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FALL SERIES 2022 – WEEK 4

Genesis 3:1-6:8: Good Gone Bad

He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

– Genesis 3:24 ESV

- **Before we begin**

- A few points of clarification
 - We will be reading this story from the perspective of the Israelites
 - They lived long before Christ or the cross
 - They did not have the New Testament
 - They had no concept of a Creation-Fall-Redemption narrative
- We have a cross-centered view of Genesis 1-3
 - We tie creation to new creation
 - We view the sin of Adam and Eve as a “fall”
 - They went from “very good” to “very bad”
 - They “fell” from grace
 - And only Christ can fix what they broke

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned...For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many.
– Romans 5:12, 15 NLT

Adam’s sin led to condemnation, but God’s free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God’s wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. – Romans 5:16-17 NLT

- Is this a fall or a slow, steady decline?
 - Did Adam and Eve fall from grace?
 - Did God abandon His creation of creatures?

“The narrative of Genesis 2-3 does not speak of a fall. One should avoid therefore a description which differs so much from the text and is so inaccurate and deceptive.” – Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11, A Continental Commentary*

“The alienation from God does not mean a definitive separation. God drives them out of the garden, but leaves them with life, and by giving them a commission outside the garden, God gives meaning to their alienated existence.” – Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11, A Continental Commentary*

- **The setting** – Genesis 2:15-17
 - Man was in the garden God had created for him
 - Adam was given strict instructions regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
 - But the female of his kind did not yet exist
 - So, he could not fulfill the mandate
 - The making of Eve – Genesis 2:18-25
 - “It is not good”
 - This takes us back to day 6
 - The timeline is right after He had made Adam
 - And before He declared all to be “very good”
 - Something was missing
 - Man (*'ādām*) was not yet complete
 - “*male and female he created them*” (1:27)
 - God had always planned on two humans
 - Adam could not fulfill the creation mandate alone
 - He couldn't be fruitful and multiply alone
 - He couldn't fill the earth with more of his kind
 - But he didn't yet realize it
 - So, God introduced him to the “birds and the bees”
 - God filled man's need
 - Naked and not ashamed – Genesis 2:25
 - Everything was “very good”
 - They have no concept of “evil”
 - Nakedness had been part of God's plan
 - **Unashamed** (*lō' būš*) – “not disappointed”
 - They were completely satisfied
 - Their nakedness was not a sign of lack
 - Yet that was about to change

Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. – Genesis 3:7 ESV

- They knew (*yāda*) – “recognized or perceived”
- Something had changed their perspective

...they **sewed fig leaves** together and **made themselves loincloths**. – Genesis 3:7 ESV

...the man and his wife **hid themselves** from the presence of the Lord God. – Genesis 3:8 ESV

- They were now deciding what was good or bad

Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! – Isaiah 5:20-21 ESV

- **A protagonist of unknown origin** – Genesis 3:1-7

- You're one step ahead of the text
- But what does the passage tell us?
 - It's a **serpent** (*nāhāš*) - "snake"
 - It's **crafty** (*ārûm*) – "subtle, shrewd"
 - And it has the capacity for **speech**

"The mention of the snake here is almost incidental; at any rate...we are not to be concerned with what the snake is but rather with what it says." – Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11, A Continental Commentary*

"...the serpent in the Garden of Eden is portrayed as just that: a serpent. Satan does not make an appearance in Genesis 2–3, for the simple reason that when the story was written, the concept of the devil had not yet been invented.

