

Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament, Lecture 4, Genesis 3-4, Fall and Cain

© 2024 Elaine Phillips and Ted Hildebrandt

Well, good morning. The peace of Christ be with you this morning. Do you know what to say in response to that? And also, with you.

I will greet you in a number of different ways as this semester progresses. That's one of them, so you can be ready for that. Another one is the Hebrew greeting for good morning, which is Boker Tov.

But we'll do that on Monday, okay? We'll do that on Monday. I tried singing in the car on the way in today to see if it would work, and it was pretty funny. So we're not going to sing today.

You can pray for my voice over the weekend that it might be a little bit more nice to listen to by Monday. I apologize because this is not very pleasant to listen to, but Lord willing, we'll get through the hour together. Instead of singing, I'd like to read part of Psalm 90 to you.

We've done Psalm 100. We've looked at Psalm 86 and selections of that. I'd like to read to you part of Psalm 90 this morning as we start because it has some allusions to some things that we're going to be talking about when we talk about the consequences of Adam and Eve's fall into the temptation.

So, Psalm 90, starting with verse 1. Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born, or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God. You turn humans back to dust.

Something we're going to address today. Saying, return to dust, O sons of men, for a thousand days in your sight are like a day that has just gone by or a watch in the night. Skip down to verse 12.

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Let's do that again. Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

And then, finally, the last couple of verses. May your deeds be shown to your servants, and may your splendor be shown to their children. May the favor of the Lord rest upon us.

Establish the work of our hands for us. Yes, please establish the work of our hands. Let's make that our prayer today, that the things that we're doing today would not

just be, you know, stuff that's got to be done, but things that would be worthwhile for the kingdom.

Whether we're learning to increase our fruitfulness in the kingdom or perhaps being involved in some kind of service project, whatever we're doing. Let's pray the Lord will establish the work of our hands.

Let's pray together. Our gracious Heavenly Father, as we begin this hour together, we're mindful of your goodness to us.

We're mindful that you are the creator and sustainer of this universe in which we are privileged to live. Father, we know that it's full of joys and the beauty that you have set in it. It's also full of despair and darkness.

So, we pray that you would help us to be lights in a dark generation. And by your Spirit, enlighten our own hearts for those who are feeling the sorrow and sadness of this day. I pray you'll help me teach today.

May we have clarity as we think and talk. But most of all, Lord, we pray that you would apply your word to our hearts. And we ask this in Christ's name, with thanksgiving. Amen.

Well, you can see before us one artistic depiction of the consequences of the fall, or one of the consequences of the fall, because there, of course, you can see Adam and Eve going out into brambles. We read about the thorns and the thistles that would face Adam as he tended the ground.

I will talk more about that a little bit later on. By this time, we also see they're clothed, which is one of the consequences of the fall as well.

And then we see that cherub figure standing with a sword, guarding the entrance to the Garden of Eden. Each one of the aspects that are in that picture and each one of the things I've just mentioned have all sorts of richness and fullness and import built into them. Hopefully, we can address some of those today.

There are many questions today, and I certainly welcome your questions. Again, I probably can't do justice to many of them.

But at least we can discuss them a little bit. So, if there's some give and take and exchange, that's something I welcome. Let's see what we've got here in terms of the setting for what we know as the fall.

By the way, I know that standard Reformed theology runs along creation, fall, and redemption. You've learned that somewhere, haven't you? Creation, fall, redemption. I'm not entirely persuaded by the term fall.

And do you know why? I mean, I'm not about to change theology. Believe me, I'm not. But fall implies I tripped, and I fell.

A fall is not particularly deliberate. Most of us are embarrassed when we fall, and we jump right back up again. We don't have a clue why it happened until after it's done, and we start analyzing it. When you look at what Eve and Adam do, it's pretty deliberate, isn't it? There's a conversation back and forth.

So, I'm a little bit more inclined to call this creation, corruption, correction. I know. It has some alliteration as well.

But there's a process behind this thing that we so casually refer to as the fall and it's not an accidental slip. So, let's just keep that in mind and then let's look at some of the circumstances that are part and parcel of this picture. And I may ask you a couple of questions just because I'm tired of hearing myself talk.

But just to remind ourselves, we've got a creation that God has pronounced at the close of it, which is very good. Things are perfect at this point. So, the creation is very good and significant.

These next two go together. We learn that the garden is a hospitable place. Notice chapter 2, verse 8. The Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden.

