

Reading: Genesis 3

Theme: In the Dock.

Genesis 3 is a foundational chapter in the Bible and it gives us insights and understanding of how things are as they are now and have changed from the perfect situation and world Adam and Eve lived in, compared to the world we live in today, with all its problems and sufferings. Genesis 3 is about real events, in a real garden, with a real Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve did wrong and disobeyed God. We saw last week, when Adam had been questioned by God, how he tried to pass the blame on to someone else; he didn't want to own up to doing the wrong he had been told not to do and he was experiencing the consequences being worked out in their lives. If you get close to electricity pylons there will often be warning signs concerning danger of death if climbed. Whose fault would it be if a person was dared, called chicken if they didn't do it and when they did it, the notice proved right?

Adam blamed Eve and also included God in his excuses, in trying to shift the blame and responsibility from himself. We need to realise we are responsible for our own actions. We may have excuses, valid and true excuses, but others with less favourable circumstances or even the same, may not have behaved and done as we have. Ultimately all will be called to account by God and no excuses will stand before His examination and people can either confess their wrong in this life, seek God to forgive them, or own their wrong in eternity, be judged and sentenced to hell forever. This

evening we move on to see the examination, the questioning of Eve by God (v13), then in v14 onward we start to see the sentences brought on those involved in this first sin on earth.

1. How Could You Do It?

Have we ever been asked that type of question? Perhaps by friends, family members or by teachers! It is an expression of amazement, wonder, shock and horror - especially if it is in the context of doing something that we knew was wrong. This is the force of the strong question God addressed to the woman here in v13 - not just “What is this you have done?” But literally “How have you done this?” (*So says John Calvin*)

Adam may have blamed the woman, yet God does not answer him, but moves on to now deal with Eve and deal wisely, gently and patiently with her. Though she was one with her husband, yet she had been abandoned by him to face God’s questioning. In fact she has to give an answer for her own actions before God.

Sin makes us all stand alone before God. No one - the killers of millions in the genocides of history; the ones who in gangs have committed atrocities and crimes; the ones going along with wrong practices of their day and age - not one of them will stand together as a group, a gang or a system. Each one will have to individually and on their own stand before God and give account of their lives, actions, words, desires and thoughts. There will be no way to be able to hide behind excuses; there will be no friends to stand alongside and give each other words to say, and certainly no one to

hide behind. People will be there all on their own, all alone, nowhere to run or hide and no protection if we do not have Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

God was dealing with Eve in love and patience. He did not want to terrify and crush her like an insignificant creature. His aim was to bring her to own she had done wrong and disobeyed Him, to cause her to realise the seriousness of what she and they had done. God knew full well what she had done. He asked her to cause her to consider why and what she had done. God knows everything we have done, said, thought, desired and when He deals with us at those times as we think on God, as we read His word, as He challenges us and our way of life, He calls on us to consider all we have done, to consider that He knows ALL about us and we are to get right with Him in the way He has provided. There came a time when we realised that and we trusted the Lord Jesus as our own Saviour. Now as we meet people who have not, we need to pray and urge them that they would do the same.

2. Deceived Eve.

Eve, to pass the blame, owned up to what had happened - the serpent, snake deceived me and I ate! This wrong, the Bible calls it “sin”, is something that no one wants to own. People will often do wrong, sin and when it is exposed they will blame anyone and anything to avoid the blame and its consequences. When a scandal breaks, in say Parliament, and the going ons of these men and women in power are made known, they begin to make excuses and have alibis conveniently available, cover up jobs begin...

Eve now knew she had been deceived, tricked, conned and duped! The devil, using the snake, had conned her completely. He promised that she and Adam would be like God and now she knew they were nothing like God - God was pure, holy, clean, perfect and sinless; but they were dirty, polluted, sinners, had limited knowledge, but God knew everything!

We are to realise, to warn ourselves and others that sin and the devil will **always** deceive and cheat. Temptation to sin seems to offer so much, but it delivers so little, for it deceives, cons, cheats and short changes people. Whether it happens on a quiet basis and people will feel they'd be a much more experienced person and be quite smug about it compared to what others have experienced a known. It may promise dramatic life changing and enhancing events - drugs, money, sex, love, relationships, attention or fame. If these things are achieved in a wrong way or are wrong in and of themselves by God standards, then it will cheat, rob, con and undermine our life. God is the designer of us all and His commands are for our best. They are not to be viewed as spoiling our fun or our lives, but are in place so we live life to the max and best.

