

## Dr. Elaine Phillips, OT History, Lit., and Theology, Lecture 4

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### A. Preliminary Matters

Well, good morning, and the peace of Christ be with you this morning. Do you know what to say in response to that? “And also with you.” I will greet you in a number of different ways as this semester progresses; that's one of them. So you can be ready for that. Another one is the Hebrew greeting for good morning, which is *boqer tov*, but we will do that on Monday.

I tried singing in the car on the way in today if it would work, and it was pretty funny. So we are not going to sing today. You can pray for my voice this weekend; it might be a little bit nicer to listen to by Monday. I apologize because this is not very pleasant to listen to, but Lord willing, we'll get through the hour together. Instead of singing, I'd like to read to you a part of Psalm 90. We've done Psalm 100, we've looked at Psalm 86, and selections of that. I'd like to read to you part of Psalm 90 this morning as we start, because it has allusions to some things that we're going to be talking about when we talk about the consequences of Adam and Eve's fall into the temptation. So Psalm 90 starting from the first verse:

1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place  
throughout all generations.

2 Before the mountains were born  
or you brought forth the earth in the world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

3 You turn humans back to dust, [something we're going to address today]  
saying, “Return to dust, O sons of man.”

4 For a thousand years in your sight  
are like a day that has just gone by,  
or like a watch in the night.

[Skip down to verse 12,]

12 Teach us to number our days aright,  
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

[Let's do that again]

12 Teach us to number our days aright,  
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

[And finally the last couple of verses]

16 May your deeds be shown to your servants,  
your splendor to their children.

17 May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us;  
establish the work of our hands for us—  
yes, (please) establish the work of our hands. [NIV 1984]

Let's make that our prayer today - that the things that we are doing today would not just be things that have to be done, but things that will be worthwhile for the kingdom. Whether we're learning to increase our fruitfulness in the kingdom, or perhaps being involved in some kind of service project, whatever we're doing. Let's pray the Lord we'll establish the work of our hands. Let's pray together.

*Our gracious heavenly Father, we begin this hour together, mindful of your goodness to us. Mindful that you are Creator and Sustainer of this universe in which we are privileged to live. Father, we know that it's full of joys and the beauty you have set in it. It's also full of despair and darkness. So we pray that you help us to be lights in this dark generation, and by your Spirit enlighten our own hearts for those who are feeling the sorrow and sadness to this day.*

*I pray that you help me teach today; may we have clarity as we think together and talk together. But most of all, Lord, we pray that you would apply the word to our hearts. And we ask this in Christ's name with thanksgiving. Amen.*

## **B. The Setting for the “Fall” – Genesis 2**

Well you can see before us one artistic depiction of consequences of the fall. Because there are, of course. You can see Adam and Eve going out into brambles. We read about the thorns and the thistles that would face Adam as he tended the ground. I will talk more about that a little bit later on. We also see their clothes by this time. That's one of the consequences of the fall as well. And then we see that cherub figure standing with the sword, guarding the entrance of the garden of Eden. Each one of the aspects that are in that picture and each one of the things I've just mentioned have all sorts of richness and fullness

and import built into them. Hopefully we'll address some of those today. Lots of questions today - I certainly welcome your questions, again I probably can't do justice to many of them, but at least we can discuss them a little bit. So if there's give and take and exchange, that's something I welcome.

Let's see what we've got here in terms of the setting for what we know as the fall. By the way, I know that standard reformed theology runs along creation, fall, redemption lines. You've learned that somewhere, haven't you--creation, fall, and redemption? I'm not entirely persuaded by the term "fall." And you know why? I mean, I'm not about to change theological terms, believe me I'm not. But "fall" implies, "I tripped and I fell." A fall is not particularly deliberate. Most of us are embarrassed when we fall; we jump right back up again, and we haven't a clue why that happened until after it's done and we start analyzing it. When you look at what Eve and Adam do, it's pretty deliberate isn't it? There's a conversation back and forth, so I'm a little bit more inclined to call this "creation, corruption, correction." I know--it's got some alliteration to it as well. But there's a process behind this thing we saw casually referred to as the fall, and it's not an accidental slip. So let's just keep that in mind. Then let's look at some of the circumstances that are part of this picture. And I may ask you a few questions just because I'm tired of hearing myself talk? Let's just remind ourselves – we've got a creation that God has pronounced at the close of it, "very good." Things are perfect at this point. So creation is very good and that's significant. These next two go together. We'll learn that the garden is a hospitable place. Notice chapter 2 verse 8, "the Lord God had planted a garden in the East, in Eden." By the way, there's all sorts of ideas in terms of where this garden might be; we don't know. There's all sorts of theological ideas in terms of this garden representing heaven itself which also has some correspondence with temple structure. That's interesting stuff. We'll get to it later perhaps. For now, just notice the Garden in the East, and God put the man there (that's Adam) and the Lord God made all kinds of trees throughout the garden. "The trees were pleasing to the eye and good for food." Then, of course, in the middle of the garden were the Tree of Life and Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. You got a

