

## **Group Study Guide**

First Baptist Church Merritt Island

*Why Did You Do It? (Genesis 3)*

12.3.17

### **Main Point**

The season of Christmas reminds us of Emmanuel, God with us. God's plan to rescue mankind from sin and death has always been His "Plan A". This passage answers the question, "Why Did He Come to Die?"

### **Getting Started**

*Have you ever been on a road trip and refused to use a restroom because it was too dirty? What sorts of things do you look for in a gas station before you believe it is safe for you to stop and use their facilities?*

It's kind of gross to think about, but most of us have stopped somewhere to use the restroom and the restroom was so terrible that we went somewhere else. We would all agree that restrooms are good, but that a defiled bathroom can no longer serve the purpose for which it was made!

Mankind was created to reflect God's glory and to bear His image. But when Adam and Eve sinned, they defiled themselves in their rebellion. Because of sin, we are not able to perfectly fulfill our purpose of showing others the greatness of God. Too often, instead of showing love and kindness, we show selfishness and suspicion. Adam and Eve's sin didn't make the world unusable, but it did make everything much more difficult. Only when we embrace Christ by faith can we once again begin to serve the purpose that God made us for. God sent Jesus to redeem mankind from the sin that defiled them.

### **Observation**

Ask a Volunteer to read Genesis 3:1-7.

*How did the serpent overturn the dominion of Adam and Eve?*

*Why do you think that Eve ate the fruit? What is the lesson of the fall?*

The Bible says that the serpent was "cunning," which is a word in Hebrew that can also be translated as "wise." In 3:6, we see that Eve ate the fruit because she thought it would bring her "wisdom." In actuality, the fall was an act of folly; it was a moment when man and woman chased after "wisdom" outside of God's law. What the cunning serpent said was foolishness because it meant defying God and not trusting Him. Instead of becoming wise, Adam and Eve became foolishly ashamed.

Satan came to Eve first, most likely because he wanted to usurp the created order. Satan knew Adam had received the command not to eat the fruit, not Eve. When the Bible says that Adam was “with her” in verse 6, the word “with” in Hebrew means he was right beside her. Yet, instead of speaking to them both as a team, he went after Eve alone and divided them. Indeed, the serpent, as a creature of the garden, was subject to Adam and Eve because of the dominion God granted them. Yet the serpent used his cunning to lead Adam and Eve instead of being ruled by them.

One of the greatest tragedies of the fall is that, in the end, Satan tempted Adam and Eve with what they already possessed. Satan said, “God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God” (3:6). The problem is that God said, “Let us make man according to Our image, according to Our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). They were already like God; they did not need to eat the fruit.

Ask a Volunteer to read Genesis 3:7-9, 14-19.

*What was the immediate consequence of disobeying the Lord by eating the forbidden fruit?*

*What do you think it means for the serpent to “eat dust all the days of [his] life”? What do you think of the punishments God delivered to each person after the fall?*

The first thing that Adam and Eve did after sinning in the garden was hide. First, they hid from one another by making themselves garments from fig leaves, and then they hid from God as He sought fellowship with them. Sin separates us not only from God, but also from one another.

The punishments for Adam and Eve are interesting in that they are activities that would have been done regardless of the fall. Eve would have had children, and she already had Adam for a husband. Adam was already working in the garden before the fall. The punishment is that, instead of taking pure delight in these things, their work would be painful and frustrating.

In punishing the serpent, God promised that the “seed” of the woman would “strike [his] head.” This striking is not a simple hit, but a crushing blow. Someday, the seed of the woman would come and destroy Satan and the evil work Satan did on that day. The hope that Eve had was none other than the hope of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Adam and Eve heard the gospel for the first time, and Eve knew that one day, she would have a Son who would take away her sin and destroy the works of Satan. We know that the Son Eve was promised is Jesus Christ who, through His death on the cross and resurrection, destroyed the works of Satan.

Ask a Volunteer to read Genesis 3:21-24.

