flesh in naked majesty. She was at once his daughter (*she came out of him*), his sister (*she had the same Creator-Father*), and his “one flesh” wife. Their one flesh relationship reflected the eternal intimacy and order of the Holy Trinity and foreshadowed the order and intimacy of Christ and His bride, the Church (Eph 5:31-32). Their intimacy was a substantial glory to God as a reflection of what always was and a glimpse of what was to come.”¹
- c) Now what is really important to see is the order of authority which God institutes prior to the Fall in the Garden of Eden. We see very particularly that Adam's authority in the husband and wife relationship was part of the creation even before sin and the fall entered the picture. We read that:

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis – Beginning and Blessing – Preaching the Word Series*, Crossway Books (2004) page 65

1. **Adam was created first.** A fact that apostle Paul makes clear in his argument for maintaining creation order in **1 Timothy 2:13-14**, “¹³ For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴ and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor.”
2. **Eve was taken out of man.** This the apostle Paul likewise notes in **1 Corinthians 11:8-9**, “⁸ For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. ⁹ Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.”
3. **Eve was designated as Adam's helper.** This we have seen so clearly in **Genesis 2:18**. This fact cannot be stated of Adam, but is clearly made known of Eve.
4. **The authority structure of Genesis 2 and 3,** rests upon the careful order of God, the man, the woman and the serpent.

d) Now this however is tragically reversed here in Genesis, for we now have **the woman listening to the serpent, the man listening to the woman, and no one listening to God.**

Yet on this slippery slope we see the man and the woman descending from a state of innocence and intimacy to a place of guilt and estrangement.

e) Now note something of the structure of the text before us. **Chapter 2:25** and **Chapter 3:7** enclose a unit, and the unit is bracketed on both sides by the couple's nakedness, but the two verses that make up the bracket are in radical contrast to each other. Whereas **2:25** picture Adam and Eve at the pinnacle of innocence and intimacy, **3:7** describes them in the dungeon of guilt and estrangement. **From innocence to guilt. From joy to gloom. From intimacy to separation. From fearlessness to fear. From freedom to bondage.** And beloved the full extent of the Fall can only properly be understood when we understand the full extent and the length God the Father had to go to, to undo the effects of the Fall of our forefather Adam. It took the work of the Second Adam to bring home to us the complete extent of our downfall in the First Adam.

Point 2 – “Engaging in a Conversation of Destructive Descent” (Gen 3:2-5)

Genesis 3:2 (ESV) “² He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’”

a) **V2** We now enter as of **verse 2** what some commentators have called “*The Dialogue of Descent*”, as it describes the dialogue that led to the descent of Adam and Eve. What is so surprising about this dialogue is that it is introduced by a snake. Bearing in mind that at the appearance of the snake sin had not yet appeared in the world, and we are told

in **verse 1**, “Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.” We are introduced here to a snake, a snake created by God, and snakes are naturally shrewd by nature. This was a snake under the control of Satan, used for his own destructive purposes. And we know this, as the New Testament identifies this snake as the devil - **Revelation 12:9** – “**9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.**” And the snake begins a conversation with the woman.

- b) On this occasion we see Satan choosing the body of a snake as most suitable for his purposes here in Eden. Now Satan is introduced here as speaking, and right at the outset we see a deliberate attack on the authority and authenticity of God's Word. Satan seeks to sow the seeds of doubt in Eve's mind. His aim was to cause her to wonder whether God really meant what He said. Perhaps God had something else in mind, surely this is not quite what God intended? That's exactly what Satan's purpose was. Bear in mind that everything that was visible to the naked eye, at this stage in the Genesis account came about as a result of the spoken word of God. All that was made was made for God, by God, by the very breath of His mouth. Nothing that came about did not come through Him. All these majestic elements of creation came from God's good Word and Satan now attacked it.
- c) **V2** The serpent opens his attack with a most deceitful question. “**He said to the woman, “Did God actually say.....?”** Notice his surprised and doubting tone. Surely God did not really mean that you are not allowed to eat of the fruit of any of the trees in the garden? Notice how subtle Satan is. **Notice however, firstly** that this is not what God actually said. Satan is implying that God had forbidden man in totality to eat any fruit whatsoever from any of the trees in the garden and that is not what God did. What Satan was implying here was a complete distortion and travesty of God's Word. God only prohibited eating from one of the trees; simply one was barred, the rest were all available for consumption. **Secondly notice** also that the serpent's question deliberately avoids the covenant name of God. We saw that **chapter 1** uses the generic name of God, *Elohim*, whilst **chapter 2** uses the covenant name of God, *Yahweh-Elohim*; except for here in this discussion between Satan and Eve. Fascinating that this special name of God is deliberately not used here by Satan. And I think we see this happening simply because the covenant stipulations were about to be broken, and therefore Satan steers

clear of anything which may perhaps have caused Eve to be reminded of the stipulations thereof.

