

GENESIS 3

THE FALL AND THE FIRST PROMISE

The first temptation was in the Garden of Eden, with beauty and happiness on every side. Alas! Even into this lovely home, the tempter came. Like the rest of the Lord's work, he and the other angels had been created pure and holy (probably during the first few days of Creation Week); but he rebelled against his Maker and led some of the other angels in this rebellion with him. And now he came stealthily into Eden's Garden – in the form of a subtle serpent – for the purpose of enticing Mankind to rebel against God as well.

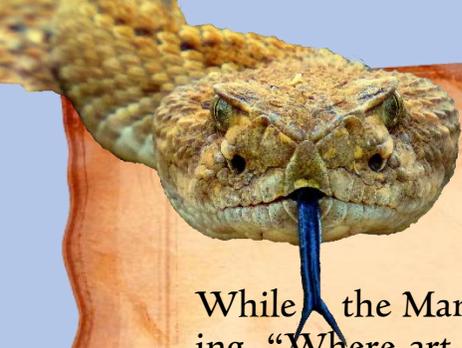
The tempter began his temptation in a way which raised no alarm in the mind of the Woman. He asked her, "Hath God said, 'Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden?'" The question indicated surprise that God would make such a prohibition. In a quiet and insinuating way, the tempter was trying to impeach the goodness of God, encouraging Eve to consider Him severe and harsh. His purpose was to put doubt of God's goodness into the Woman's mind. "If God loved you," he was essentially asking, "would He deny you anything so good?" The devil still practices the same deceit upon us today. He wants to make people think that God is severe, and that His restraints are unreasonable. He tries to make a young man think that his father is too stern with him, and a young girl that her mother is too rigid. He seeks to get people to think themselves oppressed by the Divine requirements. That is usually the first step in temptation.

The temptation was successful. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes ... she took of the fruit thereof." She listened to the cunning words of the tempter. Curiosity, ambition, and desire all awoke within her heart. The one prohibited thing in the Garden began to shine in such alluring colors that she forgot the good things that were freely given to her. The commandment of God faded out of her mind as she stood listening to the tempter and looking at the forbidden fruit before her. Then – fatal moment! – she reached out her hand and took the fruit, and the deed was done. "She gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Milton suggests that it was because of his love for Eve that Adam accepted the fruit from her hand. Since she had fallen, he wished to perish with her – even though he had directly received the Divine commandment from the Lord's own mouth. Alas! We never know what a floodgate of evil and sorrow one little thought or word or act may open, or what rivers of harm and ruin may flow from it.

No matter how pleasant sin may be, it casts a shadow over the soul after

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *The serpent deceives Adam and Eve into disobeying the Lord – verses 1-8*
- ❖ *God calls Adam and Eve to account for their disobedience – verses 9-13*
- ❖ *The first promise of the coming Messiah – verses 14, 15*
- ❖ *The punishment and clothing of Adam and Eve – verses 16-24*



it has been committed. See how “the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees.” But it is impossible to ever get away from His presence.

While the Man and his wife were trying to hide, they heard God’s voice asking, “Where art thou?” It was not in anger, but in love, that the Father thus followed His erring children! He sought them out so that He might save them.

It is pitiful to read in the narrative how, when asked regarding their sin, both the Man and his wife tried to shift blame. But in the midst of the dark clouds, the light breaks forth! No sooner had Man fallen than God’s thought of redemption appears! The 15th verse – speaking of the Seed of the Woman crushing the head of the serpent – is the first promise that was ever given of a Savior. It is very dim and indistinct, like a mere glimmering of light on the edge of the darkness. But it was the Gospel of hope to our first parents in their sorrow and shame. And as we read on in the Old Testament, we will continually find new unfoldings and fuller revelations of the coming Messiah.

Adam and Eve had vainly tried to hide their nakedness by fig-leaf coverings that they had made themselves. But this was not sufficient. The Lord clothed them Himself with the skins of at least one animal that had to be killed for this purpose. This teaches us that nothing we can do on our own is enough to pay the price for our guilt; we need to be clothed in the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus. And the blood that was shed from this animal foreshadowed the blood that He would one day shed on the cross in order to save His people.

This narrative of the first temptation and the Fall is not merely the record of one isolated failure at the beginning of the world’s history. Sadly, it is a record which must be written into every human biography. It tells us of the fearful danger of sin, and of sin’s terrible cost. But what a joy it is that on the edge of this story of falling, we have the promise of One Who would overcome sin and Satan! During His earthly ministry, the Son of God Himself was also tempted, but He did not yield; and now He is our Mighty Deliverer! He overcame the world; and in Him, we have peace.

Lord Jesus, how dreadful is sin! To what an awful state has it brought us! We pray for grace to flee from the first approaches of sin, and to never tamper with the temptations of the devil. We ask You to give us strength from above to resist him, so that he may flee from us. As long as we live in this mortal flesh, we will seek Your throne of grace, and not run away from Your mercy. May Your blessed Holy Spirit prevent us from any flimsy fig-leaf covering of anything that we have made to conceal our shame. Rather, we beseech You, Lord Jesus, to clothe us in the perfect robe of Your own righteousness, which was pictured by the coats of skins from the animals that were sacrificed to clothe Adam and Eve. Dressed in Your perfect covering, may we be accepted before the presence of God, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. Amen.