The Fall and the First Promise

Bible Stories Anthology — Genesis 3

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Author: John Lobota

Research Assistant: Claude Cowork

papertiq@bellsouth.net

> **Romans 15:4** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

Why These Stories Were Written — Romans 15:4

Paul had just quoted a thousand-year-old psalm and applied it to Christ (Romans 15:3, quoting Psalm 69:9), and then he explained why he could: *whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning*. **Written aforetime** — the scriptures that already stood before this present age of grace opened at Pentecost: the record God gave through Moses, the prophets and the writings, along with the Gospel accounts of Christ's earthly ministry, which belong to that same time before Pentecost. (When Paul wrote these words, the scriptures he had in hand were the Hebrew scriptures; the Gospels had not yet been written down.) **Written for our learning** — "learning" is the Greek word for *teaching*, the very word rendered "doctrine" in 2 Timothy 3:16. These are not quaint tales; they are doctrine in narrative form. Adam, Ruth and David never knew us, but God did, and He had their lives recorded with us in mind — written *for* us, though not all of it written *to* us, which is why we read Israel's history as our instruction and not as our marching orders. **Through patience and comfort of the scriptures** — "patience" is literally *remaining under*, the staying power we gain from watching men and women stay under a load; "comfort" is a *calling alongside*, the strength God brings when He meets them there, which is why Paul calls Him "the God of patience and consolation" in the very next verse. **That we might have hope** — not a wish, but confident expectation: the return of Jesus Christ and everlasting life with Him. That is why these accounts exist, and it is how they should be read.

The Afternoon Everything Changed

Every story in the Bible after Genesis 3 is, in one way or another, about this one.

Every sorrow, every grave, every thorn in the ground and every tear on a face traces back to a single conversation in a garden. And so does every promise of rescue. The same chapter that tells how the world was lost also tells, for the first time, how it would be won back. Before Adam and Eve took one step outside Eden, God had already announced the One who would undo what they had done — and had already shown them, with His own hands, the way back to Him.

This is where the whole Bible story turns, and where the Messiah first appears.

The Setting

When. Near the very beginning of human history, not long after the man and woman were created. Scripture does not say how long they lived in the garden before this day.

Where. A garden God planted "eastward in Eden" (Genesis 2:8), watered by a river that parted into four heads, two of which still carry familiar names — the Hiddekel (the Tigris) and the Euphrates (Genesis 2:10-14). Eden was a real place in the region we now call Mesopotamia, and Genesis describes it the way one describes a place on a map.

Who. The man and his wife; a being scripture calls the serpent; and the LORD God.

The situation. Everything was "very good" (Genesis 1:31). Adam had work to do — "to dress it and to keep it" (Genesis 2:15). He had open fellowship with God, and the freedom to eat from every tree but one:

> **Genesis 2:16** *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:*
>
> **Genesis 2:17** *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*

Notice *when* this command was given. It was spoken to Adam in Genesis 2:16-17. The woman was not formed until Genesis 2:21-22. Adam heard the command from God's own mouth; Eve heard it afterwards, most likely from Adam. That detail matters later in the story.

Notice, too, the words "thou shalt surely die." In Hebrew this is literally "*dying thou shalt die*" — the same verb used twice. This is a **figure of speech**. A figure of speech is a deliberate departure from the plain, ordinary way of saying something, used to add emphasis or feeling. The Bible is full of them, and God uses them on purpose — to make us stop and notice. This one repeats a word in two different forms, and it is called **polyptoton**. Its effect here is certainty: *you will most certainly die.* There is no "maybe" in it.

> **Genesis 2:25** *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

One broad permission, one clear limit, one certain consequence: that was the whole of God's law in Eden. Eden was the first of the great ages, or **administrations**, in God's dealings with mankind — periods in which God deals with people on a particular basis. This story is how that first age ended.

The Story, Told Faithfully

The Serpent

> **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?*

The chapter opens with a play on words that English cannot show. The last verse of chapter 2 said the man and woman were "naked" — in Hebrew, *'arummim*. The very next verse says the serpent was "subtil" — in Hebrew, *'arum*. The two words sound almost the same. This figure of speech is called **paronomasia** — a play on words that sound alike, used to tie two ideas together. Here it sets the innocent couple and the crafty serpent side by side before a word of dialogue is spoken: *they were open and unguarded; he was shrewd and calculating*.

