

## **Robert Vannoy, Old Testament History, Lecture 12**

### **Genesis 3 – The Fall – Process of Surrender, Initial Results**

#### c. The Process of Surrender

We were discussing, Genesis 3 “The fall into sin,” and we had gotten into a discussion of 2. “The details of the fall.” And I had discussed a. and b. “The nature of the test” and “The serpent.” So we begin at c. That’s all on your outline sheet. “The details of the fall,” which is c. under number 2. and then c.) is where we pick up, which is: “The process of surrender.” So Genesis 3, “the process of surrender.”

##### 1. Injection of Doubt

I think there are a number of steps involved when you reflect on the narrative there about the temptation of Eve by the serpent. First you read there is injection of doubt in Genesis 3:1: “the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals which God had made. He said to the woman, ‘did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” There’s injection of doubt. Satan raises a question: “Did God really say that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?” The implication of the question is that God is not loving and good. Is God somebody that doesn’t allow you to do a harmless thing like eating from that tree? There’s an insinuation I think implied in the question: “Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?”

##### 2. Sharpening the Prohibition

The woman coming to God’s defense is the second step in the process, but it appears that as she does that she sharpens the prohibition. Now, I don’t know that you can be dogmatic about this, but it appears that that’s what she does in verse 2. “The woman says to the serpent, ‘we may eat from the fruit of the trees in the garden but God did say you must not eat from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it or you will die.’” That last phrase, “you must not touch it,” is not something that is reported to us in Genesis 2:17. Genesis 2:17 says, “you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.” When she

responds, she says, “God said, ‘You must not eat from the tree that’s in the middle of the garden and you must not touch it or you will die.’” In other words, she adds that sharpening of the prohibition. Now, you can perhaps read too much into that, but it seems to me that that betrays an attitude of resentment or irritation on the part of Eve, in the sense that God here is a bit too severe perhaps. Why does he do this? I don’t know how many of you have young children, but you’ll see that kind of reaction often in young children. You’ll tell them they are not to do such and such a thing and they resent it, and then they make it all the more strict or rigid as they express that resentment and distort it in that way. What it’s really expressing though is the resentment or the irritation at being restricted. There may be something of that here, I wouldn’t be dogmatic about it, but certainly in the comparison of the statement in Genesis 3:2 with the prohibition, there is that addition that may then reflect irritation or resentment on her part, that God is being too severe.

### 3. Accusation Accusing God

The third step is Satan, in verse 4, flatly accuses God of being false. He comes out and he says, “‘You will not surely die,’ the serpent said to the woman.” Verse 4 is “you will not surely die.” It’s a direct attack on God’s veracity and integrity. God said, you will die, Satan says, you won’t die.

### 4. Mixing Truth and Falsehood

The fourth step is in verse 5, because in verse 5 Satan goes on to a mixture of truth and falsehood. He says, “for God knows when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” There’s a mixture of truth and falsehood, which is often worse than outright falsehood. It’s hard to sort out. What Satan says in verse 5 is true, but it’s not to man’s advantage as he implies that it would be. “When you eat of it your eyes will be opened, you will be like God.” Now in Genesis 3:22 at the end of the chapter, we looked at that verse earlier in another connection. You can see what Satan said there was true, as after the fall God says, in

verse 22, “the man is now become like one of us knowing good and evil.” But you see that implies that is something that’s desirable and good, when actually what it amounts to is Adam and Eve’s usurping as we discussed earlier the significance of the name of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the place that was rightfully only God’s as the determiner of values and what was right and what was wrong. So Satan implies that it is to their advantage, when actually it isn’t. So there’s a mixture of truth and falsehood.

#### 5. She Becomes Autonomous Violating God’s Command

The fifth step, verse 6, “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.” What you find in verse 6 is that the woman’s human reasoning, based on Satan’s arguments, leads her to sin. I think the process here was one of gradual surrender you might say. But it is only when she tastes the fruit and eats that she oversteps that boundary. She violates the prohibition that God had given to her, and really sets herself up as the norm determining good and evil, right and wrong and claiming that autonomy that properly belongs to God alone.

1 John 2:16 is an interesting verse in connection with Genesis 3. 1 John 2:16 says, “For all that it is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father but it is of the world. The world passes away and the lust of it. But he that does the will of God abides forever.” You have “the lust of the flesh” mentioned in 1 John 2:16, the sensual aspect of man--bodily appetite. If you look back at verse 6, “the woman saw the tree was good for food”--the sensual aspect of man, his bodily appetite. Then, in 1 John 2:16 you have “the lust of the eyes”--the aesthetic aspect. And in Genesis 3:6 you read, “the fruit was pleasing to the eye.” And then the intellectual aspect is “it is desirable for gaining wisdom.” John had “the pride of life” that intellectual aspect--desirable for gaining wisdom. Those three aspects: sensual, aesthetic, and intellectual seem to combine here in this reasoning that led her to take the fruit.

## 6. Eve Gives the Fruit to Adam

The sixth and last step is at the end of verse 6. “She also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate it. So, Adam also took and ate.” John Murray, in his notes on this passage in some lectures, suggests that the easiest way to overcome a man is through the woman he loves and esteems. There may have been something of that at work here. Certainly, Adam was responsible and the rest of Scripture makes that clear. But it’s through Eve that he is led to sin.

