

THE CORRUPTED CREATION

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

INTRODUCTION

These three chapters are crucial for understanding the Bible in its entire context as well as its immediate context. For the most part, the contents of the Bible from Genesis 3 through Revelation 20 are a result of the event of Genesis 3. The Scripture clearly reveals that man's problem today is his depraved condition (Eph. 2:2). When Adam sinned it affected the whole human race so that his willful sin caused the fall of all humanity (Rom 5:12; 19). As a result of Adam's sin, the entire human race became sinful with no ability to keep from sinning. Although Adam was fully responsible for his sin, Satan was the mastermind who plotted his fall from righteousness (Gen 3:1ff). Since that time Satan has had the power of death and he uses that power to enslave people through fear of death. Adam's sin sentenced him and the whole human race to die physically, but worse, it also sentenced them to die spiritually, which is separation from God. However, Jesus conquered Satan by His death on the cross (Heb 2:14) and the power of death was broken when His Father raised Him from the dead and put all things under His feet (Eph 1:20-22). So all who put their trust in Jesus Christ are set free from Satan and his power of death (Heb 2:14-15). God's grace has provided redemption for those who would receive it. A great portion of Scripture is dedicated to God's plan of redemption.

A second major result of Adam's sin is the great division in the human race between the godly and the ungodly. Those who refuse God's plan of redemption are of the ungodly line which rebel against God and are characterized by Cain (Gen 4). On the other hand, those who accept God's plan of salvation are of the godly line which seek to obey His Word and are characterized by Abel and Seth.

Genesis 4:25-5:32 reveal the generations and righteous characteristics of the godly line. The immediate context of Scripture indicates, however, that when these opposite companies intermarried, they almost destroyed that godly line. God had to send the universal flood to insure that the godly line would continue (Gen 6). Therefore, even as the doctrine of separation was necessary in the beginning, so it is still necessary for our safety and for God's blessing (2 Cor. 7:1).

I. The Fall of the Human Race — 3:1-24

A. Circumstances around the Fall — 3:1-6

1. Satan's deceit — 3:1-5

Note: It is crucial in understanding this text to consider several theological presuppositions. First, man's capacity to be tested is based upon his tripartite being which consists of body, soul, and spirit. Animals have body and soul (the life principle), but man alone has the breath of God (the spirit). This is the image of God in him which is man's basis of fellowship with God. The image of God includes man's original righteousness, capacity for intellect, self-consciousness, self-determination, emotion, use of language, etc. No animal has the above characteristics but operates from a framework of natural desires and instinct. One may delineate the image of God as it relates to man in three distinct areas:

- 1). Man's **personal** resemblance to God is that which makes man self-conscious, self-determined (see above). This is not a physical resemblance because God is a spirit (Jn. 4:24).
- 2). Man's **spiritual** resemblance to God includes man's capacity for fellowship with God (Col 3:10; Eph. 4:24).
- 3). Man's **moral** resemblance to God is that sense of "oughtness" which causes man to have an innate sense of right and wrong. This includes the work of the conscience (Rom 2:14-16).

A second consideration involves the purpose of man's test. Adam, as the head of the human race, was created with a holy nature (Gen 1:31) but he was not confirmed with a holy character. Character is only produced by exercising one's ability to make the right choices. So God chose to test Adam to give him

an opportunity to make a proper choice and confirm himself in an eternal holy state so that man would not be able to sin.

A third consideration is the nature of the test. It allowed Adam to exercise his will following God's clear command (Gen 2:16, 17). Satan was correct when he told Eve that she would have her eyes opened by eating, but he did not tell her that it would be from a depraved standpoint. There are five ways that we gain knowledge through the senses: hear, see, smell, touch and taste. The first two, hear and see, are descriptive knowledge. This is the way we learn history, for example. The last three, smell, taste and touch, are experiential knowledge. We can learn about an orange by descriptive knowledge (hearing a description of it or seeing it), or we can learn about an orange by experiential knowledge (smelling, touching or tasting it.) Now God wanted Adam to have an experiential knowledge of good and evil, BUT from an obedient experience, not a disobedient experience (Gen 2:16-17).

