

The Pivot

Genesis Chapter Three



~ I believe that almost all credible fundamental conservative scholars would agree that chapter three of Genesis is the single most important chapter in the Bible. Dr Griffith Thomas calls this chapter the Pivot of the Bible. It's where everything changes. If you were to read chapters one and two, and then read chapters four thru eleven, omitting chapter three, you would discover a tremendous vacuum that must be accounted for. Something happened – something very bad. For instance, in chapters one and two we met man in a place of tranquility, a place of blissful peace and in total innocence. Everything was perfection, beauty and functionally practical - and there was a wonderful fellowship between Adam and God. But as soon as we get to chapter four we see jealousy, anger, lying, wickedness, contention, strife, envy and murder – not to mention corruption, rebellion and more judgment. Where did it all come from? Where did things go so horribly wrong? How did sin REALLY originate? So many questions.

Sin didn't originate on earth in chapter three of Genesis – except as far as man is concerned. In relation to man, yes, sin originated here in chapter three. However, sin was already abounding before mankind was around in chapter one. Here is where we can trace back to their source many rivers of divine truth. Here commences the great drama which is still being enacted on the stage of human history today; and which well nigh a minimum of six millennia have not yet completed. Here we find the divine explanation for the present fallen and ruined condition of the human race. Here we learn of the subtle devices of our enemy – the devil. Here we behold the utter powerlessness of man to walk in the path of righteousness when divine grace is withheld from him. Here we discover the spiritual effects of sin; man seeking to flee from God. Here we discern the attitude of God toward the guilty sinner. Here we mark the universal tendency of human nature to cover its own moral shame through a device of mans own handiwork. Here

we are taught of the gracious provision that God has made to meet our great need. Here begins that marvelous stream of prophecy that runs the entire length of the Scriptures. Here we learn that man can not approach God except through our Mediator the Lord Jesus Christ'' ~

1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

~ In this report, our Spiritual Safari finds ourselves in the Garden of Eden eavesdropping on Eve and Satan. The first part of this chapter is the "setting" for the temptation. Satan just raises a simple question to Eve. Unfortunately, a question is raised in my mind here now, too – but not the same question. My question is: why the temptation? Well, to get that answer we will have to look back on what we've learned in chapters one and two; so, if you have not read all five of our safari reports from this book of the Bible, then I highly suggest you go back and do so now. Man was created innocent but man was not created righteous. Righteousness is innocence maintained in the presence of temptation. Temptation will either develop you or it will destroy you – one of the two – every time. The Garden of Eden was not a hothouse for everything to vegetate in; and man is not like a house plant. Character must be developed and, indeed, only can be developed in the presence of temptation.

So, man was created a responsible being and his responsibility is to glorify God, to obey God and to serve and to be subject to the divine government of the True and Living God – even in the face of temptations. Man didn't create himself; at least, I've not read that article, yet! I know many think they have re-invented themselves, but, my friend, God created man. I don't think it was some arbitrary action by which God acted, either. God told man that of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for in the day you eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. It wasn't the only tree Adam and Eve had to eat from – it was just the only tree that was *NOT* to be eaten of. More importantly, neither Eve nor Adam had any need to be eating from this tree. I'm sure they had to go WAY out of their way to even get to it.

Alright, with man on the scene and temptation in place we are now going to see the fall. We were introduced to the serpent in the first verse and immediately the question can reasonably be asked – a talking snake? Where in the world did he come from? How did he get in the Garden of Eden and Who let him in? Well, as far as we can tell from the Word of God the serpent was already there – but not as a hissing, slithering, slimy thing. As you can see, we aren't told much about how any of these things happened; but one thing we do know is that Adam already knew about the serpent and had named it! In Florida we go canoeing a lot. When paddling down the river sometimes you will come around the bend and see an alligator or a dangerous snake on a log getting some sun. It's always a little startling – and frighteningly majestic - to come across them, as you think about what would happen if they “got you;” but it is so natural for them to be there that it wouldn't be the place that it is without them. That's how I think the serpent showed himself to Eve. The devil snuck up on her very slowly and when she turned around – there he was - all the sudden.

