

# (Genesis #3) the Genesis of Sin

by J. Glyn Owen

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*The sermon explains the origin of sin and the nature of humanity's rebellion against God, and emphasizes the need for redemption through the Spirit of God and the Word of God.*

**Duration:** 53:37

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:1

**Topics:** "Sin"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher explains that the world is in its current state of mess and unrest because of the rebellion of mankind. According to the book of Genesis, the first couple that God created rebelled against Him, and this rebellion has been passed down to all of humanity. The preacher emphasizes that this rebellion is the reason for the division and darkness in the world. However, the message of the sermon is that Jesus Christ is the Savior who can deal with this rebellion and bring righteousness, peace, and grace.

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## Transcript

We have been looking into the early chapters of the book of Genesis from time to time in our evening services recently, and I feel constrained to be turning back there again tonight. We are going to look at the Genesis of Sin, as that is expounded for us in those first seven verses in Genesis chapter 3, and I therefore ask you to turn with me again to that passage. I'm not going to read it now, but we shall be referring to it as we proceed.

Perhaps I should clarify the situation. We are attempting to do one thing only, namely to let this book of Genesis speak for itself. One is very much aware of the various kinds of criticisms that are leveled at the Word of God in total, but particularly at this first book of the Bible, and very especially at the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

Now, there is a time and place for a proper consideration of many of these criticisms, I believe, but that is not in the pulpit, and certainly not now. Now, we are taking it that we can depend upon the integrity of this passage and of this book, and we are attempting as best we can to see what God is saying to us through the words of Genesis. What's the message? Many things we shall be leaving aside may be, but we are attempting to get hold of the main thrust of the passage, and I trust that as we do so tonight we shall have reason to believe that we ought to thank God for the explanation that we have here of what has gone on in our world and of things as they are tonight.

In order that we should with some measure of wisdom and understanding address ourselves to rectify the curse and the disease that is so rampant among all mankind. Now, whatever may be literal and whatever, if any, may be symbolical in the narrative, one thing is clear as far as the writer of the book is concerned and as far as the whole of the Bible is concerned. Everyone within the covers of the book is historical as something that actually happened in history and not something mythical or symbolical in the absolute sense.

Now, I haven't the time at my disposal to dwell in any great length at this, but let me say this much. The New Testament looks upon this so much as part of history that it traces the genealogy of our Lord Jesus Christ to Adam. When you consider that fact, I don't think one can say anything that is more significant than that.

Jesus Christ was not a mythical figure. That we can prove from extra-biblical history. He was born in a certain place at a given time, and his name is written into the annals of the Roman Empire and not simply into the pages of the New Testament.

Jesus was a real man. He was born in time. He lived and died and rose again in space and time in our world.

Now, the genealogy of the man Jesus is traced back by Luke to Adam. In other words, Luke and the rest of the writers of the New Testament believed that Adam was as real as Jesus. The father is as real as the child.

And it would have been the greatest insult for them to treat Jesus of Nazareth as if he were the child of a mythical figure that lived long ago nowhere. Not only that, of course, when you turn to passages like Romans chapter 5, the second part, 1 Corinthians 15, you will find that the Apostle Paul treats the life and historicity of Adam as real as the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks of Jesus as the last Adam corresponding to the first.

By one man he sent sin into the world, and death by sin. But by the last Adam, righteousness came in in the place of sin and life in the place of death. And you have the ministry of the last Adam, Jesus Christ, corresponding to the need created by the first.

This is only another way of saying that the writers of the books of the Bible, at any rate, look upon this as history and not as mythical, not as a parable or anything of that kind, but as something that has actually happened. Now, if this is so, if it is historically accurate, then this record is absolutely vital. Indeed, it is pivotal to an understanding of what's going on in the world.

It explains to us, for example, why all the sciences fail to heal the wound of mankind, why with all the genius of science and philosophy and psychology and sociology and every other science that we have, why with all the accumulated genius and sophistry of the ages, we cannot heal the patient man or mankind. The best that we can do is to deal with a few pimples on the face of the patient, but the sickness remains. Man is writhing in the agony of his own pain and of his own disease tonight, and you and I know something of the heartbreaks that abound on all hands simply because of what happened here.