Who was this serpent? Genesis introduces him simply as "the serpent," but the rest of scripture names him plainly: "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world" (Revelation 12:9). And Ezekiel, describing the fall of the one once called "the anointed cherub," says, "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God" (Ezekiel 28:13-14). This was no ordinary animal. It was the adversary, God's enemy, who had already fallen through his own pride (Isaiah 14:12-14) and now came to bring man down with him.

The Question

The first words the adversary speaks in the Bible are a question: "Yea, hath God said...?" This too is a figure of speech — **erotesis**, which simply means asking a question, not to get information, but to make a point. The serpent was not curious. He was planting a doubt.

And look at how he framed it. God had said, "Of *every* tree of the garden thou mayest *freely* eat," with one exception. The serpent twisted it around: *Has God really forbidden you every tree?* He made God's generous command sound stingy. He did not deny God outright — not yet. He simply turned the woman's attention from the thousand trees she could enjoy to the one she could not.

That is how temptation still begins. It rarely starts with an open attack on God. It starts with a question about what God said, asked in a way that makes God seem less good than He is.

The Answer That Drifted

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

Put Eve's answer beside what God actually said, and three changes appear:

- God said "*freely* eat" of *every* tree. Eve said simply, "We may eat." **She left out the generosity.**
- God said nothing about touching. Eve added, "*neither shall ye touch it*." **She made the command stricter than God made it.**
- God said, "dying thou shalt die" — certain death. Eve said, "*lest* ye die" — as if it were only a possibility. **She softened the certainty.**

None of these changes seems large. But together they show a mind already drifting from what God had said. In her thinking, God's goodness was shrinking, His limit was growing harsher, and His warning was growing vague. She had taken from God's word, added to it, and weakened it — three things scripture later warns against directly: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it" (Deuteronomy 4:2).

Remember that Eve had not been there when God gave the command. She had heard it secondhand. When God's word reaches us secondhand and loosely held, it is easy prey.

The Lie

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

Now the question becomes a flat contradiction. And the serpent's words are sharper in Hebrew than in English: he takes God's own emphatic phrase, "dying thou shalt die," and simply puts "not" in front of it — *not dying shall ye die.* He quotes God's exact words and reverses them. Jesus later said of him, "he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Then comes the offer — "ye shall be as gods" — and with it an accusation against God's motives: *God knows something good, and He is keeping it from you.* It is the same desire that caused the adversary's own fall: "I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:14). He offered Eve the very thing that had ruined him.

The Choice

> **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.*

Read the verse slowly and count the "ands": she took, *and* did eat, *and* gave also, *and* he did eat. This is another figure of speech, **polysyndeton** — "many ands." Instead of hurrying through a list, the writer slows us down, step by step, so that each action stands on its own. We are meant to watch every movement of the hand.

Notice the three appeals in the tree: "good for food," "pleasant to the eyes," and "to be desired to make one wise." The apostle John names the same three, centuries later, as everything the world has to offer: "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 John 2:16). Every temptation since has come through one of these three doors.

And do not miss two small words: "her husband *with her*." Adam was not away somewhere else. He was standing there. Paul explains the difference between them: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Timothy 2:14). Eve was fooled. Adam was not — he knew exactly what he was doing, and he ate anyway. That is why scripture says sin entered the world "by one man" (Romans 5:12). Adam had received the command directly from God. He was responsible for it, and he stood silent and then followed.

Eyes Opened — to the Wrong Thing

> **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.*

The serpent had promised open eyes, and their eyes did open — but not to godlike wisdom. They opened to shame. They had always been naked; now, for the first time, they *knew* it and were ashamed of it. The innocence of Genesis 2:25 was gone.

Their first act as fallen people was to cover themselves. The fig tree has some of the largest leaves of any tree in that land, which is why they chose it. The word "aprons" means a girdle or loin covering. It was their own solution, made with their own hands — and fig leaves wither in a day. It is the first picture in the Bible of man trying to cover his own sin by his own effort. It has never worked since.

Hiding

> **Genesis 3:8** *And they heard the voice 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.*

"The cool of the day" is, in Hebrew, "the wind of the day" — the time in late afternoon when the evening breeze rises in that part of the world and people come out after the heat. The picture is of an unhurried, familiar walk. God coming to the garden in the evening was evidently the normal rhythm of their life together.