2 Corinthians 11: 14and no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light ~

More is said about Satan in the Book of Revelation than is said anywhere else in Scripture. When we get to Revelation again – meta tauta - the great dragon is cast out – that old serpent that is called the devil – and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, is cast out *into the earth* – and his angels were cast out with him. Satan wasn't slithering around helplessly through the Garden of Eden, friends; the devil is a creature with tremendous ability. Interestingly, we are given no detailed record of his origin until we get to the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel; who answer many questions for us about the devil - and tell us how he became what he was and is – and why. For now, all we need to know is that Satan is not stupid; and he knew exactly what he was doing by deceiving Eve: causing Adam to fall.

The design of Satan's deception had but one specific objective: to cast doubt on the Word of God. No other purpose or plan of the devil in mind whatsoever. Eve was curious at this point as Satan questions God's love and goodness, righteousness and holiness. She had never even thought about those things before. Once Satan had Eve's attention he suggests that Adam

was simply lying to her now, when the devil asked, "...yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" - It raised a doubt in Eve's mind about God, about Adam - and it provoked her curiosity. Now, in all fairness, God told Adam what he wasn't to eat; but we're not told specifically if Adam ever conveyed God's commandment to Eve - or what he said to her about it. What we do know is that Adam sinned willfully and knowingly. Paul said, "...Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" - first Timothy chapter two verse fourteen. Well, irrespective of the questionable inter-marriage communications and proclivities of Adam and Eve, ignorance of the law is never a defense, my beloved....

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

~ So, Eve knew they could eat from all the trees except for that one - and that should have ended it. Eve had never thought to ask Adam, "why not?" Of course, asking wouldn't have helped because God hadn't said anything more to Adam - except that if he did eat of it, then that would be the day he would surely die. See, Satan first questions Eve to see if she will even admit that she knows about the tree restrictions. The question from Satan confuses her, "...yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" - That's not a clear question. Did God say you are not to eat from every tree here? Try this - did God say you could eat from every tree you can find? Okay, well, Eve answered correctly anyways except she *ADDED* something: God never said they couldn't "*touch*" it. This is why Satan approached the woman.

Of course, woman was created last; and someone has said we always save the best for last. Unfortunately, Eve got her information from man regarding the tree instructions. Remember God told Adam he could eat of every tree - just not that one. Either way, Eve got her information second-hand from man; which is another reason that Satan approached the woman: she seemed to be more open to discussion about this type of thing

than Adam was. Oh, I know this is just serving to infuriate someone today; but there's my prophecy for this report. Nice, huh? Well, my friend, we're not learning from your book - and we're not learning from my book - so, let's balance it out, shall we? Man is predisposed to blindly follow a beautiful woman whithersoever she may leadest....

1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

~ Alright, so, God never said they weren't to touch the fruit. It may have had some other useful and functional purpose. Yet Eve attached that stipulation for some reason. It would seem as if she were proclaiming the first man made law of the land - but it had nothing to do with the Word of God! In fact, it was a completely fabricated lie. Interestingly, with that in mind, we would need to recognize that, although a law had now been proclaimed by Eve herself it didn't take her anytime to break it! It was so easy for Satan to fool Eve because all he had to say is, "...ye shall not surely die...." The atheist today asks, "...are you kidding? - Would a God of love torture someone eternally in hell?" They act as if it would be impossible for a holy and righteous God to send anyone to hell. The devil always begins his attack by making us question the love of God and His goodness. If God is good - why did He even create that particular tree? Why put this restriction down about it? Now all have are so many more questions. Satan says God can't be righteous if He is going to let you die like this! Well, my beloved, that is questioning the Holiness of God - which you are entitled to do - but, two things (1) questioning the Holiness of God is really saying that we are going to be our own little personal gods (2) God's answer is: "TOO BAD!" God loves righteousness and so, by de facto, hates unrighteousness - because it simply cannot be otherwise - Proverbs chapter six verse sixteen and Psalm five verse five....