Now, if this is a correct understanding of things, then it explains to us why the best brains of the world and of the years and of the ages have not been able to lift man up, to set him on his feet again, and to bring peace and harmony into the world and allow the world to be run as God originally meant it. It is because of

what happened here. Then, of course, on the other hand, if this is true, and if this is what God meant the world to be, as it is described before the fall of man, if the picture that we have in Genesis describes the kind of thing that God anticipated, the kind of thing that God meant, and what we have before us tonight describes how things went wrong, then you and I have a key to an understanding of the need of the problem of the world.

Though it may sound terribly arrogant to say it, we have a key that is not given to the philosophers, that is not given to the non-Christian scientists, that is not given to the philosophers, and is not given to any man apart from the understanding which is given to us in God's word. Now, I come then tonight to a passage which is very, very important. It takes us to the heart of the matter which is perhaps the most important of all important matters as we study the history of mankind.

What's gone wrong? Why is the world in the mess it is? Why is it that we simply cannot bring peace to the nations? Why is it that we cannot have righteousness reigning? Well now, this passage before us tonight tells us that an alien power has captivated the heart and the mind and the will of our first parents, leading them away and astray from God and into a total rebellion against Him. And that, in brief, is the message that I bring you tonight. The explanation of the state and the condition of mankind, according to this book of Genesis, is this.

Man is in rebellion. The first two, the first couple that God made, rebel. And all their children and all their progeny have been born in rebellion, have accepted the status quo, and have added to it, and have personally joined in the rebellion so that the whole family of mankind constitutes a kingdom of darkness set over against the kingdom of light, a kingdom of Satan set over against the kingdom of God.

This is why things can't be easily rectified, because of the basic rebellion in the hearts of our parents, handed down to us, and which we have accepted for ourselves. But now let's look at it, and let's see how it is developed here in the passage. There are three main things that emerge here.

First of all, we see Satan preparing the way for his sinister attack upon our first parent. Satan preparing the way. Secondly, we see Satan propagating a lie.

And thirdly, we see Satan procuring an ally. And if that helps us to remember, to summarize the passage, then so may it be. Satan preparing the way, Satan propagating a lie, and thirdly, Satan procuring an ally.

Now let's look at the picture. Satan prepares the way for his pending assault. Now that's what we have in verses one to three.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. He said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, 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. Satan prepares the way.

Now the first thing we must do, of course, is to identify the serpent as Satan. You notice the name Satan doesn't come in there, but I've spoken of the serpent as Satan. Why do we do that? The word for serpent means the shining one.

There must have been something about this serpent which was very significant. Earlier on in chapter two you remember that God brought all the creatures of the field, all the creatures that had been made, he

brought them to Adam that Adam should name them. Adam did that.

But now here is something quite unusual. Here is a serpent who is capable of speech. Here is a serpent who is capable of communicating.

This is something out of the ordinary. You don't meet in chapter two. This is something altogether out of the ordinary.

Now, when we come to the New Testament, we find that the apostle Paul speaks of Satan as one who makes himself into an angel of light, an angel of light. And strange to say, in 2 Corinthians chapter 11, he refers to that in a context where he also refers to Eve's being beguiled by Satan. Now I ask the question, and I cannot dogmatize about it, does that mean to say that the apostle Paul is thinking of Satan as being transformed into an angel of light, not only in New Testament times, but also back in the Garden of Eden, when he came as the shining one and somehow or other masqueraded as more than a creature, and yet in the guise of the creature? Now whatever about that, by the time we come into the New Testament, we find that it is made very explicit that the serpent was Satan.

And when you come to the end of the New Testament, to the book of the Revelation, we have no qualms, no questions to ask at all, because our questions are answered. Let me read to you. Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon.

And the great dragon was thrown down, yet that ancient serpent who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. You have the same. That was Revelation 12, verses 7 and 9, but you have the same kind of thing in Revelation 20, in verse 2. And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.

In other words, the serpent is Satan, and Satan is the serpent. I don't think there is need to pursue that. But now, agreeing that we are right here in our designation of the serpent as Satan, I want you to notice next the intrusion of Satan into the affairs of God and his human creatures.

Satan is always a busybody. It is no wonder that the Apostle Paul and other writers in the New Testament were so angered by busybody. I hope you have noticed that in the New Testament.