- d) **V2-3** Now Eve's response to the question Satan poses to her, is worthy of studying. Think of it carefully: if ever there was a wonderful opportunity to set the serpent straight, now would have been the time. **But our mother failed miserably.** Instead of speaking the truth and standing up for what God had said, Eve distorts the truth by being guilty of a threefold sin. She firstly **diminished** God's Word, then she **added** to God's Word and then finally she **softened** God's Word. See then how she **diminishes** the word of God: in **2:16** God had said, "You may surely eat of **every tree** of the garden...", but in **3:2** Eve leaves out the word "every", and simply says "We may **eat of the fruit of the trees** in the garden...". So Eve minimizes the faithful and lavish provision of her Lord. She displays a watered down version of the generosity of her God. Secondly we see how Eve **added** to the Word of God. God said in **2:16-17**, "¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Now notice how Eve adds to this in **3:3a**, "³ but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, **neither shall you touch it, lest you die.**" Eve adds the part, "neither shall you touch it", yet God never uttered those words. What Eve does here is she magnifies the strictness of God. Instead of simply holding faithfully to the prohibition of but only one tree in the garden, she adds that they may not even touch the trees, not even one of them. What a blatant lie. God never did that. Thirdly then see how Eve **softened** God's Word: Eve simply says in **3:3**, "lest you die" whilst God in **2:16** said, "the day you eat of it you shall **surely die**". Eve left out the word "surely" and so softened God's approach on this matter. Eve removed the certitude of death which would come as a result of breaking the covenant God made with Adam. Eve effectively took the power in her own hands to simultaneously *diminish, add to, and soften* God's Word.
- e) **V4-5** Satan introduces an absurd juxtaposition – it's now his word versus God's Word. He says, "You will **not surely die**" (**3:4**), whilst God says, "**you will surely die**" (**2:17**). The very first doctrine Satan denies here in the Garden is the **Doctrine of Divine Judgement**, and I would propose to you, as then, so now, it still is heavily under attack. In **verse 5** Satan attacks the goodness of God. Satan suggested to Eve that God was scared that Eve would learn too much and that such knowledge would make her and the man too wise, even too wise for God. Now, not merely content with altering the Word of God, Satan

now blatantly calls God a liar. Satan casts God in a horrible light here; for Satan was attempting to convince Eve that the threat of death was nothing more than a scare tactic God had employed.

- f) **V5** Yet the lie of Satan also held the lure of moral autonomy for Eve. Not only will she know the difference between “good and evil” but she will “become like God”. Strangely enough this was the same temptation that led to Satan downfall, for we read in **Isaiah 14:12-14**, “¹² How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! ¹³ You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’
- g) There is a warning in this for us dear friends; instead of doing what Eve did, we should resist the devil by maintaining faith in God’s Word. All around us the veracity and credibility of God’s Word is being questioned. The Church largely no longer holds to the authority of God’s Word. Pastors and people across the globe are doing exactly what the serpent did in the garden; for they are also saying, “Did God really say?”. Yet we are warned so distinctly, “¹³ Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. ¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” (Matt 7:13-14).

Point 3 – “A Slippery Slope that leads to a Destructive Fall” (Gen 3:6-7)

Genesis 3:6-7 (ESV) “⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.”

- a) **V6-7** We now move from a conversation of destructive descent to the actual descent. And we have pictured here, first, Eve’s descent, and then Adam’s descent. We come therefore first to Eve’s sin. In **1 John 2:16** we have the following threefold description, “¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.” Eve’s sin parallels the description found here in John’s first letter. For as Eve allowed her mind and emotions to be influenced by the Satanic suggestions of doubt and pride, and continued gazing at the forbidden tree, it became more and more beautiful and delectable. To her it seemed that the tree was (v6), (1) “good for food”; (2) “delight to the eyes”; (3) “to be desired to make one wise”. James tells us what happened to Eve in the garden and tells us what happens to us when we give in to temptation – “¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and

enticed by his own desire. ¹⁵ Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.” (James 1:13-15). You see that’s the real issue behind Eve’s sin – she was being “lured and enticed by her own desire”, and as prototype of all sinners, Eve felt impelled to lead Adam to participate in the same sin.