By the way, there are all sorts of ideas in terms of where this garden might be. We don't know. There are all sorts of theological ideas in terms of this garden representing heaven itself, which also has some correspondence with the temple structure.

That's interesting stuff. We'll get to it later, perhaps. But for now, just notice the garden in the east.

And he put the man there, that's Adam. And the Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the garden, trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. And then, of course, in the middle of the garden were the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

And you've got a profusion of water there, as we see in the next couple of verses. And then, finally, notice that Adam and Eve had been given the privilege of eating from any tree in the garden except one. We're coming back to that in a minute.

So, it's a hospitable place, centered the tree of life, which has all sorts of interesting implications as well. The tree of life is going to show up again, for those of you who have New Testament. Where? In the book of Revelation, precisely.

It's also, in the book of Proverbs, paralleled with wisdom from time to time. So kind of keep that in mind as well. This is an important symbolic thing here.

The second thing we want to note is that when Eve is created, she is bone of Adam's bone and flesh of his flesh. They are one in many ways. Let me just read a little bit right at the end of chapter 2. After Adam has waited a while, he's named all the trees, he's experienced loneliness, and that's not good.

It's the first thing that's pronounced not good, that Adam is alone. And so God is going to find someone who is a helper. We talked about that last time in terms of the implications of a helper opposite him, someone who is on the same ground with him, alongside him.

At any rate, some time goes by. He names the creatures, and then God takes this rib out of Adam. Notice the intimacy out of his side, the parallel nature there, and he makes Eve.

He declares that she's one with him, if you will. This is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh—verse 24.

For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Just let me say a couple of things about that. This is the only place in ancient Near East literature where a man leaves in order to join with his wife.

And we usually think of it the other way around, don't we? The woman leaves her parents and marries her husband. She takes his name, etc., etc., etc. Isn't it interesting? In this narrative, we've got the man leaving his parents and coming to his wife, and they become one flesh.

There's a remarkable intimacy here. I want you to keep that in mind. That's important.

Of course, the final verse of Chapter 2 is also significant. The man and his wife were both naked. This is a fascinating word, and I'm going to come back to it.

Again, you're going to think that all I ever do is teach you Hebrew, and that's not the point. But I want you to know the word behind naked here. It's *arum*.

If you want to spell it, it's A-R-U-M. It's an easy way of doing it. When it's plural, it's arumim.

So, the man and his wife are arumim. They're naked, and they're not ashamed. So, there's harmony, there's intimacy, and there's an egalitarian perspective going on here.

That's significant. We're going to come back to arum in a moment in ways that might surprise you unless you've been through all this before. Okay, next things next.

Here comes the red-hot topic, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We've already read that it's there right along with the Tree of Life. But now look at the prohibition.

I'll read you chapter 2, verses 16 and 17. The Lord God... Again, keep in mind something that we mentioned last time. Both those divine names, Elohim, translated God, and Yahweh, translated Lord, uppercase, are used together in this context.

The Lord God commanded Adam, you are free to eat from any tree in the garden, Verse 17, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for literally, not reading your NIV now, but literally, in the yom that you eat of it, you will surely die. Okay? In the day, however, we're going to understand that, in the Yom that you eat of it, you will surely die. All right, just a couple things that we want to pause on here, and again, this may engender some questions, and that's fine, I invite your questions.

The first thing is, what does it mean to know good and evil? That's challenging. Didn't they know it before? If there's a prohibition, don't they know it? Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Let me pose a suggestion to you that I'm probably 85% convinced of, because it has some implications for other things we might want to say about this.

The word know in Hebrew, it's yada, has a wide, wide, wide range of connotations. And by the way, we're going to find out that later on in this text, yada is often used, particularly in Genesis, with the idea of knowing sexually. But hold on that for a moment.

There's also the suggestion, and I kind of like this one, that when yada, know, is used in this context, it doesn't just simply mean got it planted in my head. It means knowing with the intent of defining. In other words, maybe what's being suggested here is that when the serpent picks up the temptation, he's lying in front of Eve and Adam, who happens to be with her; as we'll find out, the temptation of being the defining process for what's good and evil.

Taking it away from God, who is the author of good, and who knows these things, and taking it upon ourselves, sort of arrogating to ourselves the privilege and responsibility of defining for ourselves what's good and evil. That has all sorts of interesting active implications about it. I want you to chew on that for a little bit, ask questions about it if you want to.

