

Genesis 3.6-13: The Disaster of the Fall

The Disaster of the Fall [vv.6-7]

v.6: Note the *verbs* in the verse. She “saw” (eye), “took” (hand) and “did eat” (mouth). She must also have walked (feet) to the tree. The temptation made a threefold appeal to Eve (cf. 1 John 2.16):

- She saw the tree was “good for food”. This is the lust of the **flesh** – a craving for physical (sensual) pleasures such as sex, drugs and alcohol. Seeing the tree as “good for food” appealed to the appetite of the flesh – and promoted the *physical* above the *spiritual*.
- It was “pleasant to the eyes” – the lust of the **eyes**. This is a desire to have what is *seen*. Certain sins use the eye-gate to incite the flesh (cf. Genesis 13.14; 39.7; Joshua 7.21; 2 Samuel 11.2). Job made a personal commitment to control his eyes and avoid looking lustfully at young women (Job 31.1). *Psalm 119.37: Turn my eyes away from what is worthless! Revive me with your word!* Walking by sight, not by faith will inevitably cause a believer to stumble spiritually.
- Finally, the tree was “desired” to “make one wise” – the **pride** of life. This is a proud display of possessions or achievements and subsequent desire to live in independence of God. The word “desire” comes from the same root word as “covet”. Covetousness is an *unbridled* or *consuming* desire for something to improve one’s personal pleasure or vanity. Eve sought wisdom (mental illumination) to make decisions independently of God.

In Romans 8, Paul makes a contrast between those who “walk after the flesh” (unbelievers in Adam) and those who “walk after the Spirit” (believers in Christ). The unregenerate are *dominated* by the flesh (*sarx*). This is a word which can be used *physically* (cf. v.3; 2.28; Galatians 2.20) or, as here, *morally*. It refers to the natural desires of fallen man under the influence of indwelling sin. It is the tendency to live for self – I, me and my – not God. Being dominated by the flesh, unbelievers ‘mind’ the things of the flesh, their whole persons being fully absorbed by sinful, selfish desires. They live for the physical and material which regulates the course of their lives. Paul goes on to show that this state affects a person’s conduct (v.4), thinking (vv.5-7) and character (vv.8-11). “*Practically, we must put to death the deeds of the body by the power of the Spirit. Are your eyes watching unsuitable things? Are your feet taking you to unsuitable places? Give those things no oxygen. Starve them! If you don’t kill them, they will kill you as far as usefulness for God is concerned.*”

Such was the strength of her desire, and love for herself, she failed the test of devotion to God. She took of the fruit, and ate, and “gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat”. Sin is not satisfied to do its evil alone but encourages others to join in. Adam could not resist taking the fruit from his wife, and thus chose her over God. The phrase “with her” suggests Adam was there all along. If so, his reluctance to intervene was an abdication of headship. All the verbs in this section, from v.1, are plural, suggesting the conversation addressed them both.

The NT makes a difference between the sin of *Eve* and that of *Adam*. Eve was tricked and “deceived” into believing she was doing the right thing (2 Corinthians 11.3; 1 Timothy 2.14). Adam, however, was not deceived – God gave him, as head, the clear commandment, and the consequent responsibility to ensure it was upheld. Adam deliberately chose to follow the lead of his wife and disobey God. His was a wilful act of rebellion. The responsibility for the human condition falls on Adam as the representative head (Romans 5.12-21; 1 Corinthians 15.20-23).

How could Eve have resisted the Devil’s temptation? Not by inner strength! **First**, she should have recognised God’s order and obeyed God’s word. Loyalty to Him and His word would make the difference. **Second**, Eve positioned herself to fall. She should have avoided the tree! Our problem is the same. We struggle with sin because we put ourselves in positions to arouse its desires (cf. Romans 13.14). The positive command is to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, meditate upon Him, that His moral character and beauty might adorn (clothe) our lives and living. He must control our motives, desires and deeds.

v.7: The consequences of sin become apparent. First, their “eyes were opened” – their innocence (ignorance of evil) was lost, and they received a conscience and therefore an appreciation (or realisation) of what they had done.¹ An awful sense of *shame* and *guilt* came upon them. They were now conscious of being “naked”. What was once evidence of a healthy relationship (cf. 2.25) has now become shameful and susceptible to lust. In Scripture, nakedness is connected with *idolatry* (Exodus 32.25), *drunkenness* (Genesis 9.20-23; Habakkuk 2.15) and *demonism* (Luke 8.26-39; Acts 19.16). We live in a world which encourages clothing to be removed or more revealing, but this is calculated to deny the fall.

¹ God has given us an inner judge called “conscience” that *accuses* when we do wrong and *approves* when we do right (Romans 2.12-16).

