

Genesis 3:1-15

Why Is There Evil In The World?

The passengers were all seated on the plane. The flight attendants completed the safety spiel and the flight took off from Reagan National headed for LAX.

Once the aircraft was at cruising altitude a voice comes over the plane's PA. "This is a recording. Congratulations. You are on the world's first completely automated airline flight. There is no pilot. There is no co-pilot. Every thing is computerized. We are now flying at 13,000 feet with everything in complete control. Relax and enjoy your flight. You are absolutely safe. Nothing could go wrong, go wrong, go wrong..."

You know, whenever people are involved in anything there is always the likelihood that something will go wrong. Obviously something has gone wrong with this world in which we live. In fact, people often wonder, how could there be a God and be so much suffering and heartache in the world?

For the answer to exactly what has gone wrong I'd like you to look at **Genesis chapter 3** in the Bible and see God's solution to our dilemma.

Genesis chapter 3 sounds the death toll for all of mankind. It's no understatement to say that Genesis 3 is the most hated and the most rejected portion of the Bible in the 21st Century.

It's scoffed at by liberal theologians and by many philosophers, psychiatrists, scientists and educators. And they all have very good reason. If Genesis chapter 3 says what it means and means what it says then it postulates some very objectionable truths that go against the grain of our modern thinking.

For example, Robert W. Funk was a teacher, writer, translator and publisher in the field of religion. A Guggenheim Fellow and Senior Fulbright Scholar, he served as Annual Professor of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem and as chair of the Graduate Department of Religion at Vanderbilt University.

Dr. Funk was the Director of the Westar Institute and founder of the Jesus Seminar. The Jesus Seminar is a aggregate of so called biblical scholars who have determined their life mission to be to show the masses how deluded we are.

Funk wrote, "The God of the metaphysical age is dead. There is not a personal god out there external to human beings and the material world. The deliteralization of the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis brought an end to the dogma of original sin as something

inherited from the first human being. Death is not punishment for sin, but is entirely natural. And sin is not transmitted from generation to generation...”

Why the antagonism? Why that denial? Because Genesis 3 shows us as we really are, sinners who helpless before God. It might not a very popular idea. But our goal isn't to believe what we want to believe regardless of the evidence. It's to know God's truth.

There's something radically wrong with our world. Genesis 3 tells us why.

I. Satan Convinced Eve To Doubt God's Word

Read verse 1

Now the serpent! Moses puts these words at the beginning of verse 1 because they are the focal point of chapter 3. The serpent is going to be the main character in this chapter and we are told that this serpent was more subtle than all of the other animals. The Hebrew word translated subtle means “wise” or “crafty.” It's a word used all through the book of Proverbs for a prudent, wise man. There's nothing evil about the word itself. But because the snake was the most crafty of all God's creation he was chosen to be used by *that old serpent called the devil*. Revelation 12:9

And he (the snake) said unto the woman, “Has God indeed said...”

This snake was a beast of the field and snakes, at least as we know them today, don't have the ability to talk to people. Because of this many people would reject this passage right from it's start, as being an historical event.

They say, “That's just a fable. It's just a nice story. Some Jew made it up years ago to convey a principal or a religious idea to his readers. It is obviously not true.”

And if you'll notice, if you tell people that you believe the opening chapters of Genesis are an accurate historical record of actual events most of them are amazed that anyone in this day and age could be so naive.

And yet, the number one book on Amazon.com is *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life's Purpose* by Eckhart Tolle. It's on Oprah's book club. It nothing but repackaged Buddhism that says, “You do not become good by trying to be good, but by finding the goodness that is already within you and allowing that goodness to emerge.”

Here we are talking about “Why is there evil in the world?” and Tolle says we just haven’t figured out how to unleash the goodness that’s inside all of us.

My favorite is the atheist author Richard Dawkins in the movie *Expelled*. He makes his case for not believing that God exists. When Ben Stein asks him where life came from, Dawkins says he doesn’t know. Then he suggests that it may have been jump-started with the help of super-advanced aliens.

It seems like some people will believe anything except the Bible.

