



READ: Selections from Genesis 2-3 (NIV)

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. . . . And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.” (Genesis 2:8-9, 16-17)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?” The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. (Genesis 3:1-7)

Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, ‘Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.’” (Genesis 3:13-15)

The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the LORD God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:21-24)

ENTER THE STORY:

It might be hard for us to imagine, but there was a time when sin and death did not exist. We read about this yesterday in Genesis chapter 1. God created the world and everything in it and called it “good”. God placed the first two people, Adam and Eve, in the garden and told them to work the land and take care of it. Adam and Eve had a close relationship with God, where they regularly walked and talked with him. They were in charge of the garden and everything in it.

There were trees all over the beautiful garden, and they could eat from all of them, except one specific tree in the middle of the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Unfortunately, Adam and Eve did NOT live happily ever after, because they chose to listen to the voice of God’s enemy, the devil, and disobey God.

It feels like our story has just begun, and already everything is falling apart. Sin has taken root in God’s good world like an obnoxious weed. Stubborn and pervasive, it seems impossible to rid the garden of it, but contrary to what we might think, God was not surprised or caught off guard by Adam and Eve’s disobedience.

- God is omniscient, a big word that means he knows everything. Their disobedience simply set in motion the plan that he
- already had (*remember we said that the story of Christmas actually started in Genesis?*).
- There is always a consequence for sin, whether we can see it or not, and because God is just (*always does what is right*)
- and holy (*set apart and unlike us*), he HAS to punish sin. Even the serpent was cursed for his part in deceiving Eve. The
- bad news for Adam and Eve was that their disobedience caused them to have to leave the garden and the presence of
- their Creator, but in the midst of their pain, God gave them a glimmer of hope.
- In Genesis 3:15, God said that one day – an offspring from Eve’s family line would crush the head of the serpent and
- defeat him forever. The word “offspring” in the Hebrew language is the word “seed,” and it refers to a single male
- person. Our hope rests completely on the actions of the “seed” of Eve, the prophesied, “Serpent Crusher.”
- **READ Genesis 3:21 again.** What did God do right before he kicked Adam and Eve out of the garden?
- From the very beginning of time, God establishes a system where the punishment for sin is death. We see this echoed in
- the New Testament as well, **Romans 6:23 says, “...the wages of sin is DEATH...”**
- By “covering” Adam and Eve with the skin of the animal, God was temporarily covering the cost of their sin with the
- death of the animal. They tried to cover themselves with fig leaves, but that was not enough.
- Through Adam and Eve, sin and death entered the world and changed everything, but the hope of Christmas is that the
- Serpent Crusher and promised Messiah – Jesus, would be born in human flesh so that he could die and permanently
- cover the cost of our sin.
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- **PRAY:** *Jesus, your mercy in giving up your position in heaven to enter our suffering as a tiny and vulnerable baby is*
- *astounding to us. Along with Adam and Eve, we are the ones who eat the fruit we shouldn’t, and we are the ones who*
- *run away from you and hide, yet you are the one who willingly takes our punishment to re-unite us back to the Father.*
- *Thank you, Jesus, for giving up everything for us. May the good news of your gospel never grow old to us. Amen.*
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