And one reason, I believe, is this, that Satan is such a busybody, he gets into everybody's business. Satan is essentially an intruder. Always has been, and he certainly is here.

Interfering into things that don't belong to him. But here he comes. You notice how he comes.

He comes and he addresses not Adam, but Eve. Not both of them together, but one of them. And that was the woman who had been given to be a helper fit for the man.

He said to the woman, Did God say, You shall not eat of any tree of the garden? Now that's the correct translation. Did God say, You shall not eat of any of the trees of the garden? Satan comes to the woman with a suggestion. A suggestion allied to an exaggeration.

You notice what he's after. He wants to engage this woman's conversation, and he's got something big to do in a moment. But of course, he doesn't want to do it all at once.

He's got to prepare the way. And so the first thing to do is to get the woman's attention. It's to get her ears.

It's to get her listening. And he's very brilliant at this kind of thing. An incredulous tone, so grammarians tell us, is very obvious here.

Did God say, You can't eat of any of the trees of the garden? And such an exaggeration. We all know how a wholly baseless suggestion can be employed to startle someone. It gets your attention all right, but it gets you off balance.

It may sound daring, even offensive to the ear. But here, he certainly gained the attention of the woman, and then he brought in his exaggeration. And of course, in just a few moments, poor Eve doesn't know what she's thinking about, nor what she's talking about.

Because he has said something which was wrong, and yet she's finding herself instinctively getting into conversation with this strange, sinister, shining being, serpent-like, who's addressing her. The end result at that stage was that Satan had secured a foot inside the door of Eve's mind, and got her into a debate on his own terms, and not on hers. The dialogue is on.

Now notice the difference. When Satan approached Jesus in the wilderness, he didn't start to enter into a dialogue with him. I find this very significant.

It's not cowardice to turn your back on Satan. Eve began the dialogue, she listened, and she went on to correct him, and to talk to him, and treat him as if he were reasonable. Satan is not reasonable.

Satan is not sensible. Satan is not one to argue with. How many of us, if we were honest tonight, and if the opportunity were given for us to talk freely and frankly with one another, would have to say, we fell, and he got us into a net, simply because we started to argue with him.

Jesus said, get thee behind me, Satan. No arguing here. Even the Son of God doesn't argue with Satan.

His apostles tell us, resist the devil, and he will flee from you, but never argue with him. Don't enter into dialogue with a being of disorder, because he's too great, and he's too big, and he's too cunning for you and for me, apart from the grace of God. He never announces the purpose or intention of his intrusions, but he comes and tries to engage us in conversation, Satan preparing the way.

Oh, that God would give us a spiritual radar system. You know, I was laughing up my sleeve the other day. I don't know whether I should or not.

Any police officers here, perhaps I shouldn't say this, but when I heard of that gadget they have in the cars to detect those who pull you up for speeding, you know, I was laughing a little. Perhaps I was very naughty. Well, forgive me if I was, but oh, that we should have some such spiritual gadget in our souls, a radar system, that we should be able to see our enemy astride our pathway.

Oh, for a sensitivity of spirit. This is why, you see, it is so necessary for Christian men and women to be filled with the Spirit of God, and armed with the Word of God. A Christian man or a Christian woman who is but a lackadaisical, distant follower of Jesus Christ, is always prey to Satan.

You and I need to be filled with the Spirit, and under the power and dominion of the Word of God, and not just following afar off as Peter was. That's a dangerous thing to do. Keep close, just as the Lord Jesus makes sure that the dove of the Spirit abides on you.

I was reading that this week. I'm making digressions tonight. This is a very dangerous thing to do, but you know, let's pass it on when it's fresh.

John the Baptist knew the Lord Jesus to be the Messiah, not just because the dove came upon him, but because the dove abode on him, abode on him. My friend, is the Spirit of God abiding on you? Is he on you tonight with his peace and his glow and his grace? Abode upon him. Led him into the wilderness, brought him out of the wilderness, led him to the cross, into the grave, out of the grave, into heaven.

Abode on him. That's the message. You and I dare not live with anything less than that in a world where there is such a sinister, malign being as the one we encounter here.

And if we're only praying, tying with Christian things, then we shall certainly betray, and we shall most miserably fall. Satan preparing his way. The second thing, Satan propagating a lie.

