13/01/19 Genesis 3:1-13 “Sin is never someone else’s fault!”

Genesis 3:1 – Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

serpent – *nachash* (serpent; snake) from root word *nachash* (to practice divination; divine; observe signs; learn by experience; diligently observe; practice fortunetelling; take as an omen) This root word is translated enchantment 4, divine 2, enchanter 1, out of 11 occurrences in the OT.

Deuteronomy 18:10 – There shall not be found among you *[any one]* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *[or]* that useth divination, *[or]* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

“serpent” therefore could signify what we might call satanism.

subtil – subtle; shrewd; crafty; sly; sensible; shrewd; clever

beast of the field – life of the land

The serpent was more cunning (more able to think and reason? or more deceitful?) He spoke to the woman; does this mean other animals might have spoken, or does it mean that the serpent was used by a being such as satan? It is generally accepted, quite correctly, that, while the serpent was considered a clever creature, it was actually satan who was either using the serpent to communicate with the woman, or that satan himself took on the form of the serpent, being a creature that the woman probably wouldn’t have worried about (as she might have if she had known it was satan speaking with her). Therefore, the serpent should be identified as the voice of satan here. In Revelation, John calls satan “that old serpent”.

Revelation 20:2 – And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

“Has God indeed said such a thing as ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” “Is it really true that God has said this to you?”

It clearly appears to be a challenge to the woman to think about why God would say that? Was He being unfair, perhaps? The serpent would have known the rule about not eating that fruit, so was he really trying to get the woman to feel that she had somehow been denied a privilege that should have been hers? Why shouldn’t she be permitted to eat of that fruit? Thus the tone of the question.

Clearly, though, there was a purpose for such a question. The serpent apparently was clever enough to reason things out for itself, so the question has to be for the benefit of the woman. What reaction was the serpent hoping to get from the woman? Probably the reaction he got, for the serpent was very cunning. The woman didn’t seem to pick up the craftiness of the serpent but instead treated the question as if it were a genuine enquiry to find out information.

Genesis 3:2 – And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

The serpent’s tone was probably facetious or cynical, but the woman reacted as if a serious question had been asked. She replied, telling the serpent that they were permitted to eat the fruit of the trees of the garden. God had said the same to Adam (“the man”) in Genesis 2:16, so it is clear that either God also told the woman the rules or, more likely, Adam relayed the rules message to the woman. (The addition of “neither shall ye touch it” in the next Vs does indicate this.) That is, the woman is not ignorant of God’s requirements. So far she has said everything correctly. But that’s about to change with the one exception to the rule in the next Vs.

Genesis 3:3 – 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.

But (the exception to the rule), she said, God has told us not to eat of the tree that’s in the midst or middle of the garden, nor to touch it, or else we will die. God didn’t tell Adam not to touch it, merely to not eat of it, so the touching of the fruit seems to be an added extra. And, the rule was clear: “for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” That is, for the eating of the fruit. It is quite possible that Adam had relayed the message to her and added the extra “Don’t even touch it!” to the eating of the fruit. After all, if eating poison will kill a child, then generally a parent will tell a child to not even touch it.

Many comments on this verse have made an issue of “neither shall ye touch it” being added in, but there seems to be no real reason why this added wording would have led to problems here. Some say that this is evidence of the alteration of the rule to something different, thus weakening its authority, but I don’t accept that the severity of the penalty was weakened or altered in any way because of the extra wording. The serpent’s emphasis (next Vs) is that she would surely not die (probably a tongue-in-cheek reply). The serpent also notes the eating of the fruit in Vs 5 below and doesn’t home in on the touching the fruit wording at all. I think the woman’s extra wording added in is not the problem here at all.

Genesis 3:4 – And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

This is the first lying statement of satan the serpent. Satan is a liar and the father of lies.

John 8:44 – Ye are of *[your]* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

But note that when satan tells a lie, it can seem like the truth, depending on the point of view you have of it. “Surely you don’t believe that you would die?” or “Surely God didn’t really mean that you would die?”