profusion of water there, as we see in the next couple of verses, and then finally notice that Adam and Eve had been given the privilege of eating from any tree of the garden, except one; we'll go back to that in a minute. So it's a hospitable place. In its center is the Tree of Life, which has all sorts of interesting implications as well. The Tree of Life is going to show up again, for those of you who have had New Testament, where? In the book of Revelation, precisely. It's also in the book of Proverbs, parallel with wisdom from time to time. So keep that in mind as well, because it's important symbolically.

The second thing we want to note is that when Eve is created, she is bone of Adam's bone and flesh of his flesh. They are one in many ways. Let me just read a little bit, right at the end of chapter 2. After Adam has waited a while (he's named all the creatures), he experiences loneliness and that's not good. This is the first thing that is pronounced “not good” - that Adam is alone. And so God is going to find someone who is a helper, we talked about that last time in terms of the implications of helper - opposite. Someone who is on the same ground with him, alongside of him. At any rate, some time goes by and he names the creatures, and then God takes this rib out of Adam (notice the intimacy), out of his side, the parallel nature there, and he makes Eve. He declares that she's one with him- if you will, “she's bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh.” Verse 24, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Just let me say a couple things about that. This is the only place in ancient Near Eastern literature where a man leaves in order to join into his wife. Usually, even now, we think of it as other way around, don't we? The woman leaves her parents; she goes and marries her husband, takes his name, and so forth. Isn't it interesting, in this narrative, we've got the man leaving his parents, coming to his wife, and they become one flesh. There's a remarkable intimacy here, I want you to keep that in mind. That is important. And of course the final verse of chapter 2 is also significant: “The man and his wife were both naked.” This is a fascinating word; I'm going to come back to it. Again, you're going to think all I do is teaching you Hebrew; but that's not the point. I do want you to know the word behind naked here. It's *arum* - if you want to spell it, it's a, r, u, m. When it's plural, it's

*arumim*. So the man and his wife are *arumim*. They are naked. And they are not ashamed. So there's harmony, there's intimacy, there's an egalitarian perspective of what's going on here. That's significant. We're going to come back to *arum* in a moment. In ways it might surprise you unless you've been all through this before.

Here comes the red hot topic- the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. We've already read that it is there right along with the Tree of Life. But now look at the prohibition. I'll read for you chapter 2 verse 16 and 17. "The Lord God," again keep in mind something we mentioned last time; both of those divine names *Elohim*, translated God, and *Yahweh*, translated LORD, uppercase, are used together in this context. "The LORD God commanded Adam, you are free to eat from any tree in the garden." Verse 17: "but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for," literally, not reading here NIV now, but literally, "in the *yom* that you eat of it you will surely die." In the "day," however we're going to understand "day," "in the *yom* that you eat of it you will surely die.

Just a couple of things we want to pause on here. This may engender some questions and that's fine; I invite your questions. The first thing is, what does it mean to know good and evil? That's challenging. Didn't they know it before? If there's a prohibition, don't they know it? Let me pose a suggestion to you that I'm probably 85 percent convinced of, because it has some implications for other things we might want to say about this. The word *know* in Hebrew (it's *yada*) has a wide, wide, wide range of connotations. And by the way, we're going to find out the later on in this text, *yada* is often used, particularly in Genesis, with the idea of knowing sexually, but hold on that for a moment. There's also a suggestion (and I like this one) that, when *yada* ("know") is used in this context, it doesn't just simply mean God implanted in my head. It means knowing with the intent of defining. In other words, maybe what's being suggested here is (and once the serpent picks up the temptation, he's in a way in front of Eve, and Adam who happens to be with her as we find out), the temptation is [holding] the defining process for what's good and evil- taking it away from God, who's the author of good, and who knows these things,

and taking it upon ourselves, sort of arrogating to ourselves, the privilege in responsibility, defining for ourselves what's good and evil. That has all sorts of interesting implications. I want you to chew on that for a little bit, ask questions about it, if you want to. Let me say a couple of things first.