Let me say a couple other things first. Again, I've already emphasized this, but I think it's worth noting again. Adam and Eve don't die within 24 hours of their taking the fruit.

In fact, they live centuries after that. And so maybe yom has other implications than just a literal 24-hour day. Now, forgive me; some of you may think I'm hammering that thing to death, but I just want you to notice how it's being used here.

Otherwise, we have to get around that by saying, well, they died spiritually. It's true, but maybe this has some more immediate ways of reading it as well.

The third thing that may raise some challenges for us is when God poses this prohibition for them and says to them, you know, don't eat of this tree. In the day that you eat of it, you will surely die. That presumes, unless we're going to just say it doesn't mean anything, it presumes they know something about death. What do you think about that? How could Adam and Eve know something about death? It is basically what it is: to have any validity as a threat.

Chelsea. I'm sorry, say it again. So, they were observing animal death around them.

Yeah. Do you like that? I mean, from a theological perspective, I like it from a perspective in terms of what we know of fossil records and so forth and so on and death being existent. But how is that going to work with what we read in Romans 8, for example, about the whole creation suffering, presumably as a result of Adam's fall? Does that fit? Go ahead.

I mean, I'm with you, but we've got to figure out how to deal with it. Sure. Okay, that's fair.

Anybody else? Okay, I'm forgetting names. Susanna. Susanna.

Did you tell me that already? Right, okay. Four more times. Go ahead.

Okay, that's fair. Anybody else? Well, let me try this on you. Excuse me.

In response to Susanna's comment, which I accept, I would simply say if your parents threaten you with something that you don't know anything about, if you're disobedient, you know, I can't even think of something that you don't know anything

about. But at any rate, let's just say that they use some word that you've never heard before, an excoriating, I can't even think of a good word that you're not going to know because you're all college students. But at any rate, it is something that you simply can't define.

How is that going to be a punishment? I guess that would be my real problem with that. If it's something they simply don't know, then I think we're faced with the challenge of this being maybe not a threat that carries as much weight. But that's always a possibility.

I tend to think since I've said it up here, that they have indeed observed animal death. Here's the thing, and I'm not original with this. I'm lifting it straight out of one of my favorite seminary professors from 30 years ago, who suggests that we think with an analogy, and it runs something like this.

Just as Christ's death and resurrection, which occurred at a given point in time, and we know about it because we read it in the Gospels, has provided salvation for us who live after that and who affirm the truthfulness of it, so also Christ's death and resurrection provided salvation for those saints who lived before that event actually happened. Right? Old Testament saints are not saved by anything except the death and the resurrection of Christ, which they are looking forward to, and all the sacrifices in the Old Testament pointed to, as we're going to see when we start dealing with sacrifices. If that's true, then perhaps analogously we can think of, and Paul does this in Romans chapter 5; perhaps analogously, we can think of Adam's and Eve's sin at a given point in time, which had implications for the rest of humankind beyond that point.

That's quite true. But maybe in the same way that death, sorry, that sin, and then death being the consequence, also had application before points in time. Again, you may or may not like that analogy.

That's one way to look at it. The suggestion is then that Eden is a remarkable, beautiful, perfect little enclave. It's an oasis in a world that's already dealing with death.

Adam and Eve could have watched that happen as they looked outside their little garden. Notice they are driven—well, yeah, our picture isn't here anymore. They are driven out of what is a little piece of heaven on earth, if you will.

So just a couple of thoughts to chew on, if you like, just the way I'm chewing on this cough drop, you know, and wrestle with it a little bit. You need to think about those things anyway as we consider this. Let's go on, because we have more to deal with, obviously.

Think of this as a drama. Oftentimes, when we read scripture, one of the worst things we can do is give it a stained-glass window between us and it. This is a drama, and it's a tragedy for all the obvious reasons.

It's the greatest tragedy in the world. Fortunately, it's got an ending that's not going to be a tragic ending, but we're still waiting for that to unfold in time and space. At any rate, who are the actors in this drama? You know them, especially if you've downloaded the lecture outline.

Who's the first one? It's the serpent, right? Now, one of the most interesting things here is that let me simply read it for you. Chapter 3, verse 1. The serpent was more of a room. Whoa, have we seen that word before? No, you haven't, but I've talked to you about it.