The Bible here speaks of God "walking" and having a "voice." This is a figure of speech called **anthropopatheia** — describing God in human terms (walking, speaking, seeing, having hands) so that we can understand Him. God is spirit (John 4:24), but He speaks to us in language we can grasp. The point of the figure is warmth and nearness: God came to them as a Father comes home to His family.

But this evening they hid. And they hid "amongst the trees of the garden" — the very trees God had given them to enjoy. His gifts became their hiding place. The word "presence" in Hebrew is literally "face." They could no longer look God in the face.

> **Genesis 3:9** *And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?*

The first question God asks in the Bible is not "What have you done?" but "Where are you?" God knew exactly where Adam was. This is erotesis again — a question asked for a purpose, not for information. It was an invitation: *Come out. Come to Me. Tell Me.* It is the first time in scripture that God goes looking for the lost, and He has never stopped. Thousands of years later His Son would say, "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

Fear and Blame

> **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.*
>
> **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?*
>
> **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.*
>
> **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.*

"I was afraid." Fear enters the world for the first time. The voice that had always meant joy now meant dread. John later writes, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18). Sin had put fear where love had been.

God asks two more questions — more erotesis — each one giving Adam room to own what he had done. Instead, Adam blamed his wife, and past her he blamed God Himself: "The woman whom *thou* gavest to be with me." The woman blamed the serpent. God gave each of them the chance to speak, and no one said, "I did it. I am sorry."

Notice that God did not ask the serpent any question at all. He had nothing to ask him. The serpent was not being invited back.

The Sentence — and the Promise Inside It

God now speaks, first to the serpent:

> **Genesis 3:14** *And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:*

"Dust shalt thou eat" is an **idiom** — an expression whose meaning is not found in its individual words, but in the way a people used it. In the East, to "lick the dust" or "eat dust" meant to be utterly defeated

and humiliated, as a conquered enemy lay face down before the victor. Scripture uses it the same way elsewhere: "his enemies shall lick the dust" (Psalm 72:9); "They shall lick the dust like a serpent" (Micah 7:17). And of the restored earth to come, God says, "dust shall be the serpent's meat" (Isaiah 65:25). On the very day the adversary seemed to win, God announced his final defeat.

Then comes the most important verse in the chapter — and one of the most important in the Bible:

> **Genesis 3:15** *And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

This is the first promise of the Messiah in scripture. Every later promise of a coming Redeemer grows out of this seed. Three things in it deserve close attention.

"Enmity." God Himself would put lasting hostility between the adversary and the woman, and between their descendants. The war that began in the garden would run through all of history, and it would not end in a truce.

"Her seed." Throughout scripture, family descent is always reckoned through the father — a man's "seed." Here, uniquely, the coming Deliverer is called the seed of the *woman*. It is the first hint that this One would come into the world in a way no one else ever had. Isaiah later made it plain: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son" (Isaiah 7:14). Paul used exactly the language of Genesis 3:15: "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman" (Galatians 4:4).

"It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This is a **metaphor** — a figure of speech in which one thing is spoken of as though it were another, to show what they have in common. Here the whole conflict is pictured as a man and a snake. A snake strikes at the heel; a man crushes a snake's head. And the contrast is the whole point: a wound to the heel is painful, but a man recovers from it. A wound to the head is a death blow. The seed of the woman would be hurt in the struggle. The serpent would be destroyed.

Then God turns to the woman, and then to the man:

> **Genesis 3:16** *Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*
>
> **Genesis 3:17** *And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;*
>
> **Genesis 3:18** *Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;*
>
> **Genesis 3:19** *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

Look carefully at *what* is cursed. The serpent is cursed (3:14). The ground is cursed (3:17). But God never says to the man or the woman, "Cursed art thou." They receive real consequences — sorrow in childbearing, toil against a ground that now fights back, and at last the return to dust — but not a curse. And before God spoke a single word of consequence to either of them, He had already promised their Deliverer. The promise came first.

Notice, too, why Adam's sentence came: "because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife." Just a few verses earlier they "heard the voice of the LORD God." Two voices had spoken in Adam's life. He listened to the wrong one.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" is a figure called **metonymy** — naming one thing in place of another closely connected with it. "Sweat" stands for the hard labour that produces it, and "bread" for food of every kind. The work God had given Adam in the garden was a joy. Now it would be a struggle.