She wouldn’t die physically (not straight away, anyway) but God had said in that day you shall surely die (spiritually now and physically one day).

Note also the temptation of Jesus in the desert. Satan knew what God had said then, too, but likewise it was quoted out of context. (Does that “out of context” sound familiar? Like calvinists using verbal gymnastics to try and fit an impossible interpretation onto a verse?)

Matthew 4:5-7 – 5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *[their]* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

In Genesis 3:4, satan was telling the truth, yet out of context. The context of the woman was the physical world, not spiritual, and as for physical death, it was the present right now, not the future. Satan’s words are always deceptive, even when they tell the truth! The woman was being misled into thinking that she would probably be still alive after she had taken the first bite. And she was. After all, if it were poison, then it would do the job within a reasonably short period of time.

Genesis 3:5 – For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

eyes – of mental and spiritual faculties

“Why should you think that you would die? That’s not really what God is saying. The real reason that God doesn’t want you to eat this fruit is because you will know what God knows, especially with respect to good and evil. He just doesn’t want you to have this knowledge so He tells you that you will die, but you shall not surely die!”

Some of this is true, but only some. Yes, they would know, but no they wouldn’t be as God – that lie of satan given to so many since then. They’d just be gods, knowing good and evil. Note the old saying: Knowledge is power! Knowledge is an aid to control. It is knowledge gained through confessionals that the catholic church has used over the centuries to control its members. And the new calvinist Biblical Counselling is being used in many churches to do exactly the same thing: to control church members through confession and counselling.

But God is God alone, and none other may take His place. (That’s what satan’s problem was, too, if you remember, that he wanted to take God’s place, and lost!) But gods are not God; gods merely know the difference between good and evil, but not how to decide perfectly between the two.

And even if they were gods, and children of God, they would still die the death of man.

Psalm 82:6-7 – 6 I have said, Ye *[are]* gods; and all of you *[are]* children of the most High. 7But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.

Telling the woman that they would be as gods was still a lie. Most poisons are only part poison, but it’s the poison that still kills.

Genesis 3:6 – And when the woman saw that the tree *[was]* good for food, and that it *[was]* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *[one]* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

pleasant – desire; wish; longings of one’s heart; lust; appetite; covetousness (bad sense); thing desired; object of desire.

So the woman took a second longer look at the fruit it seems. And it did seem to look nice; it did seem to be answering the longings of her heart, her desire. Above all, the wisdom it would allegedly give her was something to be desired. Curiosity is probably the most common reason for deciding to sin in the first place! Because of this sin of Adam and Eve, we have an insatiable desire to know what we don’t know. This desire still drives mankind today into sin time and time again. For example, curiosity is what causes most people to take illicit drugs for the first time.

The Hebrews were warned to not seek after the gods of other nations because of their curiosity to know why they served them.

Deuteronomy 12:29-32 – 29 When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land; 30Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. 31Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. 32What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

The knowledge of good and evil without the ability to control it is not a blessing but a curse instead.

Why did Adam eat when he must have known what it was? He knew that it was wrong (1 Timothy 2:13-14). Perhaps because the woman had found out information that he didn’t have, he may have simply eaten so that he could understand what she might have been saying about it. Or else maybe he was also curious enough to want to know what he didn’t know: the forbidden knowledge. It is said that the best way to make someone sin is to tell them not to do it!

Note that her husband was “with her” which does seem to indicate that Adam was with the woman during this whole episode. If so, then Adam is listening in to this discussion. But why is the serpent just talking to the woman? “And he said unto the woman” (Genesis 3:1). It is possible that because Adam was the one to whom God gave the original command, then the woman may not have got the message as clearly, and therefore more easily swayed by enticing words. Note that Adam was not deceived. 1 Timothy 2:13-14 – 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 4And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

However, ultimately, it was Adam who would be named as the sinner, not Eve.

