

The Fall

(for sermon on 6th December- 2020)

Before we begin; reflect on what Christmas means to you? Why do we need Jesus?

Christmas has always been a special time for me. Having been brought up in a Roman Catholic home and attended Roman Catholic Primary Schools and Grammar School; I've always had the sense of how special Jesus' birth was. I guess, what I missed growing up though, was how special it was for me personally; I perhaps saw it as a wondrous event, God's Son, coming to Earth; but didn't grasp [or wasn't taught] what that meant for me personally.

Christmas of course, also gives us great opportunity to share special times with family and friends.

Why we need Jesus? He has to be born, so He can grow up to die on a cruel cross, for our sins to be forgiven; and so that He can rise again on the 3rd day to give us Eternal Life.

As I say, I missed that as a child; but that makes me even more determined that children we know (family; friends, Jaffa, Xcelerate, SRE) have to understand, why Jesus' birth is a personal.

Read Genesis 3:1

1. Who is the serpent? (cf. Ezekiel 28:12-18; Isaiah 14:12-14; Revelation 12:9; 20:2)

It's commonly accepted that the serpent represents Satan (the liar, the tempter)

In Ezekiel 28 – although the passage is about the King of Tyre, verses 12-18, associate the King of Tyre as evil and reference back to Satan's evil influence in the Garden of Eden, and describe Satan as a fallen angel, who's problem was pride, and so he was cast to Earth.

Isaiah 14:12-14 – Again, although this passage is about the King of Babylon, again the evil associated with the King of Babylon, is likened to Satan, who according to v12 fell from Heaven. And v13 tells us why? Because of Satan's desire to be equal to or greater than God. Jesus says in Luke 10:18, He saw Satan fall from Heaven.

Revelation 12:9 – refers to Satan as 'that ancient serpent'

Revelation 20:2 – refers to Satan as 'that ancient serpent'

2. How is the serpent described in Genesis 3:1? (cf. John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3)

In Genesis 3:1, the serpent is described as more crafty than any other animal

John 8:44 – Jesus describes Satan as a murderer from the beginning, not holding to truth, that there is no truth in him, and when he lies, he speaks his native language; he is the father of lies

2 Corinthians 11:3 – Paul describes how Eve must be deceived by 'the serpent's cunning'

3. What do we make of a talking serpent?

Evil/demonic spirits can enter humans and animals (See Luke 8:33).

In this case Satan spoke through the serpent or gave the impression that it was the serpent speaking and not Satan.

4. What did the serpent say to the woman? Was it true what the serpent said? (cf. Genesis 2:15-17)

*The serpent asks the woman "Did God **really** say, 'You must not eat from **any** tree in the garden'". Notice the doubt the serpent sows in the woman's mind (and remember she got God's rule from Adam, not directly from God).*

What God really said in Genesis 2:15-17 – they are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it, you will certainly die"

What the serpent (Satan) is doing is a) attacking the person, who got the rule second-hand, not first-hand; and therefore more likely to doubt herself and b) attacking the Word of God, if he can get the woman doubting the word of God, then he'll get some success. Satan rephrased God's positive "you can eat from every tree but one" into a negative "God won't let you eat from any tree..."

Read Genesis 3:2-3

5. What is the woman's reply and how is it slightly different to what God said? (cf. Genesis 2:15-17)

The woman mistakenly enters into discussion with Satan, instead of saying "go away"

The woman's knowledge of the rule is a little vague. She doesn't know the name of the tree she can't eat from, just that it is in the middle of the garden. She adds to the rule, something God did not say, God didn't say they couldn't "touch" the fruit, only that they couldn't "eat" the fruit. Although, avoiding the temptation by not touching it, would be a wise move.

6. Whose responsibility was it for the woman to know what God actually said? (cf. Genesis 2:16)

Adam had the responsibility of communicating the rule to the woman. The commandment was given to Adam (Genesis 2:16). You can imagine Adam explaining to his wife "see that tree in the middle of the garden, don't touch or God says we'll die".

Read Genesis 3:4-5

7. What does the serpent say and what is his ploy?

He sows doubt in the woman's mind, by contradicting God's Word and saying "you will not certainly die"

He's ploy is make the woman doubt herself and doubt God.

Satan gets a foothold.

The Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:27 – do not give the devil a foothold.

8. What's true and what's false in the serpent's statements in Genesis 3:4-5? (cf. Genesis 3:7)

In Genesis 3:5 – Satan gives further information – which helps his ploy.

He says something true, that when they eat the forbidden fruit, their eyes will be opened.

Unfortunately, as we see in Genesis 3:7, their eyes are opened to what they've done wrong.

But Genesis 3:6 is even more enticing because Satan offers a very powerful enticement, they will be like God.

This is how Satan himself fell, by wanting to be equal to or greater than God.

9. What is the serpent "offering" the woman?

Equality with God.

Wisdom and power.

Read Genesis 3:6-9

10. What does the woman and her husband do?

Seeing how pleasing to the eye the fruit was and how desirable it was for gaining wisdom, the woman took the fruit and ate it; and also gave some to her husband, who also ate it.

The woman gave into a threefold temptation described in 1 John 2:16 – lust of the flesh (fruit good for food), lust of the eyes (pleasing to the eye) and pride of life (the fruit gave wisdom)

11. Having eaten the fruit, what did they realize?

They realized they were naked.

