

# Genesis 3:1-24 – "Confront Sin's Curse"

## Text: Genesis 3:1-24 (CSB)

**1** Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden?'" **2** The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. **3** But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.'" **4** "No! You will certainly not die," the serpent said to the woman. **5** "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." **6** The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew 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 walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9** So the LORD God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" **10** And he said, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." **11** Then he asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" **12** The man replied, "The woman you gave to be with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate." **13** So the LORD God asked the woman, "What have you done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." **14** So the LORD God said to the serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed more than any livestock and more than any wild animal. You will move on your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. **15** I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel. **16** He said to the woman: I will intensify your labor pains; you will bear children with painful effort. Your desire will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you. **17** And he said to the man, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'Do not eat from it': The ground is cursed because of you. You will eat from it by means of painful labor all the days of your life. **18** It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. **19** You will eat bread by the sweat of your brow until you return to the ground, since you were taken from it. For you are dust, and you will return to dust." **20** The man named his wife Eve because she was the mother of all the living. **21** The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them. **22** The LORD God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever." **23** So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. **24** He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life.

## Key Background:

- **The Serpent's Identity:** While Genesis 3 simply calls him "the serpent," the rest of Scripture identifies this creature as Satan, the devil, the ancient dragon (Revelation 12:9, 20:2). He is a fallen angel who rebelled against God and now seeks to destroy God's image-bearers. His appearance as a serpent represents his cunning, deceptive nature—he disguises evil as attractive and reasonable.
- **The Strategy of Temptation:** Satan's approach follows a pattern still used today: (1) Question God's word—"Did God really say?" (2) Deny God's consequence—"You will not die," (3) Accuse God's motive—"God knows... He's holding out on you," (4) Promise false benefit—"You will be like God." Every temptation begins by making us doubt God's goodness and truthfulness.
- **Eve's Fatal Steps:** The woman's fall follows three stages in verse 6: "good for food" (appealing to physical appetite), "delightful to look at" (aesthetic desire), "desirable for obtaining wisdom" (pride and ambition). This same pattern appears in 1 John 2:16 as "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's possessions"—the three avenues through which all temptation comes.

- **Adam's Silent Failure:** Verse 6 reveals Adam "was with her" during the temptation. He stood by silently while Satan deceived his wife and did nothing to protect her or correct the lies. His passive failure to lead and protect compounded the tragedy. When he then ate, he sinned with full knowledge, not deception—making his guilt even greater (1 Timothy 2:14).
- **Immediate Consequences:** "Their eyes were opened" (v. 7)—but not to wisdom and glory as promised. Instead, they saw their nakedness and felt shame for the first time. Sin always delivers the opposite of what it promises. They tried to cover themselves with fig leaves—humanity's first attempt at self-salvation, which proves utterly inadequate.
- **God Seeking the Lost:** When Adam and Eve hid, God came "walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze" (v. 8)—suggesting this was a regular occurrence, a daily fellowship now broken by sin. God's question "Where are you?" wasn't for information but for confession. Even after humanity's rebellion, God takes the initiative to seek and restore relationship.
- **The Blame Game:** When confronted, Adam blamed both Eve and God ("the woman *you* gave me"), while Eve blamed the serpent. Neither took full responsibility. Sin fractures not only our relationship with God but also our relationships with each other. The harmony of Genesis 2 gives way to accusation, blame-shifting, and broken trust.
- **The Curse on the Serpent:** God curses the serpent to crawl on its belly and eat dust—symbols of humiliation and defeat. Some interpret this as a physical change in snakes (though the curse extends beyond biology to Satan himself). The serpent's degradation foreshadows his ultimate doom.
- **The First Gospel (Protoevangelium):** Genesis 3:15 is called the *protoevangelium* (first gospel)—the initial promise of redemption. God declares war between Satan's offspring (those who follow evil) and the woman's offspring (ultimately Christ). "He will strike your head" refers to Christ's crushing defeat of Satan at the cross. "You will strike his heel" refers to Christ's suffering—a wound, but not fatal. This is the Bible's first messianic prophecy.
- **The Curse on the Woman:** Increased pain in childbirth and relational conflict with her husband ("desire... he will rule") are consequences of sin corrupting God's original design. The word "desire" (*teshuqah*) appears again in Genesis 4:7 describing sin's desire to dominate Cain—suggesting the woman's "desire" is an attempt to control or dominate her husband, which leads to harsh "rule" instead of loving partnership.
- **The Curse on Creation:** The ground itself is cursed "because of you" (Adam). Work, which was joyful in Genesis 2:15, now becomes toilsome, frustrating, and exhausting. Thorns, thistles, sweat, and eventual death mark humanity's daily experience. Romans 8:20-22 explains that all creation was "subjected to frustration" and groans, waiting for redemption.
- **Death Enters:** "You are dust, and you will return to dust" (v. 19). Physical death—the body's return to the ground—becomes humanity's certain fate. But worse than physical death is spiritual death—separation from God that occurred the moment they sinned. Death wasn't part of God's original design; it's the "wages of sin" (Romans 6:23).
- **God Provides Covering:** God makes "clothing from skins" (v. 21) to cover Adam and Eve. This required the death of animals—the Bible's first bloodshed, foreshadowing that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22). God's provision of covering pictures the gospel: we cannot cover our own sin (fig leaves fail), but God provides covering through sacrifice.
- **Expulsion from Eden:** Humanity is driven from paradise and barred from the tree of life by cherubim with a flaming sword. This isn't cruelty but mercy—preventing sinful humanity from eating from the tree of life and living forever in a fallen state. Access to eternal life must await redemption through Christ, who becomes "the way" back to the Father (John 14:6).
- **All Humanity Falls in Adam:** Romans 5:12 explains that "through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all people, because all sinned." Adam represented all humanity as our federal head. His sin corrupted human nature itself, passing spiritual death and sinful inclination to every descendant. This is the doctrine of original sin.