Romans 5:14 – Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

1 Corinthians 15:22 – For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Genesis 3:7 – And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *[were]* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

aprons – girdle; belt; loin-covering; loin-cloth. Can be part of armour. Translated “breeches’ in the 1560 Geneva Bible which then was named the “breeches Bible”.

They have now sinned by eating the forbidden fruit. Note that the fruit itself wasn’t the problem, but the disobeying of God’s command. Nor is the knowledge of good and evil necessarily wrong in itself either (for God Himself has this knowledge), but to have such knowledge without the ability to control its use is where it becomes dangerous. Their eyes are opened; they now have knowledge they never had before. And immediately, it seems, they knew they were naked. Of course, they must have known they were naked before they ate the fruit, but they didn’t know anything good or evil to do with their nakedness. With this fruit came the knowledge that their nakedness was wrong and therefore they had to do something about it. What changed was how they viewed their nakedness.

They made aprons, from what they had available, to cover up that nakedness that they now knew to be wrong. But where did they get the needles with which to sew the leaves? This does seem to indicate some sort of ability to make needles and probably other implements and suggests that they may have been in the garden for a while. Otherwise, it could mean that they somehow wrapped the leaves around themselves, fixing them together in some way, but the use of a needle of some sort does seem more logical.

Genesis 3:8 – And they heard the voice (or sound) of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

cool – r*uwach* (wind; breath; mind; spirit) Translated “Spirit” or “spirit” 232 times, “wind” 92 times, “breath” 27 times, “cool” only once (out of 378 in all). Translated “Spirit” in Genesis 1:2, “wind” in Genesis 8:1 and “breath” in Genesis 6:17. It could be thought of as a cool evening breeze after the warmth of the day.

Adam and his wife – *‘adam* and *‘ishshah*

the presence – face; presence; person

Adam and Eve heard the sound of the Lord God walking in (traversing; wandering through) the garden (enclosure) in the cool (of the evening) and clearly they were apprehensive as to what God would think or say. They had guilty consciences, something that came with the knowledge of good and evil. For without such knowledge there could never be feelings of guilt. So they hid from (made efforts to avoid) the presence (face) of God (avoided coming face-to-face with God). They hid among the trees of the garden, thinking that in this way they might avoid having to face God whom they considered now to be in some way opposed to them.

It is clear that their knowledge of good and evil also must have given them the understanding of how God would feel about such behaviour; that now in some way they had been alienated from God. They felt shame, even fear as to what might happen next. They must also have known that they couldn’t really hide from God, so such hiding must have been through shame rather than a desire to actually cover up their sin. They just didn’t want to face up to the reality that they had done something wrong.

Genesis 3:9 – And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *[art]* thou?

God of course knew where they were, but called out so that they would acknowledge Him and commence the process of confession of their sin. God knows what man has done but doesn’t leave it there, for He had already put into place His plan of redemption to redeem man from what He knew (by His foreknowledge) – that man would fall into sin.

Luke 19:10 – For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Sinful man will never seek after God for he is ashamed, guilty, afraid, yet God through the gospel of the cross made a way for man to return. God seeks after man, not to select a privileged few (as the calvinists love to teach) but to seek all the lost to offer salvation to all. And the gospel is the means by which God approaches man to offer that salvation. So it is only to be expected that God, knowing what Adam had done, would seek to approach him, seeking that which was now lost.

Genesis 3:10 – And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I *[was]* naked; and I hid myself.

God makes the initial contact in this matter. God took the initiative in seeking after Adam; without this seeking, would Adam have replied? But God sought and Adam responded. This is the gospel: God seeks lost man, and lost man responds. Adam had heard God and he was afraid of the consequences, and didn’t know what to do. Adam needed direction to get on with his now-fallen life. Life must go on, as they say. He knew his nakedness was in some way evil but probably this wasn’t the main reason for hiding. It was what that nakedness represented: the fact that Adam had sinned against God and, with that knowledge came the realisation of the full extent of the trouble he was now in. Ignorance of that knowledge would have permitted Adam to continue in bliss, but now Adam is greatly troubled. His nakedness is just the outward sign of the destruction that has taken place within his soul and spirit. He is now alienated from God. Where once he would have been quite comfortable with God’s presence, now he is completely out of his comfort zone. And so he hid himself in an effort to avoid reality.