Again, I already emphasized this, but I think it's worth noting again; Adam and Eve don't die within twenty-four hours of their taking the fruit. In fact, they live for centuries after that. And so maybe *yom* has other implications than just a literal 24-hour day. Now forgive me; some of you may think I'm hammering that thing to death, but I just want you to notice how it's being used here. Otherwise we have to get around that by saying, well, they died spiritually. This is true, but you know, maybe this has some more immediate kinds of ways of reading it as well. Then the third thing, which may raise some challenges for us - when God poses this prohibition for them, and says to them, "don't eat of this tree, in the day you eat of it, you will surely die, that presumes, unless we're just going to say it doesn't mean anything, it presumes they know something about death. What do you think about that? How could Adam and Eve know something about death? For it to have any validity as a "threat," they must have understood it.

[Question] Chelsea. I'm sorry, say it again? So they are observing animal death around them. Do you like that? I mean from a theological perspective. I like it from a perspective in terms of what we know of fossil records and so forth, and death being existent, but how's that going to work with (reading Romans chapter 8 for example) the whole creation suffering presumably as result of that fall? Does that fit? Go ahead. I'm with you; we have to figure out how to deal with it.

Well, let me try this on you. In response to Susanna's comment (which I accept), I would simply say if your parents threaten you with something that you don't know anything about, if you're just obedient, how is that going to be a punishment? I guess that would be my real problem with that - something that we simply don't know may not be a threat that carries as much weight. So, that's how it's a possibility. I tend to think, since I've set it up here, that they have indeed observed animal death.

Here's the thing, and I'm not original with this, I'm lifting it straight out of one of my favorite seminary professor from 30 years ago, who suggests that we think with an analogy, and it runs something like this. Just as Christ's death and resurrection which occurred at a given point in time (we know about it because we read it in the Gospels) has provided salvation for us who live after that to affirm the truthfulness of it. So also, Christ's death and resurrection provided salvation for those saints who lived before that even actually happened. Because Old Testament saints are not saved by anything except the death and the resurrection of Christ, to which they're looking forward, and to which all the sacrifices in the Old Testament pointed as we're going to see when we start dealing with sacrifices. If that's true, then perhaps analogously (and Paul does this in Romans chapter 5) Adam's and Eve's sin, at a given point in time, had implications for the rest of humankind beyond that point. That's quite true, but maybe in the same way that sin and death being the consequence also had application before points in time. Again, you may or may not like that analogy; that's one way to look at it. The suggestion is then, that Eden is a remarkable, beautiful, perfect little enclave that's in a world that's already dealing with death. Then Adam and Eve could have watched that happen as they looked outside their little garden. They are driven out of what is a little piece of heaven on earth, if you will. So, just a couple of thoughts to chew on. Wrestle with it a little bit. You can think about these things anyway as we consider this. Let's go on, because we have more to deal with obviously.

### **C. The Serpent's Temptations**

Think of this as a drama. Often times as we read the Scripture, one of the worst things we can possibly do is give it a stained glass window between it and us. This is a drama, a tragedy, for all the obvious reasons - the greatest tragedy in the world. Fortunately it's got an ending that's not going to be a tragic ending. But we're still waiting for that to unfold in time and space. At any rate, who are the actors in this drama we know them, especially if you've downloaded the lecture outline? Who's the first one? It's the serpent, right? Now, one of the most interesting things here is, and let me read this for you, chapter 3 verse 1, "the serpent was more *arum*." We've seen that word before! No, you haven't but

I talked to you about it. “The serpent was more *arum* than any other wild animals that the Lord God had made.” Isn't that interesting that “naked,” and how did your translation read that? Who's got the Bible in front of them? Christine. “Crafty.” “Clever.” Anybody got a different translation? “Cunning.” Good. Here's what's really interesting about this word. It shows up a lot in the book of Proverbs. And interestingly enough, in the book of Proverbs, the majority of the time it shows up, it's a positive thing. You and I are exhorted to be *arum*. We're supposed to be wise. In fact, Jesus would say, “be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” We're supposed to be *arum*, at least in the book of Proverbs. So, this isn't saying, here we have this serpent who's insidious, nasty and sneaky already. Apparently the serpent is a very cunning, crafty, shrewd, wise type of creature. Isn't it interesting that nakedness and this kind of wisdom have the same word that represents them?

Now we could say all sorts of things so I'll simply say this so we can keep going. In some ways (I don't even have to say it you know it as well as I do, as does the entirety of advertising industry in this country), nakedness is very beguiling. Otherwise they wouldn't exploit it all over the place. Nakedness is beguiling. So is craftiness and it can be used in either in a good way or a bad way. The serpent has chosen, and of course, we're going to look at who the serpent is in a moment, but he's chosen to abuse that terribly. Because in this context that has all the worst possible results we could ever imagine. I just want you to know the word there and note the relationships after the fall - I was trying to think of a word other than “fall” since I made such comments about it before - after Adam and Eve stepped into sin deliberately. They're going to perceive that they are naked again. They've been affected by this clever, crafty serpent.