a. Satan's deception — 3:1,2

3:1 — "Serpent" – Satan conquered the serpent and then energized it by indwelling in it to deceive Eve (cf Rev 13:2, 4-6). He is identified as that old serpent in Revelation (12:9; 20:2). He appeared as a serpent to tempt Eve to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. She probably did not know that she was being tempted by Satan. She probably thought that she was having a conversation with one of the innocent creatures that God had created. She did not seem to think it strange that she was talking to a serpent. But whatever she thought, God had given her and Adam a gracious promise in that they could eat freely of every tree in the Garden, except one. Regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He gave a clear command not to eat the fruit of that tree or they would surely die.

"Subtle" - by itself, subtle is not a derogatory term. It is used in Scripture in both a good sense (Prov. 12:16, 23; 13:16; Matt 10:16) and an evil sense (Job 5:12; 15:5). Today, a fox may be sly, but this does not mean its nature is evil, but the nature given to it by God. The serpent's subtle nature also was given by God, but Satan used it for evil to tempt Eve.

The serpent began his conversation with Eve by asking, "Has God really said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" It is a question that was designed to attack the validity of God's Word. It was said to make her doubt God's Word. It was also said to cast doubt in her mind about God's love for her and the grace and goodness of His commands. God gives commands to help us, not hurt us; He wants to spare us from sorrow and defeat. Note that Satan approached Eve when she was most vulnerable, when she was alone. Satan did not want Adam to be there to warn her of Satan's deceitful words. Satan knew it would be easier to deceive one person at a time than two together.

3:2 — When Eve dialogued with the serpent, she was no match for his deceitfulness. He watched for any weakness in her response to his first question and he would pounce on it. The best way to deal with Satan is to resist him, using the Word of God accurately like Jesus did with Satan (Mt 4:1-11), and he will flee (Jam 4:7; Mt 4:4, 6, 10). When Eve failed to handle God's Word accurately, she was on the slippery slope of slavery to Satan.

She corrected Satan's charge that God had forbidden Adam and her from eating the fruit of the trees in the Garden; they could eat of every tree in the Garden, except one. But she failed to say that they could freely eat of those trees, which showed His grace and love to them. She also failed to handle God's Word accurately by adding that they were not to touch the tree. Finally, she failed to state the certainty of God's judgment, if they ate of the forbidden tree when she said, "Lest ye die." God had said, "You shall surely die" (2:17). Her response showed three areas of failure in handling God's Word accurately. Satan saw her weakness and knew she was ready to listen to his lies.

b. Satan's denial — 3:4, 5

3:4 — "You shall not surely die." – The serpent ostensibly denied God's warning of judgment with a brazen lie. Is not this like the denial of false prophets that lie about Jesus' warnings about hell and those that shall be sent there?

3:5 — The serpent proceeded to present God as a jealous God Who operated on finite, rather than eternal principles. So Satan called both God's Word and His character into question.

2. Man's decision — 3:6

3:6 — Satan's deceit through the serpent worked and now Eve began to think that the serpent was right. Instead of resisting the temptation, she was yielding to it. Notice the threefold means which led to Eve's sin (1 Jn. 2:16).

a. Lust of the flesh — "good for food." The fruit had a strong appeal to the desire of Eve's body. Jesus faced the same temptation by Satan after He had fasted for forty days, but Jesus said that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Mt 4:1-4). He quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 to Satan. That stopped Satan from using that approach.

b. Lust of the eyes — "pleasant to the eyes." The fruit was very attractive and appealed to Eve's eyes. Satan makes sin look pleasing to the eyes and he did this with Jesus. He took Jesus up an exceeding high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Then he told Jesus that he would give the nations to Him, if He would fall down and worship him (Mt 4:8-10). Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 10:20 to Satan, "You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only shall you serve." Again Satan was stopped. Jesus knew Satan was a liar and His Father would keep His promise to give these kingdoms to Him (Ps 2:6-9). Faith in God's Word is a powerful shield against Satan's attacks (Eph 6:16).