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

~ The liberal, the apostate and the atheist must all, necessarily, either take away from the Word of God or add to it in order to perpetuate their erroneous philosophies concerning religion. Here, we have the very first *addition to the Word of God*. Remember, in Revelation, God warns expressly against doing either. All of the cults - and right down to some self-professing fundamentalists, by the way - add many things to the Word of God that just aren't there. I suggest you REALLY check out what you're reading these days. You better check out this so-called safari, too. Further, there is a group today that thinks we are saved by the law. Oh, they say they have faith - but it's always faith *plus* something else with them. YOU are never doing enough of whatever they deem to be the right thing for you to do; and that crowd is apt to come up with anything and everything for the "else" that does not suit you. That is all a religious lie, friend – there is nothing but falsities in those errors.

John 6: 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent ~

Satan gives Eve a very subtle contradiction to the Word of God whereby a substitute is also given for it. That caused Eve to doubt. We will see in Romans the "obedience of faith" - and we have already called attention to that text – but doubt leads to disobedience – always. Faith leads to obedience, but disobedience leads to unbelief! That creates more doubt; and it is a vicious downward cycle. The appeal that is made here is an appeal to the flesh. The tree was appealing to the eyes and was a tree to be desired. It was good for food, and it would make one wise; so, it was also an appeal to the psychological part of the flesh that desires knowledge. It was also an appeal to the fleshly part of the psychological mind that is the religious side of man! Satan has it ALL covered here, if you will; and if you want to do a quick check, you will find this is precisely the temptation that Satan brought to Christ in the wilderness. Satan tempted Jesus to make the

stones into bread – good to eat. Then Satan told Him he would give Him the kingdoms of the world – that’s quite an irresistible psychological appeal....

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

~ Today, I don’t think Satan has changed his tactics one bit. In fact, I know he hasn’t, because his present modus operandi is very effective. We all seem to fall for the same old lines over and over and over again. John wrote for all that’s in the world – the lust of the flesh – good to eat, touch, smell, look at and fondle; for that we are told to cast ourselves down from the temple. These things are not of the Father – they’re of the world. Those who believe material stuff is a blessing don’t understand it is all really a curse. Jesus said these sins of the flesh come out of the heart of man – from way down deep – where Satan is making his appeal to Eve. This is how the devil is going after every single one of us today. It is very defined and calculated; and executed in a very definite way. Satan is trying to reach in and lead mankind astray through deception concerning real knowledge; and that means by making man doubt, and then question and subsequently become disobedient to the Word of God. Eve was told that she and Adam would know good and evil. Well, friends, Eve didn’t even know what evil was....

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

~ Now, at the time in which we are studying, man has become conscious and aware. Before the fall, Adam did not even have a conscience – because he was in complete sinless perfection. Innocence is the ignorance of evil. Man did not invent his conscience, either. No, we have an accuser whose name is Lucifer. The psychologist says we all have a guilt complex. A leading Christian psychologist said, “the guilt complex is as much a part of man as his right arm is”. Most people don’t want to remove their right arm; and Satan is almost always right when he accuses me of my sins to the Father, too. I’m sure that’s not your problem – but it is mine! In fact, the only time

the devil doesn't seem to lie about me is in his accusations concerning me to the Lord! The fig leaf apron was obviously a pathetic attempt at fashion because God later has to make them new clothes. I think the leaves concealed, but didn't really cover up, as was intended by Adam and Eve. Notice that, when they are confronted, they don't confess. They attempted to cover up their sin even further. The eyes of them both were opened – they knew they were sinning – and they intentionally tried to deceive God....

8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

~ The only other tree in the garden that is named specifically is the Fig tree. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not an apple tree, either, by the way. I don't know exactly what it was - but I'm almost positive it was not an apple. Either way, Adam and Eve sewed the fig leaves; which means they were not ready to admit their lost condition. They're working to manufacture the thing that will cover their nakedness. Their lost condition at this time is the same lost condition man is in today in his religions. Man goes through exercises and rituals and joins churches - and becomes extremely religious – DANGEROUSLY religious! Well, remember that Christ cursed the Fig tree. Jesus also denounced religion right after that.

You see, Satan wants to come between the soul of man and God. The only way to do that is to disconnect us from our study of the Scriptures. The devil wants to wean man away from God as we age in order to win man over to himself by causing us to doubt what we have learned in the Bible. If the devil can get us to doubt then we will become disobedient and then we will begin to drift; as we shall see very clearly in the epistle to the Hebrews. The temptations of the flesh as we know them today would not have appealed to Adam and Eve – because it wasn't about stealing or lying or coveting or killing or adultery – it was only about doubting – and, ultimately, disobeying - God.