And "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" came true exactly as God said. Adam's body lived on for 930 years (Genesis 5:5), but that very day something died. The life of unbroken fellowship with God was gone. Paul describes the condition every descendant of Adam is born into: "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1), "alienated from the life of God" (Ephesians 4:18). As this series understands it, the spirit God had given Adam was given on condition, and it was lost that day. The body followed in time. (Some early Christian writers also noticed that Adam died before reaching a thousand years, and remembered that "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years" — 2 Peter 3:8.) The serpent had said, "Ye shall not surely die." God's word proved true, and the serpent's proved a lie.

A New Name

> **Genesis 3:20** *And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.*

This one small verse is easy to pass over, but it is remarkable. Adam had just heard the words "unto dust shalt thou return." And his very next recorded act is to turn to his wife and give her a name meaning *life* — "Eve" is related to the Hebrew word for living.

In the East, a name was not a label. It expressed who a person was, and to name someone showed a relationship to them and responsibility for them. Adam had named the animals (Genesis 2:19-20) and had named his wife "Woman" (2:23). Now he renamed her "Life." Why? Because he had heard God's promise about "her seed," and he believed it. Death had been pronounced, but so had a promise — and a promise needs a mother. This is the first recorded act of faith after the Fall. Adam, who had failed so badly minutes before, now took God at His word.

Clothed by God — Sacrifice, and the Way Back

> **Genesis 3:21** *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.*

This verse holds the heart of the whole story. Look at what happened here.

Their covering was not enough. Adam and Eve had covered themselves with fig leaves — their own work, and a covering that would wither. God did not accept it. He replaced it with something He made Himself.

Their covering cost a life. Coats of skins meant that animals died. Until that moment, nothing had ever died in God's creation. The first death Adam and Eve ever saw was an innocent animal dying — not for its own wrongdoing, but for theirs — so that their shame could be covered. God Himself did it.

God introduced sacrifice. This was the first sacrifice in the Bible, and God was the One who made it. The Hebrew word later used for "atonement," *kaphar*, means at root "to cover." That is exactly what God did in Eden: He covered their sin and their shame through the death of a substitute. Everything the Law

of Moses would later teach about sacrifice begins here. "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11). "Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

God taught Adam the way back. This was not only a gift. It was a lesson — the only way the lesson could be taught to two people who had never seen death. God showed them, with His own hands, how a sinner can come back into fellowship with Him: not through his own effort, but through a sacrifice God provides. And the next chapter shows that the lesson was learned and passed on. Their son Abel brought "of the firstlings of his flock," and God accepted him (Genesis 4:4). Hebrews says Abel offered his sacrifice "by faith" (Hebrews 11:4) — and "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Abel had been taught. The teaching began here, with God clothing his parents.

God restored their dignity. In the East, to be clothed by a greater person was a mark of acceptance, honour and provision. Pharaoh clothed Joseph in fine linen when he raised him to power (Genesis 41:42). The prodigal son's father called for "the best robe" to put on his returning son (Luke 15:22). Here, in the very first instance of all, God Himself clothed the man and woman who had just failed Him. He did not send them out naked and ashamed. He sent them out covered by His own provision.

The prophet Isaiah later sang of exactly this: "he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10). It began in Eden.

The Way Kept

> **Genesis 3:22** *And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:*
>
> **Genesis 3:23** *Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.*
>
> **Genesis 3:24** *So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*

"The man is become as one of us" — God speaking in His heavenly court, the angelic host who surround Him (compare 1 Kings 22:19 and Isaiah 6:8). Man now knew good and evil — not as God knows it, from above, but from the inside, by having done evil.

Even the sending out was mercy. To eat of the tree of life and live forever in a fallen, dying, separated condition would have been a sentence without end. God closed that way, not to keep man from life forever, but to keep him from living forever *like this* — until the promised Seed would open a better way.

And notice the word "keep." Back in Genesis 2:15, God put Adam in the garden "to dress it and *to keep it*." It is the same Hebrew word. Adam's job had been to keep the garden. He failed to keep it. Now cherubim — angelic guardians of God's holiness — kept it instead, and a flaming sword turned every way.

The cherubim stood "at the east of the garden." Remember that. Centuries later, when God gave Israel the tabernacle, its entrance also faced east, and cherubim were woven into the great veil that barred the way into the Holy of Holies, where God's presence dwelt (Exodus 26:31). The picture was the same in both places: *the way back to God's presence is guarded.* And the veil stood there, generation after generation, until the afternoon Jesus died — when "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Matthew 27:51). From the top — torn by God, not man. The way was open.