Now, sooner or later, Satan brings out his trump card, which is invariably a lie, but a lie usually that is so near the truth that you sometimes miss it. A lie that is so much like the truth that if you're not in the Spirit and if you're not educated in the Word, you don't see it. What has preceded, then, was but the initial skirmishing that prepared the way for the greater assault, was the psychological softening up process, getting your foot in the door to be a salesman.

Eve countered Satan's first words, you remember, bless her, I like this, and we ought to remember this. You know, I've never heard anyone refer to this, but here it is in the Scriptures. First of all, Eve came to the defense of her God.

Satan said, did God say you can't eat of any of the trees, the fruit of any of the trees of the garden? Oh, no, no, says Eve. When she got her composure, she said, God didn't say that. God said we could eat of the fruit of all the trees of the garden except one.

She corrected him. We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but God said you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it lest you die. Having engaged her mind and imagination, he now delivers the heavy ammunition.

What he says, even though he veils it up, of course, is this. What he says is God is a liar. He didn't use those words.

He never does. You must be careful how Satan clothes his words and clothes his ideas. He always covers the pill very well with nice, lovely, sweet, sweet something.

He didn't say God is a liar, but that's what he's really saying. That's what he meant. Because he goes on to say this, you shall not die, Eve said.

God says don't eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, nor touch it lest you die. No, says Satan, you shall not die. For, now notice, for God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

Now, one word of explanation there, a very hurried one. In some of your translations it will say you shall be like gods. In other translations it says you will be like God.

Now, the word for God, Elohim, is a plural one, and therefore no one can dogmatize as to whether the reference is to gods or to God, but probably this is right if the reference is to God, the God of the Bible, the

God that we encounter here, Elohim. There's no talk in Genesis at this point about other gods. No other gods are recognized in the beginning.

God, Elohim, and therefore it is more than probable that what we have here is this. Satan says you can eat and you're not going to die, and the reason why God told you not to eat is this. When you do, you will have such a knowledge of good and evil that you will be like God himself.

What a date! Now, can I just underline two things here, two principles, and I think that they will apply as much tonight in Knox Church and out in the world, out in Toronto and in our country and in the world as they applied right here in the Garden of Eden of old. Two things that Satan did. First of all, Satan shocked Eve's innocent faith in the goodness of God.

He shocked her innocent faith in the goodness of God. The cynicism involved in his opening insinuation and the dogmatism of his next statement so shocked Eve that she never really gained composure after this. It's a tremendous statement.

He shocks her. You see, Eve in her natural, native, unspoiled, innocent condition had a predisposition to believe that God was good. After all, God had made her, spoken to her and her husband, and put her and her husband in this lovely setup in the Garden of Eden, in such a lovely world.

There was its beauty, there was its fertility, there was the joy and peace and tranquility of it and much else. It was God who put her there, and God had given her everything she had, and she knew that. So that she was predisposed to have faith in the goodness of God.

And until this character came along, she believed that there was some reason why she should not eat of that one tree in the center of the garden. She believed that God had a good reason for telling them not to. But you see, what Satan does, he shocks that innocent faith.

I say innocent faith because it's not been tried yet. He shocks it. And Satan loves to use his shock tactic.

You sure you can trust him? You notice what he said? God's got something up his sleeve. As a matter of fact, God knows, you see, that if you took the fruit of that tree, you'd be like himself. And he doesn't want you to be that.

In other words, God wants to keep you down. Right down there. And he doesn't want you to become such a being that you are no good and evil as he does.

He wants to keep you down. He wants to keep you under. Now, I on the other hand, I have your very best in mind.

And so I suggest to you that you take no notice at all of what your God has told you. You don't. And when you do, you'll be like God himself.

You got it? He shocks her innocent faith in the goodness of God. How many of us in our younger days have gone through this precisely? We had a kind of innocent faith in God, perhaps. We'd been taught that God was loyal.

We'd been taught that God would hear prayer. We'd been taught that God was good. And then the sinister notion came.

Why do you obey the commandments? Why do you live a decent life? Why do you do this and why do you not do that? Surely it's not good for you. Why not let go? And you'd be so much the better for it. Look what you get.

You and I know what a spoiling of the life can take place when we believe the devil's lie and allow him to shock our innocent faith in the goodness of God. In the goodness of God, even when he prohibits something. The second thing I want you to notice is this.