That was the same trouble the rich young ruler had who wanted to follow Christ. He doubted; and, ultimately he simply would not obey God. In the parable of the sower, some seed simply didn't fall on good ground. We also have the tares; there are those that will not believe God. Satan's method is always the same: first, they saw it was good for food. Then, it was pleasant to the eye and to be desired. The devil works from the outside to the inside; from without to within. God begins inside man's heart – every time. Religion is something to rub on the outside of man. God never starts with religion. Here is something you might want to write down somewhere: Christianity is not a religion – Christianity is life in Christ; whereby is the only way. There are myriad religions – you can take your pick from thousands of them - each with hundreds of variations. The Lord Jesus Christ, however, is the very fountain of our understanding. He says to the Pharisees, “make the platter clean.” They were like a mausoleum; beautiful on the outside and clad with marble and flowers - but very scary inside, indeed; and containing nothing but a bunch of old dead and rotting bones. The eyes of Adam and Eve and their conscience were opened and they knew their nakedness....

9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

~ I have never seen modern fashion designers succeed with a new seasonal design using Fig leaves. I'm sure they have tried – but they have not made it

a “must have” item - yet. When Adam and Eve heard God’s voice they ran from it and hid. Then they tried to come out of the bushes to Him clothed in their man-made good works. They saw making the aprons as a good thing because it hid their new awareness of good and evil and another new thing called nakedness - and nakedness was, as Adam and Eve saw it, obviously, not an acceptable way to live. Religion will totally separate you from our Father in Heaven, friends; and here Adam and Eve are - lost. How do we know this? – Because we now see God seeking after man – His creature. Adam and Eve weren’t seeking God here; and today, man is not seeking God, either. Oh, no, friends, man is hiding from God today – just as Adam and Eve did way back when! Again, we need to note the absence of any confession at all. Adam blames Eve and Eve blames Satan – the devil made me do it - but not really. Well, let’s not be too hard on Adam or Eve. We all do and say the exact same thing....

14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

~ All we can say with certainty from verse fourteen is that the serpent was not always the slithering “snake” that we think of today. Isaiah said Satan is a man. Turn that over in your mind and see what you come up with. Tragically, God will now have to judge man. If you are one who likes to memorize Bible verses, then verse fifteen is the first one that I would recommend. This is the first prophecy concerning the coming of the Messiah; and God places enmity between Satan and the woman – and between Satan and the seed of the woman. Christ shall bruise the head of Satan; and Christ is the enmity between the two. I feel that the main thought here is not the victory that would come – but, rather, the long, continued struggle that would now ensue. The fact that a long struggle between good and evil would – and did, in fact, follow - has been and is still being revealed. That struggle is what we are going to find throughout the remainder of Scripture. I also believe this is our first prophecy of the future church, by the way.

Jesus saith, “....ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth,
because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it” – John chapter eight verse forty-four. Well, our safari believes it’s pretty easy to understand that the Lord was speaking of Satan in that passage. This is the conflict that is revealed way back here in Genesis chapter three! The apostle John said, “....in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother” – first John chapter three verse ten. There is a very real conflict and a very real struggle. There are two seeds growing in the world right now. There will be a final victory, yes; but a long, continued struggle is before us at the moment. Every man must face temptation - and must discover for himself how to allow Christ to win our every victory through Him.

Before Christ came to the earth, the victory for man came from obedience in faith. After Christ came to this earth, we are told to identify ourselves with Him – through faith! What does it mean to be saved? – It means to be in Christ Jesus. Man is one of three orders of creation: angels, man and animals. Animals are not given a choice in free will - as far as we know – but man and angels are given that choice. Here we find mans choice. Man has made the conscious, deliberate and willful decision to disobey God and man will now be held responsible for his choice from now on. It is important to note that God says, “her seed.” It doesn’t say “mans seed.” This is the first suggestion of the virgin birth. When God went looking for man, He said, “where art thou?” Well, any anthology of religion tells the story of mans search for God; but that’s just not how God is telling it to us here in His Word. Salvation is Gods search for man, my beloved. Man ran away from God as fast as he could. When God called out to Adam, “where art thou?” - that was the call of divine justice; and divine justice cannot overlook sin. It is also the call of divine sorrow, which grieves over the sinner; and it’s the call of divine love, too - which offers the redemption of God to a sinful and willfully disobedient man. All of that and the promise of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior are contained right here in

