



GENESIS 3

STUDY #3 ²⁰²¹

Start your time by praying together and then read chapter 3 in one sitting.

THE SERPENT

The introduction of the serpent at this point comes as a surprise.

1. What do we learn about him initially?
2. From the verbal exchange between him and the woman in verses 2-3, what do we learn about his:
 - Intentions?
 - Strategy?

In verse 13 the woman recognizes that the serpent deceived her.

3. How does this square with the events that took place? Does “deception” fully capture everything that has just happened?
4. Was the serpent wrong in everything he said to the woman?
5. To what extent is the woman recognizing her responsibility? Is she simply seeking to excuse her actions at this point by speaking of the serpent’s deception?

THE FRUIT (OF THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL)

6. According to the woman what are the characteristics of this fruit? What does this tell us about her motivation?
7. What does eating the fruit actually result in for the man and the woman? (See verses 7-10, 22)

THE LORD GOD’S RESPONSE - part 1

8. In verses 14-19 what are the different elements of the LORD’s initial response to what has taken place?¹
9. How would you answer the person who says that it is God’s fault in the first place for even allowing the man and the woman to have access to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and therefore he has no right to punish them?

¹ Note that the man is held equally responsible for the woman’s action. In fact elsewhere in the Bible it is the man who is held blameworthy.

PROBING FURTHER

Let's think some more about the opposition between the LORD God and the serpent. God pronounces judgement on the serpent with, "Because you have done this...."

10. Is God somehow taken by surprise by what has just happened?

In question 7 we looked at the effect of the man and woman eating the fruit at a surface level i.e. what the text of Genesis 3 actually says. The symbolic language that we find there captures a deeper reality however - that of the fracture of pre-existing harmonious relationships.

11. What relationships are damaged and with what consequences by the actions of the man and the woman? (see also Romans 5:12 & 15-21) In what sense from the Romans passage are we all involved in what the man and the woman did? (see also 1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

THE LORD GOD'S RESPONSE - part 2

12. In what sense does what does each element of what follows in verses 20-24 signify God's gracious favour towards them?

- the second naming of the woman
- the LORD making garments for the man and the woman
- sending them out to work the ground
- the barring of the way back to the garden

PERSPECTIVES

The drama of what takes place in this chapter can sometimes seem at odds with the almost naive simplicity in the language that the writer uses to describe it.

13. Why do you think the LORD has chosen to communicate such important truths in such a way?
14. The consequences of what takes place in this chapter affects everything that we think and do. It affects us into eternity. Having got to this point in the Genesis story if you could use one word to describe what chapter 3 leaves you feeling, what might that word be?

PRAYER AND FINISH

Praise our heavenly Father for his great goodness in that he does not abandon the creation at this point. Praise him also for the promise of a future change to repair the damage and restore creation once again.