Satan shames her uncritical fear of God's righteousness. He shocks her innocent faith in God's goodness. He shames her uncritical fear of God's righteousness.

In her state of innocence, Eve instinctively believed that when God said that eating of the forbidden fruit would result in death, such a sentence was reasonable, and such a sentence would take place if she ate. She believed that. It was an innocent belief in the righteousness and rectitude of God.

She believed in the moral justifiability of this statement and of this curse. Now, she didn't use that kind of language, of course, but this is exactly what she believed. She was predisposed to believe that God would put her in such a setting, and so she feared.

Now, there's a difference between fear and fear. There is a kind of fear which is a very healthy one. It's the kind of fear that a driver of a car has, and he keeps on the proper side of the road rather than on the other side of the road.

I wish some people had a little more of that fear. I've met one or two today who could have done with an extra dose. There is a fear that is necessary for proper living in society, and Eve had something of that.

This respect for God, for His justice and His righteousness. There's something wrong in taking of the fruit of that tree, and he tells me we shall die. Therefore, I won't, until Satan came along.

He shamed this kind of belief in the righteousness of God. There's no reason why you should die. There's no reason why this kind of thing should be at all.

You shall not die. In other words, you notice, he takes away the fear of God's righteousness. What he's saying is this.

There will be no consequences at all to what you do. God has said that it is wrong. God has said that you will die for it, but really there's no reason for that.

There's no rectitude, no moral necessity, and you won't actually die. So you don't need to fear that. He took away the fear as he had earlier taken away the faith.

You know, the devil does exactly the same thing today. This is his second main shaft. First of all, he takes away your innocent faith in God.

Then he takes away your fear of God, which is respect, and which is something that common grace gives to so many people. A respect for the righteousness of God, that he has a reason for what he says, that when he threatens, he means it. We forget, you see, and Satan wanted to blur the fact that there is a sense in which we cannot be like God.

And all, or rather, many of our faiths, so-called, many of the religions that are being hawked around today, many of the faiths, they have no concept of the transcendence of God. You and I cannot know good and evil as God knows evil. You cannot be like God in his transcendence.

He's the God of glory. He's the creator. We are but the creatures.

There is a sense in which we cannot ever be like God. There is another sense in which we may. You see, the devil minimizes the greatness of God, the transcendence of God, and he holds this carrot before the woman and says, you shall be like God, knowing good and evil.

Won't that be wonderful? What a revelation, what a translation, and what an elevation. Oh, beware of those influences that would attack a predisposition to faith in God, or would shame an innate fear in him, because when these defenses are down, you are an open prey to Satan. Or something happens then.

It's exactly the same thing that's happened with Eve. There comes about a bewitching influence. Now, I would like to talk about this at great length, but I'm not going to do it.

It's this bewitching influence of Satan. Let me put it in a nutshell, what I mean. Sin looks so attractive, and wrong seems so absolutely right when I'm under the spell of his temptation.

When he's got rid of my earlier confidence in God, and he's got rid of my fear of God, he's got rid of these two things, now he brings his bewitching influence upon me. And somehow or other, you know, the thing that I said I would never do, I think it's so right, and it's so necessary. I must do it now.

I'm under his bewitching influence. There's a compulsion upon me. It's attractive.

It's so wonderful. Why didn't I think of it before? I can't live without it anymore. I must have it, and I must have it now.

And in the realm of sex and moral things very especially, this is exactly what the devil says. Why should you wait? Why should you keep this thing until you're involved in wedded love? Have it now. It's right.

It's for you. And under his bewitching influence, you say, of course it's right. What on earth made me think it was wrong? But you see, what is bewitching before you do it looks so very different after you've done it.

There are two characters in the Old Testament, and they commit this sin together. It's a sexual sin. A sexual sin.

And then we read this remarkable statement afterwards. This man is said to have loved this girl, but after the sin, we read this. He loved her, but the hatred wherewith he now hated her was greater than the love wherewith he first loved her.

What happened? That thing has turned sour. The glory and the glow and the attraction of it is all gone. And it looks so tawdry, so miserable, so awful, so wretched.

He hates the sight of the girl that he committed the sin with. She was so attractive before. That's just it.