It is the reason why many people suffer insanity or have serious psychological problems: they have a need to avoid the trauma that serious conflict in their lives has caused. Many psychological defence mechanisms such as phobias are caused by some great anxiety in the past but are now buried so deeply that all that remains is the phobia that their consciousness has used to protect themselves from the trauma. Instead of facing up to our problems, we often just run away from them, like Adam and Eve did here. For, of course, Eve would also have hidden herself among the trees with Adam. It needed God to seek them before they would be willing to respond.

Genesis 3:11 – And he said, Who told thee that thou *[wast]* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

God’s questions aren’t to get answers (for God knows exactly what Adam has done), but to cause him to admit what he has done. That is, if we do wrong, we need to confess. God knows when we have sinned but we have to admit it, take responsibility, something which Adam and Eve weren’t doing. Note 1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *[our]* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God knew why they knew they were naked; He knew that they had eaten of that forbidden tree. God is omniscient; that is, He knows all things. But Adam had to confess of his own free will. This is what the gospel does: compels people to confess of their own free will what they have done, before the remedy can be applied.

Genesis 3:12 – And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *[to be]* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

And Adam blames the woman; this is a bad move indeed. It’s the woman’s fault and you (God) were the one who gave the woman to me. In some roundabout way, Adam is blaming not just Eve, but God who gave Eve to Adam. The blame game doesn’t help with God. Blaming someone else can never solve the problem of sin. We cannot blame our upbringing, the circumstances of our lives, the hardships we’ve endured, the abuse we’ve suffered, the mental unbalance of our minds, others who we were with, etc etc. – the list goes on. With sin, the only acceptable reply is that we are guilty without reference to anyone or anything else.

Genesis 3:13 – And the Lord God said unto the woman, What *[is]* this *[that]* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

And Eve does the same – the blame game. Does it lessen the severity of what they’ve done just because they can blame someone else? It was the serpent’s fault for tricking me into eating that fruit. But God merely looks upon the fact that we have sinned and The soul that sinneth, it shall die. (Ezekiel 18:20). And if all have sinned (Romans 3:23) then all must die, regardless of how good their excuses might be. The penalty for sin is death but God’s gift through Jesus is eternal life (Romans 6:23) which Adam had now had forfeited, not only for himself but all mankind along with him. Mankind sinned and God redeemed him through the cross. The blame game didn’t help Adam and Eve then, and it still doesn’t help man today.

And when all stand before God in judgment one day, they won’t be asked who it was who led them into sin, but what have they done with the choice they were given: between judgment based on their works (which all will fail) or judgment based upon the righteousness which is by faith in Christ.

Romans 4:4-5 – 4 Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Incredibly the calvinist then says that Adam had no free will options at all, that he sinned because God ordained or decreed that he should sin. Or at the very least the calvinist God made it impossible to choose to not sin. And therefore the calvinist God decreed that the serpent, while disobeying God’s command, was nevertheless not opposing God’s will in doing so. And Eve was given an irresistible urge to eat that fruit. And man was meant to have the knowledge of good and evil yet incapable of choosing good, but only evil. And Adam and Eve blame the serpent because God didn’t give them any other option. But what about the serpent? Who did it end up blaming?? Ultimately, though, the calvinists would have us believe that the serpent had to be simply carrying out God’s will. In fact, the calvinists might even have us believe that the serpent was God! For what other sense can be made of all this. If God’s will is absolutely the only will in the universe, then all other wills can only be an extension of God’s will. And thus the serpent is an extension of God’s will. And thus the calvinist God is the only one who must take responsibility for sin and all its evil consequences. All roads might lead to Rome, but all blame leads to the calvinist God.