*Where do you see God’s mercy toward Adam and Eve in this passage?*

*Why do you think God prevented Adam and Eve from eating of the Tree of Life?*

## *Why did God banish them from the garden?*

God's mercy is evident in this passage, even in His punishments. We see God's mercy in the clothing that He provided for them. God knew that fig leaves would be inadequate, and so He clothed them with animal skins. An animal had to be sacrificed for Adam and Eve to be clothed.

We also see God's mercy in barring Adam and Eve from the Tree of Life. God did not wish for Adam and Eve to live forever in their separated condition, so He prevented them from eating from the Tree of Life. Revelation 22:14 says, "Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates." Jesus' atoning death cleanses those who repent and trust Him as their Savior. His resurrection allows us to eat from the Tree of Life and be welcomed in the heavenly city.

### **Application**

Use this section to identify how the truths from Scripture apply directly to our lives.

*How might considering God's mercy toward Adam and Eve after the fall give us confidence that God will be merciful to us today?*

*What ways are our temptations today the same as those faced by Adam and Eve?*

*How often do we sin by seeking things in life that we can already have if we trust in God's Word?*

*How can we resist Satan's schemes and temptations? Read Ephesians 6:10-17.*

### **Prayer**

In a time of group prayer, ask the Father to keep us from temptation. Ask the Holy Spirit to enable us to trust in His Word and promises. Pray that each day we will seek His mercy and forgiveness for our sins, and for the encouragement that Jesus is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins.

### **Commentary**

3:3 The woman's claim that God said, You must not... touch the tree, or you will die, goes beyond anything recorded in God's instructions to Adam. Therefore, it seems that Adam had given his wife an additional command beyond what God said, or else Eve herself exaggerated the command as Satan tempted her to view God as selfish and overly restrictive. If Adam added to God's command, he almost certainly had a good motive—after all, if Eve never touched the tree, she certainly wouldn't eat its fruit. However, the sad truth is that when people add to the word of God, they create confusion and trouble.

3:4-5 The serpent, recognizing the woman's confusion, found a point of attack. Knowing that the woman would not die by merely touching the fruit, he boldly

contradicted what she had reported to be God's command. He then skillfully lied (Jn 8:44) by distorting God's word (Mt 4:6), implying that God had prohibited people from eating the fruit only to keep them from becoming as knowledgeable as He. The woman was now fully deceived (1Tim 2:14).

3:6 Since the woman did not die when she touched the fruit—in contradiction to what she had thought God said (v. 3.)—she ate it. Though Adam was with her at the time, he did nothing to stop her. Perhaps he wanted to eat of it as much as the woman did, but fearing the consequences, used his wife as a “guinea pig” to make sure it would not cause instant death.

3:7 As the serpent had indicated, the eyes of both were opened, and they knew, but instead of producing godlike power, the knowledge brought only a sense of human inadequacy, fear, and shame.

3:9 God took the initiative in reaching out to sinful humanity. This pattern—humanity sinning, then God seeking out sinners—becomes the primary theme of the rest of the Bible. Its ultimate expression is found in Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save people alienated from God because of their sin (Lk 19:10); in Him God once again walked on the earth in search of sinners. The all-knowing God asked Adam, where are you? for Adam's benefit, to encourage Adam to face his sin.

3:10 When Adam heard God, he was afraid.

3:11 Through the use of two direct questions God brought Adam to accountability for his sin. God does not overlook sin, but He can be gently firm in confronting it.

3:12 Adam answered neither of God's questions. Instead he sought to shift the blame for his sin first to the woman, and then to God.

3:13 The woman passed the blame to the serpent and admitted that prior to eating, she was deceived (1Tim 2:14).

3:14 Though accountability began with God's confrontation of Adam, judgment began with the serpent. Because of the serpent's key role (being used of Satan) in bringing sin into the human experience, it would be permanently consigned to the position of ultimate shame, under the foot. Just as conquered kings were made to lie on the ground under the foot of their conquerors (Jos 10:24), so now the serpent would live under the feet of humanity.