The serpent was more a room than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. Isn't it interesting that it is naked, and how did your translation read that? Who's got their Bible open in front of them? Tristan. Crafty.

Clever. Does anybody have a different translation? Cunning. Cunning, good.

Yeah, right. Here's what's really interesting about this word. It shows up a lot in the Book of Proverbs, and interestingly enough, in the Book of Proverbs, a majority of the times it shows up, it's a positive thing.

You and I are exhorted to be a room. We're supposed to be wise. In fact, Jesus will say, be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

We're supposed to be a room, at least in the Book of Proverbs. So, this isn't saying here we have this serpent who's insidious, and nasty and sneaky already. Apparently, the serpent is a very, well, cunning, crafty, shrewd, wise thing, creature.

Isn't it interesting that nakedness and this kind of wisdom have the same word that represents them? Now, you could say all sorts of things. I'll simply say this so we keep going. In some ways, well, I don't even have to say in some ways that you know as well as I do, and so does the entirety of the advertising industry in this country, that nakedness is very beguiling.

Otherwise, they wouldn't exploit it all over the place. Nakedness is beguiling. So is craftiness.

It can be used either in a good way or a bad way, and the serpent has chosen. Of course, we're going to look at who the serpent is in a moment, but has chosen to abuse that terribly. In this context, it has all the worst possible results we could ever imagine. I just want you to note the word there and note the relationships.

After the fall, I was trying to think of a different word to use in fall since I had made such comments about it before, after Adam and Eve step into sin deliberately, they're going to perceive that they are naked again, and they've been affected by this clever, crafty serpent. All right, at any rate, how do we know that this is Satan? I'm trying to be careful to say serpent as we're talking about this, but, you know, it's Satan. How do we know that? Does anybody have footnotes in their Bible? They're such helpful things.

Does NIV study Bible tell you anything? How do you know it's Satan? Besides that, maybe somebody preached about it for some time, or was it a Sunday school lesson? No footnotes across references? It's Friday? Okay. Thank you. Go ahead.

Revelation chapter 12, particularly verse 9, and then chapter 20 verse 2 is going to refer to the dragon, that ancient serpent, the devil, Satan. I mean, all those things are drawn together into one. So, we have that identification.

We also have the Apostle Paul, and you can jot this down and look it up later. In Romans chapter 16, verse 20, the Apostle Paul talks about Satan, who is going to be crushed, whose head is going to be crushed. Of course, that's picking up on an illusion that shows up in chapter 3, to which we're going to return in a moment.

So, we're pretty clear that it's not just tradition, right? It's coming through in the words of the scriptures, New Testament, that we have the serpent here being in some way embodying Satan himself. Both Adam and Eve are there. Yes, the conversation unfolds between the serpent and Eve, and there is no question about it.

But verse 6 says, And she gave some of the fruit to the man, Adam, who was with her. So, he's there. And there are some interesting implications of that because he's clearly not doing anything to intervene and stop the process, right? And that's important to keep in mind.

The third one, of course, is the Lord God himself, and then we'll come back to that. So those are the actors in our drama. Let's carry on.

The serpent, and we'll call him Satan for now. It's strategic. Don't think for a moment that there are no things for us to learn from this because as you watch this process unfold and you see how the serpent appeals to particular things, nothing's changed in humankind.

The serpent's strategy involves appealing to pride. The serpent's strategy involves a whole bunch of deceit, a whole web, a whole interweaving of deceit. Those aren't old.

They're also here right now. The serpent's strategy also involves very interesting deceit in that he makes sin look really good. Most of us think of sin, and we kind of put it off in the bowels of some urban context that we'd like to get out of.

The sin he makes look really, really good, and that's something you need to watch out for. It's insidious. At any rate, what does John 8:44 say? Anybody know? It's one of those Bible verses that some of you may have memorized when you were a tiny tyke growing up.

Actually, maybe not. This isn't a positive one. It's kind of a negative one.

Jesus is having some exchange with some of his opponents, and he's saying some rather challenging things to them, and they claim to be children of Abraham, and he says, nah, you're not children of Abraham. You're children of the devil. And then he goes on to call Satan the father of lies.

Okay, the father of lies, that is a strong statement. Well, let's see how this works. Picking up on verse 1, where I kind of cut off halfway through, the serpent said to the woman, and again, with all due respect to the NIV translators whom I respect deeply because they know a lot more Hebrew than I do, but they did something here that doesn't fit the Hebrew.