c. Pride of life — "desired to make one wise." Satan told her that the fruit of this tree would cause her to know all things. She would be like God. This appealed to her pride. Satan also appealed to Jesus' pride when he took Him to the top of the pinnacle of the Temple and told Him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, because it is written, 'He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You in all Your ways. They shall bear You up in their hands, lest You dash Your foot against a stone'" (Ps 91:11-12). This shows Satan can use God's Word to tempt believers to sin. How did Jesus handle this? Once again He used the Scripture and told Satan, "You shall not tempt the LORD your God" (Deut 6:16). Jesus was tempted in points as we are, yet without sin (Heb 4:15).

Eve, however, listened to Satan and sinned. It was a victory for Satan to get Eve to eat of the forbidden tree, but that was not his supreme goal. He needed to get Adam to eat of the fruit of the tree so he could be the ruler of the world. God made Adam to be the king of the earth to rule it for Him and cause it to bring glory to Him (Gen 1:26-28). Adam was given a great privilege, but it also was a great responsibility. So it was Satan's plan to get Adam to disobey God's command and obey him by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree. If Adam would do that, it would show that Satan was his master and he would have to give his kingdom to Satan. It is a rule that whoever conquers the king also gets his kingdom. So when Adam ate the fruit of the forbidden tree, Satan conquered Adam and he had to deliver his kingdom to Satan. Satan told Jesus that the kingdoms of the world were delivered to him (Lk 4:6). God did not deliver them to Satan; it was Adam that delivered them to Satan when he was conquered by Satan in the Garden of Eden. Of course, there were no nations at that time, but the potential was there and Satan knew it. Adam was the father of the human race and his sin passed on to the entire human race (Rom 5:12). As a result the human race is under the rule of Satan. Jesus called Satan the "prince of this world" three times (Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Paul called him the god of this world (2 Cor 4:4). The world is still ruled by Satan.

B. Consequences from the Fall — 3:7-19

1. Upon the human race – 3:7-13

3:7-13 — Note that Adam and Eve hid themselves because of their guilt. They now knew evil and good but from a depraved standpoint. This guilt was related to their spiritual death or separation from God. They tried, as men do today, to cover their nakedness, but without success. Sin cannot be covered by one's own works. God's dialogue with Adam and Eve was held, not because of His ignorance, but because He wanted them to confess their sin. Instead, they are like people today, they blamed others for their sin rather than accept their responsibility for it.

Adam's sin has been passed on to the entire human race so that every child is born in sin and is totally depraved (Rom 5:12). Total depravity does not mean that man is as bad as he can be, but that he is as bad off as he can be. He has no hope of earning eternal life. As he has died spiritually, he will die physically. Adam's sin brought about the second law of thermodynamics, entropy, so that decay became a law of the universe.

However, there is one way to escape death and Satan's rule. Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life. He that believes on Him shall never die (Jn 11:25-26). When his body dies, he will be alive and receive a body eternal in the heavens (2 Cor 5:1). Jesus Christ paid for our debt of sin by dying for it on the cross and He was raised from the dead to prove that the debt was fully paid (Col 2:9-15). It is true that in Adam all die, but it is so true that in Christ shall all are made alive (1 Cor 15:22). Those who are in Christ are free from the sin of Adam and from the rule of Satan.

2. Upon the serpent — 3:14, 15

3:14 — The entire animal kingdom was put into bondage by Adam's sin (Rom 8:20), but God cursed the serpent more than any other animal. This also is indicated by the prediction that the millennium will not provide a release from the curse for the serpent (Is 65:25). Near Eastern culture used the phrase "to eat dust" as a figurative expression for being cursed. The curse on the serpent indicates that his manner of mobilization was changed by the curse.