3:15 Hostility between the first woman and the serpent would be passed on to future generations. This verse is known in Christendom as the protoevangelium, or “first good news,” because it is the first foretelling of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Using an emphatic Hebrew construction, God announced here that a male descendant— He—would someday deal the serpent (meaning Satan) a fatal blow. The NT writers understood Jesus Christ to have fulfilled this prophecy (Heb 2:14; 1Jn 3:8). In an extended sense,

the NT also indicates that God would work through the church—those indwelt by the Spirit of Christ—to destroy the works of the devil (Rm 16:20). The assertion that the snake would only strike his opponent’s heel (as opposed to head) suggests that the devil will be defeated in the ensuing struggle (Rev 2:2,7-10).

3:16 Even though the woman had been deceived into eating the forbidden fruit, she was still held accountable for her act. Notably, however, the word “cursed” is not contained in God’s words to her (vv. 14,16). Two penalties were imposed; both struck at the heart of a woman’s roles in life. More than would have been the case had sin not entered creation, bearing children would add to the sum of anguish in the universe (God said he would intensify, not originate, woman’s labor pains). Marriage would also be marred; though the woman’s desire would be for her husband, sin would mar God’s plan for marriage and create tormenting inequality and subjugation. The latter is a description of the ravaging effect of sin on a husband-wife relationship, not a prescription for abusing one’s wife. The NT teaches that marriage should reflect the relationship of Christ with the church (Eph 5:24-25) and be characterized by a husband’s understanding of and respect for his wife (1Pe 3:7).

3:17 Because Adam listened to and obeyed his wife’s voice in preference to what God commanded (2:17), a curse would strike at the heart of a fundamental relationship in his life as well. Adam’s relationship with the ground would now be forever damaged by sin. All the days of his life he would experience painful labor (cp. the woman’s labor pains, v. 16) as he worked to bring forth the fruit of the earth.

3:18 Prior to the first couple’s sins God is only recorded as having put trees in the garden (2:8-9); now there would also be thorns and thistles. Prior to sin, humanity had only to reach up to get food; now they would have to bend their backs to gather plants of the field.

3:19 The simple plucking of fruit in order to eat food (lit “bread”) would now be replaced by backbreaking labor and the sweat of the brow. Working daily in the soil, Adam would be continually reminded that he was dust and that he would return to dust.

3:20 The new name Adam gave his wife emphasizes the woman’s life-giving role that counteracts the curse of sin, which is death. Yet the divine order calls for a reciprocity exhibited in male servant leadership and female submission, both of which are modeled in Jesus Himself.

3:21 By making clothing out of skins, the Lord God graciously provided for humanity’s need in a way superior to what Adam and Eve had done with fig leaves. The use of animal skins anticipates the OT system of animal sacrifices (Lv 1; 3-7; Num 15:1-31). In the NT, the apostle Paul spoke of a day when God would clothe His people with immortality (1Co 15:53-54; 2Co 5:4), thus providing the complete undoing of the curse of humanity’s sin.

3:22 Because of sin, people now knew good and evil experientially. Since the gift of life was directly tied to obedience, man's sin meant that the penalty of death must be enforced.

3:23 As the Hebrew text ironically expresses it, the Lord God sent Adam from the garden so that he would not send forth ("reach out"; v. 22) his hand for the garden's fruit.

3:24 Following their sin, the first couple went east, a direction associated with departure from God in numerous biblical examples. Other instances of eastward movement in Genesis include Cain's journeys after judgment (4:16), humanity's migration toward Babylon (11:2), and the migration of Keturah's sons (25:6). Cherubim are used as an artistic motif in the tabernacle (Ex 25:18-22; 26:1) and are also mentioned in Ezekiel 10 and 11. The ironies continue as the man who was once commanded to "watch over" the garden (Gen 2:15) is now guarded from the garden.