When he gets rid of your innate faith or confidence in God, and he gets rid of your fear of his righteousness, then he comes with this bewitching influence, and you look at the forbidden thing, and you're out of your wits. This is why Jesus did not die along with Satan. Satan prepares the way.

Satan propagates his lies. Satan procures an ally. So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and she ate.

And she also gave some to her husband and he ate. Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves apron.

The passage describes the mighty fall, first of the woman and then of the man. She who was given as a helper meat for Adam is now the one that leads him into the disaster. Two things I want you to notice here, two main things.

The confident defiance of God's commandment. This is a continuation of what we were saying just a moment ago. But it brings us into the arena of the action itself.

Robbed of her innocent, untried faith in God, and of her instinctive fear of Him, Eve takes another long look at the forbidden tree. And she looks at it, and do you notice what happens now? There's this enchantment upon her. My, it's so beautiful.

And the fruit of the tree is so precious, so tasty, it would seem. I don't know how she could say that. But she looked at it, and it was to be desired also to make one wise.

It had this appeal to the taste, to the eye, and it somehow promised such wisdom that would elevate her to the very place of God. In one mad moment she put out her hand and she took the fruit of the forbidden tree. That was it.

The confident defiance of God's commandment. She had hesitated before, because she had some confidence in the goodness of God. She had hesitated before, because she had some confidence in the righteousness and rectitude of God when He threatened it.

But now with all these gone, she puts out her hand and she partakes of the forbidden fruit. Scripture tells us nothing about the exact taste of that fruit, whether it was insipid or juicy or satisfying. I don't know anything about that.

All that's unimportant. But what is important is that our first parents had exiled themselves from God. As they partook of that forbidden tree, they set themselves over against the will of God and stood up against Him and opened up a chasm that will forever stand dividing heaven from hell.

That's what the book says. Nothing less than a Calvary and a risen Lord Jesus Christ with the wounds in His hands and form a bridge from the one side of the gulf to the other. And there is no other way from the kingdom of lostness and of darkness into the kingdom of salvation and of light.

Only one. And so we come to the cruel foretaste of disillusionment. She's taken the fruit.

Adam is likewise. But two of them have taste of it. What then? Listen to what this says.

Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. But they didn't ask for this. They had been told that they would know good and evil, but they didn't.

They didn't bargain for this. Know good and evil, be as God. Well, they've got some knowledge of good and evil.

That's why they put these fig leaves on. But this is not the kind of knowledge they asked for. No, no.

This is not what they thought they were going to have. But you see, the devil never keeps the stuff in the window. And he's never honest, and he's never upright.

God is. The devil puts the wrong tags on things. God never does.

God calls a slave a slave. That foreglim that we have there, in which God, through the writer of Genesis, proceeds to tell us what happened. That foreglim is only a foreglim.

Because in the rest of the chapter we shall read, and we shall discover much else when we get to it. But first of all, will you notice what happened here? They now possessed a knowledge which was painful to endure. Not a knowledge such as God has of good and evil, but a knowledge that made them aware of themselves, and ashamed to be in one another's company.

They'd never had this before. I don't know what length of time the first two chapters of Genesis cover. I can't tell you.

Nobody can tell you. But however long Adam and Eve had lived together, they were able to live together in nakedness and were unaware of it. There was no sense of shame.

They were in the bodies that God had given them, in God's beautiful world. And all was sweet and dignified and meaningful. But suddenly from somewhere comes a sense of shame.

The serpent's promise of eyes opened came true in its fashion. But it was a grotesque anticlimax of the dreams of enlightenment. Man saw the familiar world and spoilt it now in the seeing.

And evil was in his eye as in the eye of his partner. His new consciousness of good and evil was both like and unlike the divine knowledge, differing from it and from innocence. As a sick man's aching awareness of his body differs from the insight of a physician or the unconcern of a man in good health, Adam and Eve felt sick within.

And sick they were. They possessed a knowledge which they wished they did not have. Not an objective knowledge such as the physician has of the patient, but a knowledge of the patient himself who has all the symptoms of a new disease, and he dreads it.

That's the knowledge given to them. A shame in the soul. And the last thing is this.

They possessed a knowledge which was painful to endure, and they pined with a need that they were unable to fulfill. What are they going to do? You know, there is something laughable about this. I don't know what your emotions are or what you think when you read this.