Clothing, for fallen humanity, is essential. In the assembly, sisters must be careful about their clothing that it does not encourage or enflame the lust of fallen human nature. In an attempt to cover their shame, they “sewed fig leaves together”. Ever since, mankind has worked to cover his moral and spiritual deficiencies before God. But the “filthy rags” of our own self-made righteousness cannot cover our sinful hearts (Isaiah 64.6). We need the “garments of salvation” (Isaiah 61.10) with which only God can clothe us. The “fig” tree produces the largest (and very strong) leaves of any trees in the Middle East. They made themselves “aprons” – the word is often translated ‘girdle’ and describes the belt of a warrior in 1 Kings 2.5. This was therefore merely a covering for their modesty.

The Discernment of Adam’s Guilt [vv.8-13]

v.8: This verse illustrates the beginning of the outworking of the sentence, “thou shalt surely die”. Their spiritual death (separation from God) was immediate. But note the **grace** of God. *“The Lord God might instantly have discarded the guilty pair and consigned them to their doom. Instead of that He sought them out; a sure indication that He had designs for their ultimate blessing”* (FB Hole). The Gardener has not abandoned his garden! God was unwilling to forsake the objects of His love even when they failed. The word “voice” describes the *sound* of the LORD God “walking in the garden in the cool of the day”. The Hebrew literally means “walking to and fro”, and the verb describes an established, *repeated* and *habitual* practice. The “cool of the day” signifies the early evening, the cooler time of the day. It was not the ‘heat of the moment’! Perhaps God was waiting all day for some indication of repentance. Adam and Eve “hid themselves” – an implicit admission of guilt. They could no longer enjoy the communion they once had with God, even making excuses for avoiding His presence. Unconfessed sin in the life always affects the enjoyment of our communion with God. It will also lead, ultimately, to a decreased interest in the word of God and fellowship with His people. **v.9:** God first speaks to Adam, an order reversal of v.1. Both “him” and “thou” are *singular* because Adam, as head, is accountable. “Where art thou?” is the broken-hearted language of a father speaking in love to his wayward children. Obviously, God knew where Adam was, but the implication was, ‘Why are you hiding?’ The question was designed to draw out an admission of guilt (cf. 4.9; 16.8). Whilst not quite the *first* question of the OT (cf. 3.1), it forms a nice parallel to the first question of the NT. The wise men asked, “Where is He?” – a question which concerned the Person who would ultimately answer Adam’s guilt. *“Where art thou? It is the call of Divine justice, which cannot overlook sin. It is the call of Divine sorrow, which grieves over the sinner. It is the call of Divine love, which offers redemption from sin”* (AW Pink).

v.10: At this point it seems Adam came out from hiding. Without confessing his guilt, he responds to the implication of the question with fear and sorrow. “I was afraid” admits to an experience he had not had in God’s presence before. Sin had given Adam new knowledge of the evil of nakedness, and therefore a feeling of shame in the presence of God. **v.11:** God’s second question, “Who told thee that thou wast naked?” was probing the *source* of Adam’s guilt. “Hast thou eaten...?” is more specific and urges Adam’s confession. The word order in the Hebrew places prominence on the forbidden tree, and reminds him that eating was a direct violation of God’s command: “Did you, from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from, eat?” **v.12:** Adam first sought to *clothe* himself (v.7), *hide* himself (v.8), then *excuse* himself (v.12). This was no simple confession. The focus of the sentence falls on the woman, “she gave me”, but he also indirectly blames God for providing the woman! The *corruption* of sin is evident as the *criminal* argues he’s the *victim*. If he cannot deny his guilt, he will blame somebody else, and if possible blame God (FB Hole). The invariable tendency of mankind of sinful men is to indulge in the “accusing” of *others* and “excusing” of *themselves* (Romans 2.15). Finally, after trying to minimize his culpability as much as possible, he confessed, “and I did eat”. **v.13:** Now it was Eve’s turn! She too sought to pass the blame to the serpent, arguing she was “beguiled” (deceived). With a glint in the eye, it has often been said, “Adam blamed Eve; Eve blamed the serpent; and the serpent didn’t have a leg to stand on!” Neither Adam or Eve were willing to make a simple confession and take full responsibility for their actions. Their behaviour is a contrast to that of the believer if he falls into sin. We “confess” (1 John 1.9) which literally means ‘to speak together’ or ‘agree with another’. When confessing sins to God, we must *“drag them out into the open before God, call them by their names, take sides with God against them, and forsake them”* (MacDonald).

In summary, the effects of the Fall on man were *fourfold*:

1. The discovery that something was wrong with himself.
 2. The effort to hide his shame by a self-provided covering.
 3. Fear of God and an attempt to hide from His presence.
 4. Instead of *confessing* his sin, seeking to *excuse* it.
- The same effects are observable today (AW Pink).