

Genesis 3:1-24

One bad apple DOES spoil the whole bunch (or: Why Donnie Osmond would have flunked out of seminary)

The 1960's and 1970's saw a plethora of "faddish" music groups such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and the Monkees. There were also a number of "family groups" such as the Jackson Five, the Partridge Family, and the Osmonds. Perhaps you remember the Osmonds, with young Donnie, crooning "one bad apple don't spoil the whole bunch girl, oh give it one more try before you give up on love."

Well, here's why Donnie Osmond would have definitely flunked out of seminary. The fact is, one bad apple not only DOES spoil the whole bunch, it did! Six thousand years ago, a bad apple was found in a Garden. It was a Garden called Eden that this rotten apple came into being. And it so spoiled everything that we're still suffering today!

The evolutionist says we're progressing upward - getting better every day. But the Bible declares that six thousand years ago, at the dawn of creation, the disease of sin afflicted man, and we've been becoming more and more spoiled ever since.

Notice then the galling actions of Satan in vv. 1-8. We see first where *sin was introduced* (vv. 1-5). Have you ever wondered where sin came from? Sin existed before creation! In Isaiah 14 we read of the fall of Satan. In the gospels, Jesus said he watched "Satan fall from heaven like lightning." We meet a new character in Genesis here. He comes in the form of a serpent, but really it is no one less than Satan! He is the one who committed THE original sin before creation even occurred. And here he is poised to unleash his poison upon God's creation! It's only three chapters from the beginning of the Bible that we meet him. Interestingly, three chapters from the end of the Bible we see him for the last time. But his efforts to thwart the plan of God are seen on every page in between!

He's described as subtle, which means "wise" (cf. Ezekiel 28:12 - a description of Satan). He still retains that wisdom today, but it's a wisdom warped and twisted by sin. Note how he works. First of all, he **created doubt** (vv. 1-3). We see where *he questions the authorship of God's Word*. "Hath God said," he says. You weren't there Eve when it was said! Can you be sure God said it? Eve's reply is instructive because it's a misquote of God's word. This is clearly seen when we compare Genesis 3:2-3 with Genesis 2:16-17. She dropped the words "every" and "freely" and added the phrase "neither shall ye touch it." She also dropped "surely" from lest ye surely die. Folks, it's vital that we know God's Word. We mess up when we don't. There are plenty today who question the authorship of God's Word. But you can rest assured - it IS His word!

We also see where *he questions the accuracy of God's Word*. Where had Eve heard this from? From Adam (2:16-17). Eve was not even created yet when God spoke this to Adam! Satan used that by essentially saying, "how do you know Adam didn't misunderstand?" In this regard, Adam was at fault as he should have communicated so clearly what it was that God said that Eve didn't have any doubts at all. Men, it's vital that as spiritual leader you communicate God's word accurately.

But Satan not only created doubt, he also **claimed denial** (v. 4). What a blatant lie he tells here when he says, “thou shalt not surely die!” The whole temptation hinged on who Eve would believe. It’s the same in salvation. Satan denies the truth that you can’t save yourself. Who will you believe?

Notice that Satan also **created delusion** (v. 5). The phrase “as gods” translates the Hebrew term Elohim, which is used throughout chapter one for God as the Creator. Satan is essentially saying “you’ll become like God Himself.” It was the same daring thought he once entertained in eternity past. And the same thought that transformed him from the anointed cherub to the devil. **WARNING** - this same delusion is prevalent today in New Age philosophy!

As we see sin introduced here, I think it’s interesting to note that for a woman, the center of her rule is in her heart, not her head. Satan’s attack to Eve was based in the intellect, that area that’s not the center of her rule. For a man, the center of his rule is his intellect, not his heart. Satan’s attack on Adam thought was through Eve to his emotions, that area that wasn’t the center of his rule. Satan will attack your weak areas. That’s why it’s doubly important to daily dress in the armor of God!

It was bad enough that sin was introduced. But even worse we also see **sin imbibed** (vv. 6-8). Notice first a word about **commitment** in v. 6. In his commentary, John Phillips points out the following process: Eve’s look became a lust (“she saw”); her desire became a decision (she “took”); her choice became a chain (she “did eat”); and as a sinner she now became a seducer (she “gave”). Had she turned immediately away (as we should do when faced with temptation) she would have saved herself so much heartache. But she didn’t turn away. Instead she saw and decided to take and eat. Now she was a sinner, and sin has a powerful grip. In fact, it wasn’t enough that she was a sinner. Misery loves company, so now she gave to Adam as well.

We often think there’s no harm in looking. But note the awful progression it led to. It indeed became a slippery slope down which Eve slid into the depths of sin. 1 John 2:16 says, “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” Is this not what we see here - all three? She saw that the fruit was good for food (the lust of the flesh); that it was pleasant to the eyes (the lust of the eyes); and it was desired to make one wise (the pride of life). What a contrast Eve is to Jesus when he was tempted by Satan as recorded in Matthew 4:1-11. His temptation came in the same three areas: make the stones into bread after having fasted for forty days (the lust of the flesh); He was shown all kingdoms and told they were his if He would worship Satan (the lust of the eyes); and He was taken to the temple and told to throw Himself down so the angels would catch Him for everyone to see who He really was (the pride of life). Yet in each case, Jesus responded with scripture. Would to God that Eve had done the same - would that we would today!

The commitment wasn’t Eve’s alone, however. Notice the end of v. six: “. . . She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” Adam was not deceived. He sinned with his eyes wide open! In this sense, his sin was more serious than Eve’s!