Their innocence had gone [like the innocence of a naked toddler]

Some commentators say perhaps they were covered in light (Psalm 104:2 and Matthew 17:2) and that having sinned, that light was lost, leaving them exposed and naked.

12. Why did they hide? Does God know where they are?

They hid out of guilt and shame.

Even though God asked “where are you?”; He knew where they were, they [we] can’t hide from Him; as one commentator says, it’s more like the heartfelt cry of anguished father, knowing his children have done wrong and knowing that a gulf in the relationship has occurred.

Read Genesis 3:10-13

13. What is the man’s explanation for hiding?

The man heard God’s voice and he was afraid.

Our sin will always makes us afraid and guilty before a Holy God!

14. What is the man’s explanation for disobeying God’s rule? Who does he blame?

V11 – God asks “who told you that you were naked” and “have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from” are rhetorical questions; God knows the answer.

He wants to the man to confess his sin.

The man’s explanation is to blame the woman YOU [God] gave me. So the man is blaming the woman and God here.

Whereas the man could have simply said, as we learnt from King David, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Sam 12:13)

15. What is the woman’s explanation for disobeying God’s rule? Who does she blame?

The woman’s explanation is to say she was deceived by the serpent. She kind of blames the serpent.

Being deceived into sinning, still makes it a sin.

Read Genesis 3:14-19

16. What is the punishment for the serpent?

Notice God doesn’t ask the serpent any questions as He did with the man and woman.

The first punishment is directed against the animal that Satan used to bring about the temptation.

God commanded that the serpent now slither on the ground instead of presumably walking on legs.

Next punishment – enmity between serpent and the woman – a natural aversion between humans and serpents (I can vouch for that)

Next punishment – eat dust all the days of your life. This is true of the serpent and Satan. Eating dust has the idea of defeat (Isaiah 65:25 and Micah 7:17) and we see that ultimate defeat of Satan (Romans 16:20)

Next punishment – enmity between serpent’s seed and woman’s seed. This a natural animosity between humans and Satan. But the punishment continues in that the seed of the woman will bruise Satan’s head and Satan will bruise the seed of the woman’s heal. This is a direct prophecy of Jesus, the Messiah; Satan would bruise Jesus’ heal, but Jesus would crush Satan’s head

Genesis 3:15 is often referred to as protoevangelium – the first gospel.

17. What is the punishment for the woman?

The woman will have great pain in childbirth.

The woman will desire to please her husband yet the husband will rule over her. This gives the idea of the tension in a marriage relationship; where the husband is head of the house and yet this headship might be difficult because a) the husband doesn’t lead properly and b) the woman does follow properly.

18. What is the punishment for Adam?

Hard work – the ground will no longer just produce good but also weeds and thorns (see Job 7:1-2)

And of course, death! Dust [remember Adam was made from dust] you are and to dust you will return.

19. **Ponder:** In what ways do we suffer the consequences of Adam and Eve's sin, today? (Romans 5:12, 15-16; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

Romans 5:12, 15-16 – we all inherit sin and death through Adam (and Eve's) sin.

1 Cor 15:21-22 – death came through a man [Adam]

Read Genesis 3:20-24

20. What is the significance, if any, of Adam naming Eve?

The man was created first and therefore the head.

She was named Eve, mother of all living; even though not a mother yet. Adam named her in faith, trusting God would bring forth offspring in His timing and also bring forth a deliverer from the woman, who would defeat Satan (Genesis 3:15)

21. Why did God clothe Adam and Eve?

God clothed them clothing as He acknowledged their sin, and shame they now felt in being naked.

In order for clothes of skin to be made, an animal had to die; the first sacrifice. Without shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22)

22. What does God mean by: "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil."?

Could be a hint of sarcasm – that humans are "now like us" (God)

Or perhaps acknowledging that they now have "greater" knowledge; but in a bad sense; now having knowledge of sin and evil

23. Why did God prevent them from eating from the tree of life?

Their sin precludes them from living forever. Remember the punishment for disobedience was death.

24. What was Adam and Eve's punishment, in verse 23? Why?

The are removed from the garden. The punishment for sin was also spiritual death; they are removed from that close relationship with God; the relationship has been damaged and there is a separation.

25. Why did God place cherubim to guard the Garden of Eden?

The tree of life was like the Holy of Holies in the Temple and now off limits – due to the sin of Adam and Eve. There are no longer allowed to live forever and therefore cannot eat from the tree of life. But there is a way they (we) can live forever.

Re-read Genesis 3:15

26. What/Who is this promising?

God promises that the woman's descendant (Jesus) will crush the head of the serpent (Satan).

This will allow sin to be fixed and replaced with forgiveness and will allow death to be fixed with eternal life.

Read Hebrews 2:14-18

27. What does this NT passage have to do with Genesis 3?

Despite the sin [and death] introduced by Adam and Eve.

God had a rescue plan to allow His precious Son to become flesh

He became fully human (as well as being fully God) so that He could make atonement for sin and also break the power of the Devil and the power of sin and death.

Unlike Adam and Eve, Jesus though tempted, did not give in to temptation.

Finish in prayer: Thanking God that Jesus shared in humanity, so that through His death He broke the power of him who holds the power of death – that is the devil; and freed those who fear death (Heb 2:14-15)