Sadly many will go through life without realising that they have been deceived by the devil and they go to meet God unprepared. If God shakes our little lives and thoughts and causes us to question our lives as they should or could be, then we are to thank Him and ask Him to deal with us more

and more, to cause us to seek the real life He offers to all who seek Him and find Him in the Lord Jesus.

In his commentary on this passage, the Puritan commentator Matthew Henry basically says that it should not lessen our sorrow and humiliation for sin that we were deceived into it, but it should make us angry that we let a sworn and known enemy deceive us! He goes on to say we're pretty stupid and weak if we let a known enemy and con merchant trick us in this way. We are to realise the devil is a sworn enemy of every human being and yet so many are willingly and easily deceived and taken in by him. As believers we are not to be easily caught out as we are not ignorant of his wiles!

God quickly finishes His questioning of Adam and Eve. We have seen that Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the snake, but the snake did not have a leg to stand on! God did not question the serpent, but moves on from examining and questioning Adam and Eve to pass sentence on those who were involved there in the Garden of Eden.

3. The Sentences Passed.

This point is going to be continued next week as it will cover verses 14 to 19 - as we will see the sentences of punishment announced on their rebellion against and their disobedience of God. I feel quite certain I will remind us of this heading next time and we will see 4 things from it:

A. The Tempter's Sentences.

The serpent is not questioned or interrogated, as it was but a brute animal, no sense of sin. It was to be under the control

of men and women and yet it let itself be used by another power - the devil. In the sentences passed in v14-15 both the serpent and the devil are addressed. The serpent as an animal had no soul, was not a moral creature, but it was a guilty animal; the devil had sinned, done wrong out of his own being as we have seen previously and he was not able to be pardoned. Adam and Eve will be addressed and sentenced as ones who are pardonable and therefore saveable and so hope will be given to them, for they were deceived from outside of themselves. That does not remove or lessen their sin, guilt and condemnation, but as they were brought into sin by another, so they could be rescued from sin by another - but that One would need to be very special and exceptional indeed!

A sentence is placed on the serpent. We know what snakes are like and they are found in most parts of the world, but from v14 it would seem that before the Fall they were different from how we know them now and it appears they did not go on their belly as now, but were creatures with legs. Some writers even say winged creatures, beautiful and highly decorated. As I said previously I don't know where they get that from and they don't say, but we are to realise that all the animal kingdom has undergone a dramatic change since their creation, especially so the serpent and its kind.

God's words to the snake indicate that He was addressing more than a brute animal - it suggests a rational being. Here God is also addressing the devil that used the snake - as a cover for his scheme and plans to deceive Eve, to get Adam

and so cause them to fall into sin and spoil God's creation and the high point of creation - mankind made in God's own image.

The snake is cursed and condemned above all animals. It was more crafty, subtle above all other animals and now it was cursed above all other animals. It was also separated from all other animals as it was the only one that was used, allowed itself to be used in the temptation. Yes all of Creation suffers from the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin, but the serpent is singled out. The serpent, the snake is put to a low position. It is given a despised position in Creation - by mankind and animals. It is repulsive to most animals and most people. Yes snakes are part of God's creation, but few are really happy to have them about! They are most often on the ground, going through the mess of nature's droppings, its shed skin, its waste. The snake was put in a low and degraded position.

The serpent is cursed some writers see a word play in the Hebrew between "naked" used in 7,10 and 11 and the word "cursed" used in v14. In Hebrew word "naked" = ay-rohm and the word "cursed" = ah-room; it is as if God was saying *"You feel naked as a result of sin, but see the curse as a result of sin"*. Adam and Eve had been concerned about the results of their actions, but they learn God's justice must be brought to bear on it and it is to be their real concern!

When God looks on our lives, all we are and do, we are to realise He sees past all our fine or bold words, past the veneers and layers we try to hide behind and He sees us

naked, soul naked and if we are dirty in our soul because of our sin (*even nice little sins*), then we are cursed. A modern word play on the words used would be naked, then nuked!

That would have been our state and end if God hadn't worked in amazing saving grace in us. This God is not the God who simply condemns, who says "*must do better*"; He is the God who knows we can do nothing to make ourselves get right with Him and He has done something, actually done everything we need to be right with Him and He will go on and tell Adam, Eve and the devil of it - even as here He passes sentence, but we will learn more of this hope next week - it is a glorious and a wonderful hope as it points us to the One who is the only hope for men and women to be right with God.