Where the Story Leads

To the Messiah

Genesis 3:15 is the first promise of the Messiah, and the rest of the Old Testament narrows it step by step. The seed of the woman would come through Abraham: "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22:18). Then through Judah: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah" (Genesis 49:10). Then through David, whose throne would be established for ever (2 Samuel 7:12-13). Paul names Him outright: "to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

The heel was bruised at the cross. The head was crushed through the cross, the resurrection and the ascension:

> **Hebrews 2:14** *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*
>
> **1 John 3:8** *...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*
>
> **Colossians 2:15** *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

Having been raised from the dead, He ascended and "is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

The coats of skins pointed to Him too. The animal in Eden died so that Adam and Eve could be covered. The Messiah is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) — not covering sin for a time, as the sacrifices of the Law did, but taking it away.

And the whole story sets two men side by side. Where the first Adam, in a garden of plenty, listened to the wrong voice and fell, the last Adam, in a wilderness after forty days without food, answered every temptation with "It is written" and stood (Matthew 4:1-11).

> **Romans 5:19** *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*
>
> **1 Corinthians 15:22** *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

To the Grace Administration

The serpent's head, under our feet. Genesis 3:15 has a surprising echo in Paul's letter to the church at Rome:

> **Romans 16:20** *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly...*

The victory promised in Eden and won by Christ is shared with believers today.

The same old strategy. The adversary has not changed his method:

> **2 Corinthians 11:3** *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

His first move is still "Yea, hath God said?" That is why believers are told to know God's word accurately, and to stand "against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11) — "wiles" meaning methods, schemes. Eve's handling of God's word — taking from it, adding to it, softening it — is the exact opening he still looks for.

Clothed by God, completely. Adam and Eve could not cover themselves; God covered them, at the cost of a life. Under grace, God has done the same, completely and permanently. The believer is made "the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21) and has "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). No fig leaves are needed. Nothing we make could add to it.

From hiding to boldness. Adam hid from God's face. Under grace, the believer is told to do the opposite:

> **Hebrews 4:16** *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

The way opened. The cherubim kept the way of the tree of life. The veil kept the way into the holiest. Both said, *not yet*. Now the way is open:

> **Hebrews 10:19** *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,*
>
> **Hebrews 10:20** *By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;*
>
> **Ephesians 2:18** *For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

And at the end of the Bible, the tree of life appears again — no longer guarded, but given: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7; see also 22:2, 14). The story that began with a way closed ends with the way open for ever.

To the Topic of Temptation

Genesis 3 is scripture's first lesson on how temptation works, and the pattern never changes:

1. **Doubt** God's word — "Yea, hath God said?"
2. **Deny** it — "Ye shall not surely die."
3. **Replace** it with a better-sounding offer — "ye shall be as gods."

Then the chain of the fall: she *saw*, she *desired*, she *took* — and then they *hid*. The same four steps appear in Achan's sin (Joshua 7:21) and David's (2 Samuel 11:2-4). The chain is weakest at its first link: the look, and the question that is allowed to linger.

The answer to all of it is the one Jesus gave: God's word, known accurately and believed fully. The first Adam lost the battle at the point of God's word. The last Adam won it there.

The Main Takeaway

The world was lost when God's word was doubted — and it is won back by believing God's word, beginning with His very first promise.

- **Know exactly what God said.** Eve's trouble began before she ate — when she took from God's word, added to it and softened it. Read it for yourself, and let it say what it says.
- **Listen to the right voice.** Adam heard two voices and followed the wrong one. The voice that contradicts God is never the voice of your friend.
- **When you fall, don't hide — answer when He calls.** "Where art thou?" is still an invitation. He comes looking, not to condemn, but to cover.
- **Stop sewing fig leaves.** Nothing we make can cover us. God has already clothed the believer in Christ.
- **Live as someone on the winning side.** The serpent's head was promised to be crushed in Genesis 3:15, and it was. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

For Our Learning — The People

- **Eve.** Not foolish or weak, but deceived (2 Corinthians 11:3). She heard God's command secondhand, and her trouble began with handling it loosely — taking from it, adding to it, softening it. After the Fall she became "the mother of all living," and the promise of rescue was tied to *her* seed.
- **Adam.** He received the command directly from God, stood beside his wife, knew better, and said nothing. Confronted, he blamed his wife and, by implication, God. Yet he was also the first to answer God's promise with faith, naming his wife *Life*. Scripture makes him the pattern for a greater man: "the first man Adam… the last Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45).
- **The serpent.** "More subtil" — crafty, shrewd. He never uses force; he uses questions, half-truths and flattering offers. Scripture names him "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan" (Revelation 12:9). He offered Eve the very thing that ruined him: to be like God.
- **The LORD God.** He walks in the garden. He calls out to the hiding. He asks questions that give room to confess. He speaks the promise before the penalty. He clothes the ashamed with His own hand, and teaches the way back. He is not an angry judge looking for an excuse. He is a Father looking for His children.