At any rate, how do we know that this is the Satan? I'm trying to be careful to say the serpent as we're talking about this, but, you know, how do we know that? Anybody have footnotes in your Bible? They're such helpful things. Does the NIV Study Bible tell you anything? How do you know it's Satan? No footnotes, cross-references? Good. Revelation chapter 12, particularly verse 9 and then chapter 20 verse 2. It's going to refer to the dragon, that ancient serpent, the devil, Satan - all those things are drawn together into

one. So we have that identification. So we also have apostle Paul - you can jot this down and look it up later. The apostle Paul in Romans chapter 16, verse 20, talks about Satan whose head is going to be crushed and of course that is picking up on an allusion that shows up in chapter 3 to which we're going to refer in a moment. So we're pretty clear that's not just tradition; it's coming through in the words of the Scripture, the New Testament, that we have. The serpent here in some way embodies Satan himself. Both Adam and Eve were there. Yes, the conversation unfolds between the serpent and Eve, no question about it. But, verse 6 says, "and she gave some of the fruit to the man, Adam, who was with her." So he's there. And there's some interesting implications of that, because he's clearly not doing anything to intervene and stop the process. That's important to keep in mind. The third one, of course, is the Lord God himself. We will come back to that. So those are the actors in our drama. Let's carry on.

The serpent, and we'll call him Satan for now, is strategic. Don't think for a moment that there is nothing to learn from this, because as you watch this process unfold, and you see how the serpent appeals to particular things; nothing's changed in humankind. The serpent's strategy involves appealing to pride. The serpent's strategy also involves a whole bunch of deceit, a whole web of interweaving deceit. Those strategies aren't old; they are also here right now. The serpent's strategy also involves very interesting deceit in that he makes sin look really good. Most of us think of sin and we put it off in the bowels of an urban context that we would like to get out of. He makes sin look really, really good. And that's something you need to watch out for.

At any rate, what does John 8:44 say? Anybody know? It's one of those Bible verses some of you may have memorized, when you were growing up. (Actually maybe not, as it isn't a positive one!) It's kind of a negative verse. Jesus is having some exchange with his opponents and He's saying some rather challenging things to them. And they claim to be children of Abraham. Jesus says, "you're not children of Abraham, you're children of the devil," and he goes on to say Satan is the father of lies. That's a strong statement. Let's see how this works. Picking up on verse 1 where I cut off halfway through, "the serpent said to

the woman...” Then again, with all due respect to the NIV translators whom I respect deeply, because they know a lot more Hebrew than I do, but they did something here that doesn't fit the Hebrew. The serpent doesn't pose a question, I don't think. Because generally speaking, when the first two words with which the serpent introduces this statement... whenever they're used elsewhere in the Scripture, it's a declaration of a certainty. It's not a question. I mean the question is bad enough; if we read it as a question as the NIV does, it says: “Did God really say, you must not eat from any tree in the garden?” That's already introducing doubt. But I think if we read the Hebrew more accurately, it runs like this: “Certainly God said you shall not eat from any tree of the garden,” which is of course, setting up against what God had said - except that God had not said that! What did God say? [response] So he's taken this wonderful gift that God has given them, any tree except one, and he's taken it and moved it all the way over to the side: you can't eat from any tree. It's an intentional distortion of God's word, and again, I think he's making that as a declaration, not necessarily as a question. Well, we also know as we keep reading, that Eve has not responded accurately in terms of representing the word of God. In verse 2, she says "We may eat from the trees but God did say you must not eat fruit of the tree that's in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die." Now, why has she done that? Isn't “you must not touch it” an addition in there?

Caleb. Go ahead. [exchange]

Go ahead Zach. Yes, and forgive me if I misrepresented this; I'm not saying she purposely distorted them. I would say she is purposely protecting them.

Katie. And this is exactly what the Jewish rabbis have done for centuries and centuries. In fact, based on this, there is the whole rabbinic dictum, the whole rabbinic declaration that says, you have to put a fence around the Torah. Have you ever heard that expression? Dr. Wilson will refer to it at some point. You'll certainly hear it. Putting a fence around the Torah means that if Torah says don't do this, well, you'll make this fence out here, and therefore you're not going to even come close to any kind of breaking the law here. We all have a way of doing that don't we? And the motivation isn't necessarily bad. In

fact, I'm going to go way out on the limb here; it's not in the text, and you can take or leave it. But I have a suspicion. After all, it's Adam who got the prohibition, right? Eve had not been created at that point. Adam hears the prohibition. Once Eve is created, I suspect that obviously they talked; at least I hope they did. They may have decided between themselves to be actually prepared and they said, "You know, because we're not supposed to be eating of that tree, let's just have a boundary for ourselves. Just have a boundary, and let's put that boundary about not touching it and that'll be our boundary." And so, perhaps it becomes built in, part of the tradition as Adam teaches Eve, if you will, and they work together, and it starts to get complex. I don't know that for sure; I'm just suggesting it. Granted there is a lot we can say in terms of how words are reported, but I would suggest this to you.