Notice next here a word about **conscience** (v. 7). As soon as sin had been committed they lost innocence and gained conscience. Some would want to use this verse to make original sin equivalent to sex. But there is no relationship between the two. However, it does illustrate well the loss of innocence. When we were potty training our

son, Matthew, we always got nervous when company came over and he had to go to the bathroom. We could invariably expect him to come out of the bathroom with no clothes on asking for assistance. He did this for one reason and one reason alone - he still possessed an innocence that threw modesty down the toilet with the rest of whatever went down with it! No longer did Adam and Eve live in innocence. Now they had a conscience. And their nakedness made them daily aware of the drastic fall they had taken!

Notice also a word about **consequence** (v. 8). What a terrible consequence! For the first time they feared the presence of God! As a result, they tried to hide from God! Maybe you think you're hiding something from God. You know you're hiding it from others and think you've pulled the wool over God's eyes too. Let me remind you tonight, "the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth . . ." (2 Chronicles 16:9a). You can't hide from God.

But we need to see the saving actions of God in vv. 9-24. We can see first *the reaction of man* (vv. 9-13). There's an explanation, an excuse and an example. Notice first the **explanation** (vv. 9-10). God asked Adam where he was. Why? Did God need knowledge? NO! He knew. This was mainly to express the truth to us that man WAS now lost! Adam, however, tried to explain his hiding. He's like many today who seek to explain their actions before God and justify themselves. He should have just come and said "I've sinned and am no longer worthy to be called you son." But instead, we see the earliest evidence of the truth of Jeremiah 17:9: "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

So notice that Adam offers an **excuse** (vv. 11-12). God got straight to the heart of the matter. Adam, in response, first blamed God. "It's the woman YOU gave me," he said. I can picture God unmoved by such an accusation. So Adam tries another one. He blames Eve. "She gave me," he said. What a cowardly act. Not long before he had exclaimed "whoa, bone of my bones!" Now he tries to shift the blame to her instead of being a man and admitting his wrong.

The result shows up in the **example** (v. 13). Eve does the same thing. "It's the serpent's fault God," she declares. This is the corrupting influence of sin. Many want to associate with others of less than reputable character saying "I can lead them to Christ." But the hard facts of the matter show that they'll lead you to sin!

Notice the **response of God** to all this (vv. 14-24). His response is seen in both His sentence and His salvation. Notice first **His sentence** (vv. 14-19). There are three parts to God's sentence. First, He *pronounces war* in regards to the serpent (vv. 14-15). I believe this explains the natural aversion of people to snakes! And here for the first time in the Bible we see the Gospel! We're told of a seed who's heel Satan would bruise, which is what Satan did to Jesus at the cross. But we're also told that the seed would crush the head of Satan. Such is yet future!

God also *pronounces woe* in regards to the woman (v. 16). This sentence really works itself out in two ways; both the hospital and the home. Man seeks to do away with pain in childbirth (epidurals, etc.). But he can't exterminate the struggle for dominance in the home. There's truly only one way to have peace at home; when the home is composed of two people who understand biblical roles!

Notice, too, that God *pronounces work* in regards to the man (vv. 17-19). The very ground was cursed because of sin. What had the ground done? Nothing - but sin is far-reaching. Paul makes an interesting statement in Romans 8:22: "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time." Since the Fall even the ground cries out to be released from bondage. Until that time, however, we must toil in our work. Work, in and of itself, is not the curse. Adam worked before the Fall. We see in chapter two where God put him in the Garden to dress it and to keep it. But that was joyful; now that work has become toilsome because of the Fall. Even here, however, is a picture of grace. Having to work the ground with sweat was a curse, yet it is the very thing that sustains us! God turns the curse into a blessing!

Notice finally though the response of God as seen in **His salvation** (vv. 20-24). There is a *covering provided* (vv. 20-21). Here in Eden, blood was shed for the first time. Scripture says, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins" (Hebrews 9:22). Adam and Eve must have stood aghast as God took a creature in their stead and slaughtered it before their eyes - it's blood being poured out to provide them a covering. It was the first foreshadowing of Calvary! For at Calvary, the blood of Jesus was poured out. His righteousness became the covering for our sin!

But notice what else God did. There was not only a covering provided, there was also *calamity prevented* (vv. 22-24). What if Adam and Eve had now gone to the tree of life? If they'd eaten there, in their fallen condition, they would have lived forever in their sin! They would have become like the fallen angels - incapable of death and forever locked into the guilt and penalty of their sin. But God, in grace and mercy, didn't allow that to happen. We think of the banishment from the Garden as punishment, but really, it was a beautiful expression of the love of God!

A NAZI soldier entered the place where Picasso's massive war mural was on display. It contained twisted shapes of grotesque figures intended to portray man's inhumanity, man's slaughter of fellow man. The Nazi turned to a man standing there (not knowing it was Picasso) and said, "who's responsible for these things?" Picasso answered, "you are."

When God created the world, He said "it is good." When He created man, He said "it is very good." But step outside yourself for a few moments. Look at man with an objective eye! What do you see? Like Picasso's war mural, he really is a mass of twisted shapes and grotesque figures. Even among the best of us, by man's standards, we still see individuals disheveled by dishonesty, people prancing through life full of pride, potential falling prey to vanity, and folks striving after the illusion of wealth, fame, position, etc. Who's responsible for these things? You are!

The Bible declares that when Adam fell, so did we. We participate in the sin of Adam because we are sinful both by choice and by nature. That sin is a curse - a curse that either we carry or allow someone else to carry for us. Praise God that someone came and took the curse of sin for us. Jesus Christ, two thousand years ago, became the covering for our sins. Because of sin, the ground will bring forth thorns, God said. It brought forth thorns and they fashioned them into a crown, pressing them into the brow of God's only Son! Because of sin, there must be death, God said. Scripture, in Romans 6:10, speaking of the death of Jesus, says, "The death he died, he died to sin once for all." He died for you. Will you accept His gift of eternal life?