For Our Learning — Customs and Orientalisms

- **"The cool of the day."** Literally "the wind of the day" — the late-afternoon breeze, when people come out after the heat. A picture of daily, unhurried fellowship.
- **Fig leaves.** Among the largest leaves in the land, which is why they were chosen; but they wither in a day. Man's own covering never lasts.
- **The "face" of God.** "Presence" in Hebrew is "face." To hide from someone's face was to break fellowship with them.
- **Naming.** In the East, a name expressed a person's nature and the namer's relationship to them. Adam's naming his wife "Eve" (Life) was a declaration of faith in God's promise.
- **Clothing given by a superior.** To be clothed by a greater person meant acceptance, honour and provision — Joseph clothed by Pharaoh (Genesis 41:42), the prodigal clothed by his father (Luke 15:22). God did it first, in Eden.

- **Cherubim at the east.** Eden's way faced east and was kept by cherubim; the tabernacle faced east, and cherubim were woven into the veil (Exodus 26:31). Both guarded the way to God's presence — until the veil was torn from the top (Matthew 27:51).

For Our Learning — Figures of Speech

A figure of speech is a deliberate departure from the plain, ordinary way of saying something, used by God to add emphasis and feeling. These are the ones in this story:

- **Polyptoton** — the same word repeated in different forms for emphasis. "Dying thou shalt die" (2:17): certain death. The serpent's reply puts "not" in front of God's own emphatic phrase.
- **Paronomasia** — a play on words that sound alike. "Naked" (*'arummim*, 2:25) and "subtil" (*'arum*, 3:1): the unguarded couple set beside the crafty serpent.
- **Erotesis** — asking a question to make a point rather than to get information. "Yea, hath God said?" (to plant doubt); "Where art thou?" (to invite confession).
- **Polysyndeton** — "many ands." "She took… and did eat, and gave… and he did eat" (3:6): every step slowed down so we watch it.
- **Anthropopatheia** — describing God in human terms so we can understand Him. God "walking" in the garden, His "voice" (3:8): nearness and warmth.
- **Idiom** — an expression whose meaning comes from how a people used it. "Dust shalt thou eat" (3:14): utter defeat and humiliation (Psalm 72:9; Micah 7:17; Isaiah 65:25).
- **Metaphor** — speaking of one thing as another. The bruised heel and the crushed head (3:15): the Deliverer wounded, the adversary destroyed.
- **Metonymy** — naming one thing in place of something closely connected. "Sweat" for hard labour, "bread" for all food (3:19).

What the Bible Actually Says

- **It was not an apple.** Genesis 3 says only "the fruit of the tree." The apple came much later, from art and tradition.
- **Adam was not somewhere else.** He was "with her" (3:6).
- **God never said "don't touch it."** That was Eve's addition (3:3; compare 2:17).
- **God did not curse Adam and Eve.** He cursed the serpent (3:14) and the ground (3:17). The man and woman received consequences — and a promise.
- **"In the day that thou eatest" did come true.** Adam's body lived 930 years, but that day he lost the life of fellowship with God. God's word did not fail, even when it seemed to.

God's Will and Intent

- **God wanted fellowship, not robots.** He made man free, gave him every good thing, and asked only for trust on one point. Love that cannot say no is not love.
- **God did not cause the Fall.** The temptation came from the serpent. The choice was the man's and the woman's. God's word to them had been generous and clear.

- **God moved first toward the fallen.** He came walking, He called, He asked, He listened, He promised, He clothed. Every one of those acts is grace.
- **God's promise came before His penalty.** Genesis 3:15 was spoken before 3:16-19. Rescue was never an afterthought.
- **God provided the way back.** Through the coats of skins He introduced sacrifice, covered their sin at the cost of a life, and taught them how sinners return to fellowship with Him — pointing forward to the Lamb of God.