## Questions from the Story:

- How is the serpent described in verse 1? What does "most cunning" reveal about Satan's methods?
- What is the serpent's first question to the woman (v. 1)? How does he distort what God actually said?
- How does Eve respond to the serpent (vv. 2-3)? Does she accurately represent God's command?
- What does the serpent claim about God's warning (v. 4)? How does he directly contradict God's word?
- What accusation does the serpent make about God's motives (v. 5)? How does he portray God as withholding good from them?
- What three things does the woman observe about the fruit (v. 6)? How do these correspond to different types of temptation?
- Who is with the woman during this conversation (v. 6)? What does Adam's presence reveal about his failure?
- What happens when they eat the fruit (v. 7)? What do they see, and how do they respond?
- What do they use to cover themselves (v. 7)? What does this represent about human attempts to fix sin?
- What do Adam and Eve do when they hear God walking in the garden (v. 8)? Why do they hide?
- What question does God ask Adam (v. 9)? Is God seeking information or inviting confession?
- How does Adam explain his hiding (v. 10)? What new emotion has entered the human experience?
- What questions does God ask Adam in verse 11? How do these questions guide Adam toward acknowledging his sin?
- How does Adam respond to God's question (v. 12)? Who does he blame?
- What does God ask the woman (v. 13)? How does she respond?
- What curse does God pronounce on the serpent (vv. 14-15)? What does moving on his belly and eating dust symbolize?
- What does God promise in verse 15? Who are "your offspring" and "her offspring"?
- What does "he will strike your head" mean (v. 15)? What about "you will strike his heel"?
- What consequences does God declare for the woman (v. 16)? How does sin affect childbearing and marriage?
- What consequences does God declare for Adam and the ground (vv. 17-19)? How does sin corrupt work?
- What does verse 19 say about humanity's ultimate fate? How does death enter the human experience?
- What does Adam name his wife, and why (v. 20)? What does the name "Eve" mean?
- What does God do for Adam and Eve in verse 21? What is significant about clothing made from skins?
- What does God say in verse 22? Why must humanity be prevented from eating from the tree of life now?
- What does God do in verse 23? Where does He send Adam?
- How does God prevent humanity's return to Eden (v. 24)? What guards the way to the tree of life?
- Why does Satan begin his temptation by questioning God's word ("Did God really say?")? How is this still his primary strategy today?
- What does the progression of Eve's temptation (good for food, delightful to look at, desirable for wisdom) teach us about how sin works?
- Why is Adam's passive silence during Eve's temptation such a serious failure? What was his responsibility?
- How do Adam and Eve's attempts to cover themselves with fig leaves picture humanity's futile attempts at self-salvation?
- What does God's question "Where are you?" reveal about His heart toward sinners, even after they've rebelled?
- How does the blame-shifting in verses 12-13 demonstrate that sin fractures human relationships, not just our relationship with God?
- What makes Genesis 3:15 the "first gospel"? How does it point forward to Christ's victory over Satan?
- How does God's provision of animal skins to cover Adam and Eve foreshadow the gospel principle that covering sin requires blood sacrifice?
- Why did God drive humanity from the garden and prevent access to the tree of life? How was this an act of mercy?
- How does Romans 5:12-19 help us understand that all humanity fell in Adam, and all who believe are redeemed in Christ?
- In what ways do we see the curse of Genesis 3 still at work in the world today—in childbirth, work, relationships, and death?

- How should understanding the reality of spiritual warfare and Satan's deceptive methods make us more vigilant against temptation?