3:15 — This passage is often called the proto-gospel because it is the first gospel message. God indicated that the real struggle upon earth is between Satan and Christ (Rev 12). The seed of the woman is a clear reference to the Christ (Rev 12:1-5; Gal 3:16, 19; Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn. 3:8). Satan's seed, of course, consists of those who chose to follow him and reject God's plan of redemption. Thus begins the struggle between the righteous and unrighteous as personified in Cain and Abel.

3. Upon women — 3:16

3:16 — The woman, though the first to sin, was deceived, but Adam was not; therefore, the human race was cursed through Adam, not Eve (1 Tim 2:14). However, Eve and all women after her would be subjected to sorrow (labor, pain) in childbirth. Nevertheless, her natural desire for bearing a child would enable her to endure the labor and pain associated with it. Finally, God said she would be ruled by her husband. This is not to imply that she would be an inferior person, but in a sinful society, there must be designated leaders to avoid chaos. The New Testament clearly teaches that man is to love, protect and instruct his wife in matters of faith and godliness (1 Cor 14:34-35; Eph. 5:24, 25; Tit 2:3-5; 1 Pet 3:1ff).

4. Upon man — 3:17-19

3:17-19 — Adam's sin resulted in a curse upon his environment. Instead of working in a beautiful garden, he would work in a world of weeds, thorns and thistles which would demand laborious work. No longer would he enjoy the fruits of the garden in Eden.

C. Cure for the Fall — 3:20-24

3:20 — Adam's new name for his wife is Eve, which means "living." She would be the mother of all living human beings. It suggests that he believed God's promise that she would bring forth the seed to crush Satan.

3:21 — The skins of animals provided coats for Adam and Eve. This was probably the first blood sacrifice for sin. God taught them the principle that blood must be shed to remove sin (Heb. 9:22; Lev 17:11).

3:22-24 — God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden because of their sin and to keep them from eating of the tree of life. He did not want them to think that they could eat of that tree and have eternal life. Eternal life is only available through the seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, whom He would send in the fullness of time (Gal 4:4). Jesus told His disciples, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father, but by me" (Jn 14:6). Eternal life is in Jesus, not in a tree. The tree of life is a symbol of life because its fruits can give physical life and its leaves can give physical healing, but it cannot give eternal life. It is a symbol of the spiritual life that Jesus will give to those that fully and only

trust in Him for salvation. He is the only way to obtain eternal life. This also is true of baptism. Baptism is a symbol of washing away sins, but only the blood of Jesus can wash away sins (Rev 1:5; 7:14). Symbols of Christ teach us about salvation, but only Christ can give us salvation. Dr Warren Vanhetloo, a Hebrew professor, gave an emphatic translation of the last part of 3:22 to show why God removed Adam and Eve from the Garden: "And now, lest man put forth his hand, taking also of the tree of life, intending to eat, thinking he will live forever." God did not want them to have the false notion that the tree could magically give them eternal life, so He drove them out of the Garden and put Cherubim and a flaming sword at the Garden's entrance to keep them out. The flaming sword was a symbol of God's wrath.

II The Growth of the Human Race — 4:1 - 5:32

A. Company of the Ungodly — 4:1-24

This chapter really is given to show the growth of the ungodly seed (see 3:15). Chapter 5 reveals the growth of the godly line in preparation for the events leading to the Noahic deluge.

1. Characterized by ungodly worship — 4:1-7

4:1, 2 — Adam had many children (Gen 5:4); an account of two of them is given in this chapter. Eve demonstrated her faith by indicating her firstborn was gotten from the Lord — perhaps she thought he was the promised Redeemer. How disappointed she would be when Cain would murder Abel. Cain was a farmer and Abel raised livestock.

4:3-5 — Both sons brought sacrifices to God: Cain of his agricultural goods and Abel of his livestock. God had probably instructed them concerning sacrifice. Why was Cain's sacrifice refused? Because it was not by faith (Heb. 11:4); he did not have faith in God's word to offer Him a proper sacrifice. He did not believe the shedding of blood was essential for forgiveness of sins (Heb. 9:22; Lev 17:11). He mistreated God in his offering which led him to mistreat his brother in killing him. He was a wicked person (1 Jn. 3:12).