Go ahead, [Trevor]. Yes, she is, as I'm using the term "protecting." I would suggest that together they actually determined to protect this situation so that they don't even come close to the tree. The problem is, of course, she is representing God's words in ways that God didn't say them. For the discussion we're having, yes, because that's already been done in some ways. She's been tainted by this whole web of deceit that's about to unfold. At least, I think, it's one way to read it.

The serpent goes on, and in verse 4 he's going to flatly contradict what God said. "You're not going to die." Flat out. "You're not going to die. God knows that when you eat it, your eyes are going to be open and you're going to be like God," or "gods," the word is *Elohim*, and it can mean God. The *-im* ending also has a plural sense of God in there. There are places in the Scripture where this very same word means multiple gods. For example, when it says, "Don't worship other gods," it's *Elohim*. So you got to watch your context there.

At any rate, knowing how to define good and evil, that's his contradiction. He also, I would suggest to you, in that statement, you're going to be like God, or gods, is appealing to pride. What's really interesting here is that as human beings living in the context of the garden of Eden (and I'm being hypothetical because we don't know how this would've unfolded, but in the opportunity to continue to interact with God apart from the fall), they

would eventually come to know these things, but they would've come the right way, not the shortcut way, which is disobeying the word of God. That's the clue. At any rate, I said this earlier, but I'm throwing it in at this point as well. The serpent's very clever. And don't you think he uses the same thing on us, repeatedly? Making that particular thing look so attractive and so right, and something I'm actually going to pray for it because I want it so badly? You know, that's how things work.

Notice what Eve says. She sees the fruit of the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eye, desirable for gaining wisdom, or enlightenment. This is a different word for wisdom. There are a variety words for wisdom that are used in the Hebrew Bible. It's a different word. "Enlightenment" might be a better way to translate this. So she sees the chance to get ahead and get ahead in ways that look like they might be morally right and good.

#### **D. Initial Tragic Consequences of Disobedience**

So she grabs the fruit and eats it. And of course, we have to deal with what happens. The reason we need to read this as a tragedy is because everything, every aspect of who they were and how they lived, was completely torn apart--every aspect. All the pains in the tragedies with which you and I wrestle on a daily basis come right back here. First of all, they perceive they're naked. Hadn't bothered them before, but now it does. Now again, this is a nitpicking point and you don't have to write it down; I'm just kind of throwing it out there for you. You know, the Jewish rabbis read Hebrew Bible texts very carefully, much more carefully than we ever do. And one of those things they notice here is that spelling of *arumim* in Hebrew is different than it was at the end of chapter 2. And so they're naked, but it's a different kind of nakedness. It's now the nakedness that is full of insecurity. They feel the need to cover up, not only physically but other ways as well. All sorts of personal insecurities get built into this, of course. As we know, from reading this text, they start trying to use very ineffective coverings--fig leaves. How many of you have seen fig leaves lately? Some of you from California, anybody from Southern California? How big is a fig leaf? And how effective is it going to be to sew a fig leaf together with another fig leaf

together with another fig leaf; it's not really a very good covering, is it? Even when they try to cover themselves, it's pretty ineffective. Garden variety fig leaves, at least in Israel (I've got to set my Bible down yet again) like so, don't cover a whole lot. It's got holes in it too—holes that creates a problem if you want to cover up.

Next, perception of nakedness. This is the first indication of fear, chapter 3 verse 8: “the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” Again, note the intimate relationship they had with God. This is clearly an anthropomorphism in some way, or God is choosing to manifest himself in their sphere; that's another way of looking at it. But they hid from the LORD God. Then, of course, the LORD calls the man: “Where are you?” and Adam answers, “I heard you. I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.” So fear enters into this, and clearly that vast chasm is going to come between the LORD God and the humankind. That vast chasm is created by fear. Now fear will become a motivator; tragically, fear will become a motivator for humankind ever since. It is even a motivator that's built into the covenant, because fallen humankind is motivated not only by love - of course, that's the best one - but also by fear, and the Scripture acknowledges that.