- b) **V6** That however does not in any way excuse Adam from his sinful actions and consequences. For the narrative tells us “she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” So it would be easy simply to blame Eve, but if we do so, we do exactly what Adam and Eve did in the garden, and that does not please God. It’s interesting that when the Apostle Paul writes about this in the New Testament both in his letter to Timothy as well as to the Church in Rome, he does not put the blame on Eve whatsoever for this sin, but he looks to Adam, and the reason for this is that Adam, not Eve is the Covenant Representative. Paul however does say that Eve was deceived in writing, “Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived” (1 Tim 2:14; Rom 5:12, 17-19). In the same breath, we are nowhere told, “in Eve all sinned”, but we are told “in Adam all sinned and all died” (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:22). Therefore it must be stressed that Adam willfully sinned. It’s not Eve’s fault, it’s not the serpent’s fault. Adam watched Eve delighting herself in the forbidden fruit and he wanted the same. Everything was indeed upside down – Eve followed the snake, Adam followed Eve, and no one followed God. And as seen, Adam and Eve then fell from the pinnacle of innocence and intimacy to the pit of guilt and estrangement.
- c) **V7 Verse 7** then ends the bracket, as mentioned earlier. This scene begins and ends itself in nakedness, although in sharp contrast to each other. In 2:25 the nakedness is a sign of innocence, whilst in 3:7 the fact that Adam and Eve recognize their own nakedness, is a sign of their guilt towards God and their immediate estrangement from God. What was once an open relationship rid of any form of fear, now becomes a relationship dominated by failure, sin, guilt and a need to hide from God. And Adam and Eve fall, and Adam’s sin becomes our sin. By Adam’s sin, “sin entered into the world, and death by sin” (Rom 5:12). All who were to be born as Adam’s posterity, would be “in Adam” and would therefore carry the guilt of Adam. Adam as federal head conveyed to us, all that came to him, as a result of His disobedience.

Conclusion:

- a) Beloved this fall brought along with it devastating consequences. It brought along with it the result that every boy and girl born, comes from his or her mother’s womb spewing lies - Psalms 58:3, “³ The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray from birth, speaking lies.” It means that we are born in guilt ridden sin, we are estranged from God because of Adam’s sin, and Adam’s condemnation rests upon, for in the day Adam sinned all died. There is not one unaffected by

this – “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). As a result of Adam’s fall, “None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹ no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹² All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” ¹³ “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” ¹⁴ “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.” ¹⁵ “Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ in their paths are ruin and misery, ¹⁷ and the way of peace they have not known.” ¹⁸ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (Rom 3:11-18)

- b) And folk, just like Eve in the garden, we so often sinfully do the same with the Word of God – we allow growing doubt about the Word of God to spawn biblical revisionism, often both conscious and unconscious. We tend just like Eve to minimize Scripture’s promises by being reductionistic about its benefits. Not only do we minimize God’s Word but we also exaggerate what we do not like by adding to God’s Word. And then because we are guilty of minimizing and adding to the Word our consciences become so seared that we feel free to subtract from God’s Word.
- c) Yet this ought not be. We are called as believers to tremble at God’s Word – not to do with it as we like. We read in **Isaiah 66:2**, “² But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.” And we are to look to the example of Jesus Christ, who is the Second Adam, who came to undo all the effects of the curse which the First Adam brought upon the world. We are to look to him and see how He as Second Adam threw Himself upon the Word of God, defeating Satan each time in the desert with direct quotations from the Book of Deuteronomy. Jesus was the Word, lived the Word and quoted the Word. How marvellous that He who was the Eternal Word of God resisted temptation by turning to the Written Word of God.
- d) How different things would have been if our first parents Adam and Eve had this same disposition in them. How radically different all would have been. But praise God for the Second Adam. For without Christ we would be lost and without hope in the world. Therefore look to Him afresh. Trust Him to keep you from the wiles of the evil one. Trust Him to lead you on the way everlasting. Trust Him to make you more like Him. And repent if you are not in Christ – for then you are still in your father Adam, and all of Adam’s guilt is still upon you and in his guilt you will die, unless you repent.

Amen

Soli Deo Gloria

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