"...while the word satan appears elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, it is never a proper name; since there is no devil in ancient Israel's worldview, there can't yet have been a proper name for such a creature." – biblicalarcheology.org

- What does the text tell us? What does it say?
 - YES! I believe the serpent to be a tool of Satan
 - He is the **great deceiver**
*...that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, **the deceiver of the whole world**...* – Revelation 12:9 NLT
 - He is the **accuser of the brethren**
*...the **accuser of our brothers** has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.* – Revelation 12:10 NLT
 - He is the one who **tempted Jesus** (Matthew 4)
 - But to Eve and the Israelites, it was nothing more than a smooth-tongued, talking serpent
 - It was just another part of God's creation

- *Did God say...?*
 - The serpent's identity is **irrelevant**
 - But his words are **integral** to rest of the book
 - He misrepresented God's words
 - Raising doubts about God's goodness
 - He refuted God's intentions
 - "You will not surely die..." – vs 4*
 - "You will be like God..." – vs 5*
 - Their eyes were opened
 - They knew they were naked
 - Their circumstances and outward condition remained unchanged
 - But now they perceived things differently
 - God had created them in their naked state
 - And He had deemed everything "very good"
 - But good had become bad in their eyes
 - And they attempted to cover up God's mistake
 - From abiding to hiding – Genesis 3:8-11
 - They attempted to hide from God

- **The subtle snare of self-determination** – Genesis 3:12-13

"freedom to live as one chooses, or to act or decide without consulting another or others." – www.dictionary.com

- They justified their actions as right
- And refused to accept guilt or responsibility

"The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." – Adam

"The serpent deceived me, and I ate." – Eve

- A refusal to accept blame
- A denial of any wrongdoing

- **The consequences**

- The serpent – vs 14-15
 - ...the curse of perpetual ignominy
 - ...permanent alienation from mankind
- The woman – vs 16
 - ...fruitfulness accompanied by pain
 - ...companionship marred by conflict
- The man – vs 17-19

- ...fruitfulness accompanied by toil and pain
- ...unceasing labor that eventually ends in death
- **Their perfect fellowship fractured** – Genesis 3:22-24
 - By God’s grace, they were allowed to live
 - They were free to be fruitful and multiply
 - They could serve as God’s caretakers
 - They could fill the earth “with more of their kind”
 - But eternal life was now off-limits
 - And their decision would have long-lasting implications
- **Discussion questions**

Why would loss of fellowship with God be the worst of all their punishments? What does that look like in our lives?

Why is self-determination so dangerous for us as human beings? What is behind our obsession with autonomy?

In what ways is this passage an expression of God’s grace rather than a reminder of His judgment? Why is it important for us to see God in this light?



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FALL SERIES 2022 – WEEK 5 HOMEWORK

WEEK 5: Gen 6:9-11:9 – A Royal Reboot

This lesson will cover God’s decision to destroy all that He had made and will explain why God chose to start over with Noah. With this one man and his descendants, God will begin again the process of filling the earth with those who bear His image. We will explore the relationship between the ark and Jesus, unpacking the salvific similarities between the two. One of the key themes will be the giving of the covenant to Noah and his sons. In a sense, God has established a new world governed by new rules. Yet, these chapters reveal that nothing had really changed after the flood. It was a case of déjà vu all over again. It wasn’t long before sin ran rampant through the world again, culminating at a place called Babel.

- Set aside some time this week to read through Genesis 6:9-11:9. Take notes and jot down anything that impresses you from the stories in this text.
- Read pages 97-137 of Ken’s Devotional™ on Genesis.
- Go back and re-read Genesis 6:5-7. Describe in your own words the spiritual condition of humanity.

Now read Genesis 6:8—9. Why do you think Moses points out the dramatic difference between Noah and the rest of mankind?

- Read Genesis 6:11-22. What does God command Noah to do?

What was the reasoning behind God’s command?

- What are the key events of chapter 7?

Look closely at verses 9, 13, 15, and 16. What do they have in common and why do you think Moses emphasized this particular point?

- Write down the key events of chapter 8.
- Look closely at Genesis 9:1-17 and write down any similarities you find between it and the two opening chapters of Genesis.

Why does Moses make this comparison?

What happens in verses 18-28 and what is its significance?

- Why do you think Moses spent so much time on the genealogy of Noah and his sons in chapter 10?
- As chapter 11 opens, it has been a long time since Noah and his family entered the ark. What jumps out at you concerning the activities of mankind and how does it reflect man's desire for autonomy and self-determination?