### **E. Pronouncements of Judgment**

Well, we have some pronouncements made. The first one is clearly a curse. Verses 14 and following. You know, whatever the serpent had been before - it seems to have been upright, on legs - but now we have it crawling on its belly, eating dust. It's a literal physical thing, but even within that literality of the serpent, it's got an interesting quality built into it. Because what does a serpent do? They twist; they don't go in straight line. They eventually get in a straight line, but their bodies are always twisting. This becomes a fascinating metaphor for deceit, for that kind of evil. So even in what literally happens to the serpent, we see something interesting of a metaphorical nature.

Carrying on, verse 15 is where we're hopeful. “I will put enmity between you and woman. Between your seed and hers, he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” Same Hebrew word there. The NIV has again done us a little bit of a service. The seed of

the woman - obviously it's looking forward, way forward, to Christ, and this is the verse, that Paul alludes to Roman 16:20, where he says, "Jesus has crushed the head of the serpent," that's what's going on here. "He will strike your head," God to the serpent, "but you will strike his heel." That, of course, is indicative of all the things, the persecutions, the attacks, torments, the serpent brings into human life; it's all there. However a thing to keep in mind in terms of our element of hope - this is according to theologians and probably most of you heard this already, in fact, I suspect that in New Testament you heard it; this is the first articulation of the gospel, often called the Proto-evangelium--the first articulation of the gospel.

This next is often called the curse on the woman, but that's not really appropriate; it's not a curse. It is a pronouncement, however. We need to look at it a little bit. So let me read it first. "To the woman, the Lord God said, I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing, in pain you will give birth to children, your desire will be for your husband, but," I know your text says *and*; that little letter can be easily translated *but*, "he will rule over you." What are we going to do with this?

[Trevor.] Please. Okay, the question is, what does the verse mean when it says, there will be enmity between the serpent and the woman? Are you talking in the literal sphere or are you talking about the forces of Satan, on the one hand, and the humans on the other? Oh, I skipped over that, right. Forgive me, I guess I just made a presumption and it's not a very good one. I think it's fairly clear from this point on, in the spiritual realm, everything that's an offshoot of pride and deception and so forth, and is represented and embodied in the serpent is going to be at warfare with who God wants those children of his to be, those who are, his image bearers. So enmity in that sense is very clear. You know, from a more literal perspective, most of us don't like snakes. I'm not sure that's where this verse really means to go, but it's interesting. I remember being terrified as a child until my mother taught me how to play with them. Garter snakes, not rattle snakes. You know, she helped me get over that fear that, I think, is intrinsically built into lots of people, not everybody, but lots of people. I have no problems with garter snakes. But I'm still a little bit taken a

back when I hear something rustling behind me if I'm hiking.

Yes, [Sarah]. Good question: what might Satan's motivation be for messing with God's creation, i.e. Adam and Eve? A lot of things I could say in response to that. Let me just try this and you can pick up with it. When we read Isaiah 14, and Ezekiel 28, which we'll be doing later on, even though those two passages are talking about human rulers, Nebuchadnezzar and the prince of Tyre, there are powerful allusions there to the malevolent forces behind those, and that malevolent force is someone who wants to be having the upper hand, even with God. So I don't think it's just Satan, toying with God's creation to mess it up, just for the sake of doing that. It's his thrust to be better than God, or more powerful than God, and do a one-up on God, basically. I think that's part of what's going on here.

[Chelsea]. So what's this about animals talking? Yes, good question. This isn't going to be the only time we have instances of animals talking. What's the other classic one in the first Testament? Yes, Balaam's talking donkey. And notice Balaam is a prophet of some sort; we'll deal with what sort that is later on, and he doesn't seem to have a nervous breakdown over the fact that his donkey starts talking. Maybe something's going on here that wasn't as odd as we might think it is from our western perspective. I'm not saying that you can go somewhere in the world today and you find talking animals. But pre-fall, this may not have been all that unusual. C. S. Lewis does it all the time doesn't he? Not that I'm saying C. S. Lewis is inspired but in some ways, C. S. Lewis does have a very excellent imagination, and I suspect that all the creatures in Narnia that can talk are coming out from his careful reading of what's going on here.

[student] Did Eve have children in the garden of Eden? Apparently not, although, we just don't know. So that's why I said, "apparently." [student] Yes, you're right, except that I would suggest she's at least seen that birth process in the world around her in the animal world around her. If she's seen death, she's certainly seen birth, and she's seen that it has some rigor accompanying it. That's the guess. Yes, that's the best I can do for you. If she had children in the garden of Eden, we might know about it. We don't know that for

sure, but we might know about it.