I wish we could find out. But I'm afraid I smile a little. I see these two sewing fig leaves together to hide their nakedness.

There's something so pathetic about it, and yet something so tragic. Where does it all come from? It all comes from this. They try to be like God, and they disobey His commandment, and they make fools of themselves.

Sin always leads you that way. The instinct was sound, of course. Shame is the first fruit of guilt.

And they try to cover themselves by this means. But it did not avail. And we read later on, as we shall see, that with their aprons of leaves on, they still had to hide behind the trees of the garden when they heard that God was coming.

Oh, those aprons are not going to hide anyone. You need something more than that to deal with your shame. You need the blood of Jesus Christ to wash your sin away.

And you need the righteousness of Christ imputed to you. And this is the only answer. Now I'm through one or two things very briefly as we close.

I can hear someone say, well, that's what it says. That's what Genesis, that's what that passage says. It speaks of the intrusion of Satan into the world of God and the upsetting of the world by this malign, sinister power who is stronger and wiser than man, and yet subject to God.

But a question that remains is this. Why should God allow a thing like this? Haven't you met it? Haven't you asked it? Haven't we all at some point or other asked the question, why should God allow this kind of thing? If He's sovereign over His world, if He made it, and if He rules over it, why should He allow it? I want to give the answer in a nutshell, without enlarging. But I think it's so important.

You see, something of this order had to happen, because God made man for Himself. God made man to have fellowship with Him. Now, there were only two ways in which this could have been done.

Either God made man an automaton, in which case, well, he would have been programmed to do the right thing, say the right word, and there would have been no virtue to it. A kind of a puppet, moving at the movement of a finger. Or, God makes man a free being, with the capacity to offer His love freely to Him, to obey Him willingly, to worship Him gladly, but with the possibility at the same time of not doing so.

Of listening to a sinister intruder, a serpent who was Satan. And because the kind and quality of fellowship with man that God is after is that of the free offering of the heart and of the will and of the life to Himself, this is why temptation is allowed. But God allowed it because He wanted the heart of man given Him spontaneously and gladly and freely.

And man, well, because of that all, our world is divided now into two categories. And all of us are born into the one class. Our first parents were in rebellion against God.

They belonged to a kingdom of their own, the Adamic kingdom, the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of Satan. And all of us are born into that. That stands over against the kingdom of God and of His dear Son, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of life.

And this is the sinister, devastating thing that happened here in Eden. You know, you could weep sometimes when you hear some sometimes well-trained ministers of the gospel talking about this incident, almost as if they were talking about two little boys breaking into a garden to steal some apples. They've never seen the truth that lies behind it.

But truth is this. It's not the stealing of a paltry bit of an apple or any fruit like that. It's man rebelling against God, setting up his kingdom, dividing the world and involving his progeny for future generations.

That's what we have here. That's why it's so serious. This is the explanation that the Bible gives us of the great division of the world tonight and of the need of mankind.

It's the need of a Savior who will deal with that basic rebellion in the human heart, who will wipe out the guilt of man, who will build up His own kingdom of righteousness and of goodness and of peace and of grace that will outlive every other. And our Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior who does that. Is He yours? Has He brought your rebellious heart to a place of penitence? A story.

Two outstanding leaders in the history of Europe line through with us. And in a great skirmish which has gone down in history, these two great leaders representing two great nations meet. And the vanquished is going now to this representative of the victorious country.

And he's going up to the representative with his hand out to shake his hand. The representative of the victorious country says, Stop, he said. Before you give me your hand, give me your sword.

Your sword first. Then your hand. There are many people who want the hand of God before they surrender their sword of rebellion.

You surrendered your sword of rebellion. You repented of your sin. Ask for grace to do it tonight because the hand of God is open and stretched out to those who will turn from their sin and rebellion and come to Him in His Son.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we not only pray that Thou will give us the right understanding of things in accordance with Thy work, but a right experience of the saving grace which came in Jesus Christ Thy Son. Deal with our native rebellion of soul, our setting up of our wills against Thine, our entering into forbidden territories and under the influence of Satan, under his enchantments, and so much that was evil.

Ignorantly, perhaps in some measure, but nevertheless for which we are responsible. O Lord, we ask of Thee to forgive us, to give us to know the Savior and the sanity that He needs that He may live and not die. We ask it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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