The Bible says “the serpent said to the woman.” The reason we have a talking serpent in Genesis 3 isn't because it's a fable like Aesop or Lokman would write. The reason we have a talking serpent is to show us that this serpent is unlike any other snake on earth. This snake is empowered by the great deceiver, Satan himself.

In Genesis chapter 3 and verse 1 we have the very first question recorded in the Bible. It comes from the serpent and listen to what he says, *Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?*

Pay close attention to this because the very same thing that Satan did in the garden is what he does to us today. He wants people to doubt the Word of God. Has God really said not to eat? Is the Bible really true? Can we really find peace of mind and eternal life through following the words of some dusty old book called the Bible? Has God indeed said? Has God really said that?

And notice Satan's strategy here because it's the very same strategy he uses today. “Has God said you shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”

Satan knew the answer, of course, before he ever asked. But what he wanted to do was to draw Eve's attention away from all that she could have. I mean, can you even begin to imagine the wonders of the original creation? And he wants her to become obsessed with the one thing in all creation that she was forbidden to have.

Someone once said to me wasn't God terrible for doing that? How terrible of God to say Eve couldn't have something!

Look over at Genesis 2:15-17

Adam was given liberty in the garden to eat of every tree except one. With liberty

always comes responsibility and Adam's responsibility here was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In verse 16 you see the phrase *you may freely eat* and in verse 17 the phrase *you shall surely die*. Both of these in the original are Hebrew idioms called absolute infinitives. That happen to be the strongest way the Hebrew language has of saying anything. In other words "you may freely eat from every other tree; no question about it, but the day you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you will die and there is no question about that either. No reprieves, no second chances. You shall surely die!"

Now the woman wasn't on the scene yet at that time in chapter 2 but by the time chapter 3 rolls around she knows about God's command. I'm going to assume that Adam had made it very clear to her what God expected from them.

It's not recorded for us in the Bible, but I think that it is clearly implied that Adam and Eve were content to live in the garden and eat of the other trees.

The fact that they couldn't have one thing didn't bother them because they had so many other blessings. The many things they did have overshadowed the one thing they didn't have.

As long as you maintain an attitude of thankfulness for what you have, what you can't or don't have won't bother you. If Eve would have maintained an attitude of thankfulness at this time her response to Satan's question would have been "we can't eat from that one tree over there but so what, we have all these others." But Satan's strategy was to pull her thoughts away from what she could have and Eve's perspective became dominated by what she couldn't have.

Read chapter 3 verse 2-4

First Satan casts doubt on what God says. Then he comes right out and denies it totally. "You shall not surely die." The serpent parrots God's words exactly except he negates them. He uses that same Hebrew construct. Where God said *you shall surely die* he says *you shall not surely die*, and Eve believes him.

Now at this point you might be sitting there thinking to yourself, "That Eve must have been pretty dumb to fall for a line like that, you shall not surely die."

Unfortunately for us Eve isn't the only one who got caught with that one. You know

why Satan never changes his tactics? Because he doesn't have to. He told the first lie 6000 years ago and people are still falling for it today. Christians and non-Christians alike.

People who have never come to that place in their life where they have realized that their lost and need a savior, think to themselves, "I've got plenty of time to worry about religion. I'm too busy for God now, to give Him any time now."

"I just don't have time now and I'm too busy making money so I can have all the things I think I need to make me happy." Or they think like I used to, "I just don't have anytime for God now.. I'm too busy having a good time. I have to enjoy all the things that I need for my personal happiness." All the while Satan whispers in their ear, "You shall not surely die." And then one day they die and then it's too late to think about God!

Satan doesn't ask you to sign up to go to hell. He just convinces you to put off thinking about it.

Isn't it funny how unnatural death seems to us. You drive past an accident you're just kind of looking and suddenly you see someone covered with sheet immediately a heaviness comes over you. You're struck with the profoundness of the fact that someone has just stepped into eternity.

Death seems so out of place in a world where we are programmed to constantly think only of life. *Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.*

And this is the reason, **Read verse 5...**

First Satan casts doubt on what God says. Then he Focuses the attention of the woman on the one thing she could not have. He follows that up by denying God's Word.