Question: could the serpent actually have had, prior to this curse, a much more appealing figure? I think possibly so. I think possibly so. By the way, you know, we're going to do a whole lot more with this serpent idea when we encounter our little figure Leviathan when we read Job. That's going to add some other layers to this, maybe. Anything about this pronouncement to the woman? Picking up on what Andrew said, perhaps. Clearly, the first pronouncement, which is a punishment, is that she's going to endure a great deal of pain in childbirth. Now, there's a lot that we can say about that, but it's pretty clear from medical realm, for centuries, not just the last hundred years in our country, has worked very hard to reduce the pain of childbirth, because it's pretty rough. And by the way, mortality is a big part of that picture too. So isn't it interesting that we very carefully do that, and yet the second part of this, at least some parts of us as God's people, aren't too keen on reducing. Let me do what I think is a better translation of the second half of verse 16: it says, "your desire will be for your husband," that word "desire" is only used three times in the Hebrew Bible, and it's not "Oh, I love you; I just can't wait to embrace you." It's not that kind of desire. In fact, the very same word is used next, in the next chapter. Where? When God is rebuking Cain, he says, middle of verse 7, "sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you, but you must master it." Do you see that? In fact the same structure is there. "Sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you, but you must master it." Now go back to chapter 3, "your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you." I suggest to you that what is being said here to Eve is that in the place they had harmony, the most intimate harmony between them, is now going to experience horrible, terrible friction. The desire is a clutching desire. Sin doesn't simply desire to have us. Sin grasps at us. We haven't figured that out yet, probably will, okay? Sin grasps at us. Cain is told "you must master it." That's what I would suggest is being said to Eve: there's going to be one-upmanship in your relationship. You're going to want this; it's going to be a powerful, strong desire, whatever this happens to be. Your husband's going to be master you, and it's always going to be that kind of thing.

Possibly, the apostle Paul had this very passage in mind. Keep in mind he's a rabbi, he's a trained rabbi which means he *knows* his first Testament exceedingly well, and he's always alluding to it. Possibly he had this in mind in Ephesians chapter 5 when he tells his audiences “submit to one another.” Submit to one another, and then talked about husbands loving the wives as Christ loved the church, and wives putting yourselves under your husband. Both of those go directly contrary to what fallen human nature is inclined to do, and we see fallen human nature here in Genesis 3:16. Of all people, we and the church got to be working against that, so that there's going to be harmony again. We establish harmony in Christ. There's a lot more to say about that; that's the pronouncement to the woman.

Let's go on to a curse pronounced, not on Adam, but on the ground. Pain and toil - it's going to produce thorns and thistles, verse 18, “by the sweat of your brow you're going to eat your food, until you return to the ground.” Remember the Psalm we read this morning, Psalm 90 and “returning to dust”? Well, here it says, “for dust you are to dust you will return.” And so the curse pronounced on the ground is actually going to be the ground not only making work harder for Adam, shortening his life perhaps, but also going to be the ground that will embrace him when he returns to dust again. So sobering things are taking place in this context, sobering to say at least.

But let's go on and look at some indications of God's mercy. Any further questions you want to ask about that? I know I've gone over it probably faster than I should have.

Susanna. Yes, good question, or good statement, to which I'm going to respond anyway. It is the second half of the verse, “your desire shall be for your husband and he will rule over you” is actually a model. I'll respond to that in two ways. I recognize that it's often said, but two things are going on. First of all, the first half of the verse presents something that is really, as I said earlier, something we need to be working against. In that context, I'm having trouble seeing the second half of the verse being a positive statement for how things should be. So I would simply say, the whole thing is descriptive of what happens as the result of the fall. It is not prescriptive, and I think that then allows us to read the context

better. Not only the context of that one verse, but also reading the second half in conjunction with chapter 4, which has some of the same parallel kinds of statements, and they aren't nice. But thank you, I meant to say that there are a lot of people read it as prescriptive of how we need to be, but I am not real convinced, actually.

Becca. Yes, good question. Since Adam was given the mandate to tend the garden and care for it, how does the nature's work change here? Let me answer that just a couple ways, and maybe this won't be complete, but we can try. Yes, the tending and the caring job that Adam has in chapter 1 and chapter 2 - because chapter 1 talks about ruling over the creation, and presumes a creation that is going to, if I may say it in this way, be working with him, and it's not going to be something that seems to be always contrary. How many of you plant gardens? Does anybody plant gardens anymore? You know, weeds always grow faster than anything else. Not sure why that is; they always do. So, you know, just the very fact that we now have a fallen universe means that those things that are deleterious to the good, are going to be there and in profusion. And so it's going to become harder work, what's interesting is that the terms that are used here in this pronouncement are toil, agony, and anguish. Those very terms show up again in Ecclesiastes chapter 1, when the author of Ecclesiastes is talking about some of the frustration of living in a fallen world. We'll come back to that, but it's a good question.