So, there’s a gradual process. You can theoretically go back over that process, reflect on it and ask the question, when did sin actually take place? When did Eve sin? I don’t know if you can nail that down. Certainly by the time she took the fruit, in the overt act, she had clearly violated the commandment. But she may have sinned prior to that in her reasoning, in her mind. Murray suggests that sin took place at the point at which there was the sympathetic entertainment of the serpent’s suggestions. Here Eve could have said, “Look the Lord has spoken, I’m going to obey the Lord,” but instead, she says, “Wow, maybe you’re right.” At that point, where she sympathetically entertains the serpent’s suggestions, Murray feels there was sin. He doesn’t think you can specify that. You can’t be absolutely sure as to precisely where that occurred. It may go back as far as her first answer. When she says, “We may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden” or when she says at the end of verse 2, “neither must you touch it.” It may go back that far but it’s hard to say with certainty. In any case, you have a process of surrender.

### d. The Suddenness of the Result

d. is: “The suddenness of the result.” The process was gradual, the result was sudden. You find that immediately, in the seventh verse, because you read as soon as Adam also took of the fruit, the next statement in verse 7 is: “The eyes of them both were opened and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.” So, the first thing with respect to the suddenness of the result, is the shame of nakedness. Verse 7, “their eyes were opened.” Now you remember Satan said in verse 5, “God knows that in the day you eat your eyes will be opened. And you

will be as God knowing good and evil.” You find when they eat, and the first thing the text says is: “the eyes of them both were opened.” However, what you find is an awareness of nakedness that had not been present before.

I don’t think this means, and I think we should be very firm about this, that this was the origin of sexual consciousness. There have been those who have argued that. It isn’t until after the fall that there is an awareness of sexual consciousness. I don’t think that we can say that sexuality and sexual consciousness came into being because of sin. Sexuality and sexual consciousness are not sinful or the result of sin. God had said to Adam before the fall, “Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth.” There’s no reason to think that this is the origin of sexual consciousness. But you do have an awareness of shame and nakedness that arises at the point of sin. I think what that tells us is now there is a marred or distorted relationship between Adam and Eve that wasn’t present before. I think what that reflects is ultimately the distortion of all human relationships because of sin.

If you go back to Genesis 2:25 we read, “they were both naked, the man and his wife were not ashamed.” But now it’s all changed, they know that they’re naked and now they sew together fig leaves and make themselves aprons. I think this reflects the shame that arises as a result of sin which points to the destruction of harmony and purity in the relationship between Adam and Eve. That which initially had been there when in their sinless condition is now gone, and of course, in a wider sense, I think it’s indicative of the alienation between man and his fellow man whether that be male or female because of sin and distorted relationships.

I think maybe what I would say is shame is a reflex. Maybe that’s not a good term to use. Now what is shame if you think about it? It is sort of an emotional kind of feeling that is triggered by something. I think it’s a feeling that arises from a consciousness of guilt. It can have various causes, you can be shamed because of nakedness, you can be shamed for a whole variety of things that may trigger it. It is related to a sense of guilt. Here its associated with the exposure of the body. Animals don’t have it, as far as we know. It’s a very complex thing because it’s also related to culture and upbringing. You

know, in some cultures shame is almost non-existent as far as nakedness is concerned because of the way in which the culture treats that. But it does normally seem that there is a sense of shame for nakedness as well as for other things. It is related to a sense of guilt. So “reflex” I think in that sense.

But let’s get back to this question, what is the significance of the awareness of nakedness immediately after the fall? I would just suggest that after the fall man has a fallen nature. He’s basically oriented towards sin as a result of the fall. That causes him to seek and to exploit his fellow man. That becomes the natural human reaction of the fallen nature, seeking to exploit his fellow man. I don’t think that’s anywhere more readily seen than in the sexual relationship. To exploit another person when you get into a sexual relationship becomes a very real danger. And so what we find is the relationship between Adam and Eve is not pure as it was before and they experience shame as a reflex to their guilt. There is the use of that term again, “reflex.”

But then the reverse side of that is shame is as a blessing. It may come as a result of sin and a sense of guilt, but it’s also a blessing because it protects from moral danger. So it has a positive function, I think we can say that shamelessness encourages sexual exploitation of the other person. There is a lot of that in our society and it encourages sexual exploitation. Shame protects from that. Clothing is given by God as a means for keeping a proper relationship between the sexes in a fallen world. Now, if we reflect on this a bit further, it seems to me that where true love rules, that’s a loaded term today “true love,” true love in the biblical sense where that rules, and where there’s a desire to obey God, on the part of two individuals in a marriage relationship, that shame can fall away to a great extent. And you can approach back to what it was in Genesis 2:25, “they were both naked the man and his wife and were not ashamed.” But only where true love in the biblical sense rules, and where there is a desire to obey God does that function fall away without becoming brazen shamelessness. It seems to me that in the circumstance within the marriage relationship that condition prior to the fall can be approached, but never perfectly realized in the fallen world.

So you have a very significant thing happening here. It’s striking that the first

thing that's said after the fall is, "the eyes of them both were open, they knew that they were naked." Secondly, it seems to me that there's a larger question at first addressed here that is, there's alienation between Adam and Eve. That alienation with the tendency towards exploitation, is seen perhaps as clearly in a sexual relationship as it is anywhere else, and so that becomes a thing that is immediately focused on here. I think the issue is a much broader issue. You know the thing with Noah and his sons even though it's not male and female, it's quite possible that there was some sort of perverted sexual exploitation there as well as in the exposure of Noah's nakedness.

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