verse fourteen of chapter three of the Book of Genesis. This is the picture all the way through Scripture, too. Paul said there were none that seeketh after God. Jesus said we don't choose Him but He chooses us. Today we can only say we love Him because He first loved us; and God is still seeking out man right now to offer salvation, but that struggle continues – and will continue – possibly for a very long time....

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

~ Verse sixteen is the judgment of God upon woman. She can't bring a child into the world now without sorrow. It is most interesting that the one thing that brings so much joy to a family comes from continuous sorrow. Here is your first Biblical math lesson: Faith + Suffering = JOY! Such is the judgment of man. Remember, death did not come to Adam PHYSICALLY at the moment he ate of the fruit; even though God had specifically said, "...the day you eat of it ye shall surely die." Death is the separation of the spirit and of the soul, from the body. The Ecclesiastical writer says the body goes down to the dust, but the spirit returns unto God who gave it. Every man will ultimately answer to God - you can be sure of that; whether lost or saved. Adam didn't die until nine hundred plus years later; and the point is simple: Adam died immediately spiritually speaking and was separated from God the moment he made the conscious and willful decision to sin by eating the fruit. Paul said to the Ephesians that they were dead in their

trespasses and sins; but they weren't dead physically, of course. No, they were dead spiritually. Also, remember in the parable of the Prodigal Son, the Father said, "...this is my son, who was dead, he is found." Well, dead? – Not physically dead – but he was separated from the Father. Death means to be separated from God! Remember Jesus also said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believeth in me, though he were dead, shall live." So, Adam *DID* die the moment he ate - and that also explains why he ran away from God – and it explains the sewing of the Fig leaves. Those leaves tell quite a story, don't they? ~

20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

~ When God rejected the Fig leaf outfits and made the skins into clothes for Adam and Eve He created a blood sacrifice. To have skins from animals, naturally, those animals had to be killed. You don't take an animal's fur and then let them go back into the woods. This is the origin of sacrifice - and this is how God made it known to man. Interestingly, when Adam and Eve exited the Garden of Eden they looked back on that bloody sacrifice. They saw the Cherubim, as we shall see them see in subsequent chapters. In short, when they looked back on their way out of the Garden they saw what Moses later placed on the mercy seat: on the Cherubim looking down - the blood was sprinkled there.

There are four great lessons to be learned from the Fig leaves account. One, man must have appropriate covering to approach God. You cannot come to God clothed in your own good works. We come to Him as a sinner and as a sinner only. Number two, God doesn't accept a home-made garment. Number three, God must provide the covering – not us. Number four, the only acceptable covering is that which was obtained by the sacrifice that the Lord Jesus Christ became for you and me. There must be shelter from, protection against and covering between man and the wrath of God – and only He can provide it. Many people have discounted this teaching and abandoned it altogether today. The most difficult thing to

achieve for a man is to take his rightful position before God! Salvation only happens when we take our proper place, as sinners, before Christ at the foot of the cross. That's where we start with Him or, my friends, we just don't start with Him at all....

22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

~ All I can really say as we end this leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God is thank God He is not going to let man live eternally in sin. Praise Jesus He isn't going to do that. THAT is certainly a blessing to each of us. The flaming sword is not some sort of spiritual roadblock. It means that the way of life is kept open for man to come back to God. Now, however, knowledge of God doesn't come through a tree for man – it comes only through a sacrifice - and when Adam looked back on his way out of the Garden of Eden – this is a picture of what he saw! What we have found in this exhausting report is the river of divine truth that we will follow all the way to the last word contained in the Bible. The way; it is kept open today – by the Lord Jesus Christ. All of this will make more and more sense as we drink from this divine river and continue to progress through the jungle that is - the Word of God ~