4:6, 7 — God's grace is evident when He came to Cain to appeal for restoration of fellowship. God promised to accept his offering (hence fellowship), if it were the right kind. If he refused, God warned him that the effects of his sin would literally pounce on him.

2. Characterized by ungodly living — 4:8-15

a. Cain's murder — 4:8

4:8 — Cain's rebellion shows that sin is not static. It is active against God and man. Cain's rebellion against God was manifested by his attack on Abel. Sinful men carry out their rebellion against God by attacking those that please God. The battle predicted by God (3:15) was in effect.

b. Cain's punishment — 4:9-15

4:9 — Cain's response to God concerning Abel's murder was twofold: (1) he told an outright lie to God; and (2) he tried to evade God's question. Sin distorts man's rational process so that he believes he can sin and no one, not even God, will know about it.

4:10-15 — God increased His curse on the ground for Cain so that it would no longer produce food for him. He would be a fugitive and a vagabond, moving from place to place. Cain indicated that his punishment was too great — typical of those who do not truly repent. God gave him a sign, probably a literal mark, to assure Cain that God would not allow adversaries to take his life.

3. Characterized by ungodly desires — 4:16-24

4:16, 17 — Cain's descendants (the ungodly seed), it appears, attempted to meet their needs by humanistic effort rather than submit to God's redemptive program. This chapter indicates that Cain lived a wandering life. His wife was probably another daughter of Adam.

4:17, 18 — The first city was named Enoch after Cain's son. Cain apparently determined that his son could have a happy life in a proper cultural setting.

4:19 — The rule of God to have one wife did not satisfy Lamech, so he practiced the first recorded case of polygamy. But man cannot satisfy his desires by feeding them (Mt 19:4-6). The names of these wives probably indicate their sensuality: Adah means adorned; and Zillah means tinkling or shady.

4:20 — Jabal was the originator of the pastoral life.

4:21 — Jubal was the originator of the musical instruments.

4:22 — Tubal-Cain was the originator of metallurgy. The evidence of his work was demolished with the flood. These pre-flood descendants had great technological skills but they received the judgment of God, because they failed to consider Him (2 Pet 2:5; 3:4-9).

4:23, 24 — Lamech gives us the first poetry recorded. It is a strong defiance against God. He seems to mock God's punishment of Cain. He indicates he slew a man who wounded him and killed a boy for striking him. He could take care of himself many times better than God took care of Cain. Notice that Cain's descendants are technologically advanced, but are sensual and proud.

B. Company of the Godly — 4:25 - 5:32

1. Characterized by godly worship — 4:25 - 5:20

This chapter indicates the genealogy of the godly seed. This sets the foundation for the flood because God judged the earth to maintain the godly line (2 Pet 2:5).

4:25, 26 — The spiritual failure of Cain's descendants is contrasted with Seth who would stand in Abel's place to continue the godly line.

"Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" — Seth and his descendants were instrumental in public worship. The godly seed were more than godly individuals, but were a godly society. This also shows that the true value in life was a proper relation to God rather than a fulfillment of their fleshly desires.

5:1-20 — The ages of early men were much longer than our own. It is possible that the genetic effects of sin had not advanced very far as of yet and this allowed them to live longer. However, they all died, except Enoch. These chapters emphasize the presence of death.

2. Characterized by godly living — 5:21-28

5:21ff — Enoch is an excellent example of the life that should characterize a believer - Enoch lived a life that pleased God. God rewarded him by translating him to heaven so that he did not experience death (cp. Heb. 11:5; 2 Kings 2:11).

3. Characterized by a godly desire — 5:29-32

5:29ff — Noah, the son of Lamech, lived a life of faith and hope. God promised Lamech that He would remove the curse upon the earth. Lamech was a godly man. Some of the curse was lifted in Noah's day through the flood, and all of it will be lifted in Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

Christ came through the line of Shem, Noah's son.