Now comes the final move in Satan's strategy. He convinces the woman that God is trying to hold something back from her.

Satan's 2 lies were and are: Sin won't harm you. And if you don't sin, your missing something in life.

Sound familiar? Satan doesn't have to make to much use of his imagination. He just keeps using the same old stuff for 6000 years and you and I still fall for it.

You'll notice also, that Satan never challenged that quality of the tree, or God's right to restrict Adam and Eve from the fruit. Instead he denied God's promise of punishment. He denied the consequences that God said would take place if they disobeyed.

Here's how that plays out in our culture today: There's no hell. There's no judgment for sin. How could God be loving and send anyone to hell?

You're not going to die. You can be your own God.

In spite of lying in this verse there is some truth. If you want to sell a bushel of bad apples you have to put some good ones on top. Think about these true statements:

1. God knows
2. Your eyes shall be opened
3. You shall be as God
4. Knowing good and evil

The problem was that Satan used these truths to leave some impressions that weren't true. That's his specialty. Here's some of the things that weren't true.

1. That knowing good and evil made God, God.
2. That Eve could have know good and evil and not suffer consequences.
3. That God was jealous of His knowledge of good and evil and His place in the universe.

The truth was that Adam and Eve could never know good and evil the way God does. God knows evil without experiencing evil. Experiencing evil is something which God never had done and something that would be fatal to their experiential knowledge of good.

That was the last thing that Satan wanted her to know. It's true Eve would be able to know good and evil but she'd be powerless to choose the good over the evil and her fate would be sealed.

It amazes me every time I read through this chapter how up to date it is. How that every strategy used by Satan parallels exactly his strategy today and Eve just followed the bait right on into the trap. She was deceived and she didn't even know what was happening to her.

She listened, responded, and yielded.

James 4:7 says *Resist the devil and he will flee from you*. Eve put up no resistance at all. She didn't consult Adam, she didn't consult God. She made her decisions on the basis of her own judgment and reasoning.

I. Satan Convinced Eve To Doubt God's Word

II. Eve Was Enticed By The Lust Of The Flesh, The Lust Of The Eyes, And The Pride Of Life.

Read Verse 6a through *she took of its fruit and ate*.

And in a multitude of counselors there is safety. Proverbs 24:6 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God. James 1:5

Eve figures, "I'll decide what's best for me."

Verse 6 begins as temptation usually begins for all of us *the woman saw*. It all began with a look. Lot pitched his tent Sodom and David looked down on Bathsheba bathing.

The woman saw... There's an interesting parallel here between verse 6 and I John 2:16. *For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world.*

Today we think of the word "lust" almost exclusively in sexual terms but the word in the original, *epithumia*, just means "desire."

The desire of flesh, *the tree was good for food*. The desire of the eyes, *it was pleasant to the eyes*. The pride of life, *a tree desirable to make one wise*.

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III. Adam Willfully And Blatantly Sinned

Read 6b

Satan's real purpose through all of this wasn't to get Eve, it was to get Adam. And here's why, Adam was the one created directly from the dust of the ground. Adam was the one who was to become the actual head of the human race.

Apparently the sin nature is passed through the man. The only way someone could be born without sin is to be born without a human father, which is why Jesus had to be born of a virgin. The only way Jesus Christ in his human body could be sinless was to be born without a human father.

So Adam was really the one that Satan was leveling his guns at. But then why did he go to Eve first?

For one thing apparently she hadn't received the commandment directly from God. That in itself would make her more vulnerable. But there is another reason.

A woman's emotional makeup is different from that of a man and Satan knew that he could appeal to Eve's emotions.

The Apostle Paul makes an interesting comment on this passage in his New Testament letter to a young pastor named Timothy. In I Timothy chapter 2 he writes, *And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man...for Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.* I Timothy 2:12-14

Eve was deceived but Adam wasn't. Satan never appealed to Adam's emotions because that wasn't the way to get to him. Satan knew the way to Adam was through Eve. And the New Testament tells us that a woman's emotional make-up is such that she should not be in a position of spiritual leadership.

