

Paradise Lost

Introduction

In this study we turn our attention to Genesis 3vs1-24, the account of humankind's rebellion against God. This rebellion is instigated by the serpent and results in a series of Divine judgements – against the serpent; against the woman and finally against the man. The result of human rebellion is catastrophic. Life in God's world will continue, but it will now be a far cry from the good life that God had intend for His creatures. Relationships are marred and life will be characterised by pain, struggle, frustration and the reality of death. Nor will humanity be able to remedy the fundamental problem of life, for their rebellion has cut them off from the garden and the tree of Life.

As with the previous narrative, Genesis 3 is a carefully structured narrative, rich in symbolism. But behind the literary form lies a terrible historical reality as well as a remarkable theological truth. Not content to be under Divine rule, human beings grasped at equality with God, so exchanging the glory of God for images, the truth of God for a lie. They pursued wisdom without God and professing to be wise became fools, exchanging the right to eat from tree of Life for a banquet in the grave. Yet despite this, God shows His grace – grace to come seeking lost humanity, grace to promise salvation through the seed of the woman who will through suffering crush the serpent's head and restore life and blessing to a cursed and dying world.

At the end of this study you should be able to answer the following key question from the text

- What is sin?
- How did sin enter the world?
- What are the consequences of sin in our world?
- What hope is there for a world under the judgement of God?

Read Genesis 3vs1-24



Observe:

1. The description of the serpent
2. The serpent's 'promise'
3. The response of the woman and the man to the serpent's words

4. The response of the woman and the man to the Lord's presence
5. The series of questions and answers in vs 9-13
6. The series of judgements expressed in vs 14-19
7. The naming of Eve
8. The provision of skin garments to cover human nakedness
9. The exclusion of the man and the woman from the tree of Life

?Think:

1. What lay behind the serpent's question and promise?
2. What did the woman and the man hope to gain by eating the fruit?
3. What was the actual result of their eating?
4. What does God promise and provide?

! Understand / Apply

1. What answer can you give for our key questions?