## **F. The Mercy of God**

How about thinking just a little bit about the mercy of God in this whole context? We've already talked about the fact that God does promise redemption, the Proto-evangelium, in this promise that the seed of Eve will crush, or strike the serpent's head. He also provides coverings. The fig leaves, as I said, are not that useful, and certainly don't last, so He provides coverings of animal skins. There are just a couple things that I note here for you, that are important to think of. In the ancient Near East, clothing wasn't just clothing. It's symbolized inheritance. We're going to see that again, by the way; that's a theme that's going to come back to us again, so don't forget it after this. It symbolizes something important - that this is my inheritor. That's exceedingly important.

Adam and Eve just disobeyed God; He could've ditched them. The very fact that He provided coverings for them says they're continuing to be His children; fallen yes, but they're continuing to be His children. That's an extremely important and encouraging statement. Covering them means we are still his children; we are descendants of Adam. In addition to that, there's a possibility that this is the institution of animal sacrifices. I don't know it for sure, as I'm reading between the lines, but by the time we get to chapter 4, we have the sacrificial system operating, because Abel and Cain bring two different types of sacrifices. Physical death is also an indication of the mercy of God. We may not think so, because death is sad. But eternal life as fallen, odiously evil creatures is even more horrifying. So physical death is a mercy.

Well, we've got time. We'll at least look quickly through Cain and Abel because I'm assuming you know this narrative fairly well. As you know from reading chapter 4, Cain brings some of the fruits of the ground and Abel brings something better. Abel kept the "flocks," Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of soil, Abel brought the fat portions of some of the firstborn of his flock." I hope you're seeing the difference in quality of the offering that they bring. And again, it's presumed they knew. Cain's bringing "some of"; he's not even bringing the firstfruits. This is not a distinction between blood sacrifice and grain sacrifice. Because grain sacrifices, later on, are going to be shown to be acceptable. He's just bringing some of it. Abel knows to bring the fat. Now, in our culture, where cholesterol's a big deal and your doctor keeps telling you don't eat the fat... now, we're not too keen on this. But it's the fat that's the part of the meat that really gives that wonderful aroma, gives it the taste, gives it the tenderness. So God's requiring the fat portion is really requiring the best. So when Abel brings fat portions, he's bringing the best. Now, we know that the Lord will look with favor on Abel, he doesn't look with favor on Cain. So Cain gets angry, and as the result of his anger, he commits the first murder. When God confronts him, we see again, God's mercy. Cain is sent to wander. If it were measure for measure punishment, if we wanted to talk about that kind of justice, it would've been the death of Cain. It's not, as we can see.

Just a couple more things I'll say here, and then we'll stop. The New Testament has some things to say about this, not only in 1 John 3:12, but in other places as well. For example, Hebrews 11 talks about the faith of Abel. The New Testament comment in 1 John is particularly striking, "don't be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one." Remember, "sin desires to have you--clutch at you," so he murders his brother. Why did he murder him? 1 John says because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. You know how that works? Sometimes when we're doing things wrong, the people doing what's right really make us mad. I mean, probably not out to murder them, but perhaps, we make disparaging comments about the God Squad on campus or something like that. I don't know what they're called now, but that used to be a disparaging term about five years ago. These kinds of words are inappropriate for people who are trying their hardest to do what's right and live for God.

At any rate, as you look at the genealogy in chapter 4, you see some fascinating parallels with the line of Seth in terms of names. I don't have time to go into that, not yet. We'll do it on Monday. What I want you to notice, are two things in terms of the development of culture. Fairly significant things are going on here. Father of all who played the harp or lyre, okay? Musical stuff. Forging all kinds of tools out of iron and bronze... that's talking about some kind of level of civilization at some point of back there. We don't know when this was, but it's interesting. Now, maybe it's later on and just reading into it; it's interesting nonetheless. There are also some other aspects of culture that are pretty ugly, and that's Lamech, who says, "I've killed a man for wounding me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times." We're going to close, not with that ugly thing, but the fact that I think possibly Jesus, when he tells Peter you've got to forgive seventy times seven; I think Jesus is referring right back to this allusion, when he says, not seven times, that's minimal, seventy times seven, that's the forgiveness we need to offer, as opposed to Lamech who is seeking vengeance on the spot.

Okay, on that happy note Shabbat shalom!

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