Apparently what Adam did he did with a full understanding of the circumstances. He blatantly chose separation from God rather than separation from Eve and when he did Satan had him.

Read verse 7

They got knowledge, but what a price they had to pay for it. They traded a paradise with God for one sin. In exchange for a perfect environment, fellowship with God, no fear of war, poverty, crime or death they inherited "civilization." Not only that but they got tornadoes, floods, hurricanes and earthquakes.

Sociologists want to tell us that we're just a product of our environment but Adam and

Eve had a paradise and they still fell. They had the perfect parent, God, and they still fell.

The Bible tells us that the environment is a product of us.

One man wrote, "Somewhere as Darwin and Huxley were coming out of their amoebae stages and headed for the moon they passed Adam and Eve going the other way, headed for a hole in the ground and corruption and death."

The tempter had promised Eve that when she ate her eyes would be opened but he hadn't told her what she would see. Now they saw their nakedness and everything else through the eyes of fallen sinners.

They did the best they could to cover themselves and ever since we've been using our own methods to try and cover our guilt and ease our conscience. We use religion, philosophy, education, morality, anything we can to cover ourselves before God.

Read verse 8-10

Sin brings shame and sin brings fear. Adam and his wife hid themselves from God. They weren't looking for God. They were the hiders, He was the seeker.

Notice God seeks out sinners, not the other way around. It wasn't that God didn't know where Adam was. He wasn't digging around in the bushes saying "Adam where are you? I can't find you." But the amazing God of the Bible is doing is giving Adam a chance to confess. He's giving Adam a chance to own up to what he's done. Which of course, Adam does his best to avoid.

Finally, God backs Adam into a corner and since Adam isn't going to confess on his own puts it to him straight.

Read verses 11

And of course Adam confesses all and asks for forgiveness.

Read verse 12

It's that woman's fault that I ate. In fact, it's really Your fault God because You gave her to me.

The woman admits her wrong?

Read verse 13

Even when we get backed into a corner by God and His truth we have such a hard time facing the truth.

Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent and we blame our childhood, society, our economic conditions. We will look to anything but to ourselves to blame for own personal sin because the moment we does that we're admitting that there is someone higher than us.

We're admitting that there's someone we need to give an account to and that is not the way we like to think.

The buck has to stop at the serpent because there is no one else to blame. Notice God doesn't ask the serpent any questions. He simply curses him.

Read verse 14

To eat dust is a Hebrew idiom for humility and defeat. Did snakes have legs before this? I have no idea. That would be pure speculation.

What I do know is this. Verse 14 deals with the serpent as an animal but verse 15 is entirely different. It's in verse 15 that we hit the high point of chapter 3.

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IV. God Promised A Deliverer Right From The Beginning

Read verse 15

Here God displays the riches of His grace. Before He pronounces judgment on humanity He displays His mercy. Before He banishes Adam and Eve from Eden He gives a blessed hope and promise. Satan caused the downfall of man but one is coming whose going to bruise his head. By woman had come sin, by woman would come a

Savior. By woman came the curse. By woman would come Christ who would remove the curse.

God said, *I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed.*

The Bible often times speaks of a man having seed but here a woman is said to have seed. Her seed refers to giving birth without the agency of a human father. This is a preview of the virgin birth of Christ.

He shall bruise your head means “Your power, your headship will be taken away Satan.”

And you shall bruise His heel. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. Wrote the prophet Isaiah in 53:5.

Verse 6 continues, *All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way.*

We’ve all followed in Adam's footsteps. We have all gone our own way. God promised a deliver, and that deliverer was the virgin born son of God, Jesus Christ.

You and I are responsible for our sin as surely as Adam was for his. You can make your loin cloth of fig leaves but that's not what God's interested in.

God's solution, promised to Adam and Eve thousands of years ago, was His solution all along. Adam's sin didn't catch God by surprise. His eternal plan was the seed of the woman.

God's eternal plan was to one day step into our world robed in flesh and suffer on a cross for sin.

We've all followed in the footsteps of Adam. The question is, have you believed God for the solution?

He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. John 3:18