All right? The serpent doesn't pose this as a question, I don't think, because generally speaking, when the first two words with which the serpent introduces this statement, whenever they're used elsewhere in Scripture, it's a declaration of certainty. It's not a question. So, I don't think, I mean, the question's bad enough.

If we write it as a question, as the NIV does, it says, did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden? I mean, that's already kind of introducing doubt, but I think if we read the Hebrew more accurately, it runs as I've got up here. God said, certainly God said, you shall not eat from any tree of the garden, which is, of course, then setting up what God has said, except that God hasn't said that, because what did God say? Yeah. So, he's taken this wonderful gift that God has given them, any tree except one, and he's taken it and moved it all the way over to their side.

He said you can't eat from any tree. It's an intentional distortion of God's Word. And again, I think he's making that as a declaration, not necessarily as a question.

Well, we also know, as we keep reading, that Eve has not responded accurately in terms of re-presenting the Word of God. In verse 2, she says, we may eat from the trees, but God did say, you must not eat from the fruit of the tree that's in the middle of the garden. You must not touch it, or you will die.

Now, you know, why has she done that? What's this? You must not touch it addition in there. Kaylin? Is your hand not up? Go ahead, go ahead. In this case, no. It's a good attempt to direct it somewhere, but it simply means walking up and touching it.

So why is she doing this? Go ahead, Zach. Yeah, and forgive me if I misrepresented this. I'm not saying she's purposely distorting them.

I would say she's purposely protecting them. Katie? And this is exactly what the Jewish rabbis have done for centuries and centuries. In fact, based on this, there is, excuse me, the whole rabbinic dictum, the whole rabbinic declaration that says you have to put a fence around the Torah.

You've read that expression? Dr. Wilson will refer to it at some point, and you'll certainly hear it. Putting a fence around the Torah means that if the Torah says don't do this, well, you make your fence out here, and therefore, you're not going to even come close to any kind of breaking this law here. We all have a way of doing that, don't we? And the motivation isn't necessarily bad.

In fact, I'm going to go way out on a limb here because it's not in the text, and you can take or leave it. I have a suspicion; after all, it's Adam who got the prohibition, right? Eve had not been created at that point. Adam hears the prohibition.

Once Eve is created, I suspect that, obviously, they talked. At least, I hope they did. They may have fought amongst themselves and actually prepared and said, you know, because we're not supposed to be eating of that tree, let's just have a boundary for ourselves.

Just have a boundary, and let's put that boundary about not touching it, and that'll be our boundary. And so perhaps it becomes part of the tradition as Adam teaches Eve, if you will, and they work together in this garden complex. I don't know that for sure.

I'm just suggesting it. Granted, there is a lot that we could say in terms of how words are reported, et cetera, but I will suggest to you, based on a lot of the studies that have been done of oral tradition, that there is an accuracy that's very intentional sometimes many times. Go ahead, Trevor.

So, basically, what you're saying is she's just emphasizing the command that God gave her? Yeah, she is, and I'm using the term protecting. They have actually, I would suggest together, they've actually determined to protect this situation so they don't even come close to it. The problem is, of course, that she is representing God's words, which are ways that God didn't say them.

For the discussion that we're having, yes, because it's already been, in some ways, she's been tainted by this whole web of deceit that's about to unfold. Right? At least, that's, I think, one way to read it. The serpent goes on.

Excuse me. And in verse 4, here he's going to flatly contradict what God says. You're not going to die.

Flat out. You're not going to die. God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes are going to be opened and you're going to be like God or gods.

The word is *elohim*, and it can mean God. The *im* ending, I am ending, also has a plural sense about it, and there are places in Scripture where this very same word means multiple gods. For example, when it says, don't worship other gods, it's *elohim ahirim*.

So, you've got to watch your context there. At any rate, knowing, or perhaps knowing, to define good and evil, that's his contradiction. He also, as I would suggest to you, in that statement, you're going to be like God or gods, is appealing to pride.

It's really appealing to pride. Now, what's really interesting here is that human beings living in the context of the Garden of Eden, and I'm being hypothetical because we don't know how this would have unfolded, but in the opportunity to continue to interact with God apart from the fall, they would have eventually come to know these things, but they would have come the right way, not the shortcut way, which is disobeying the word of God, and that's the clue. At any rate, I said this earlier, but I'm just throwing it in at this point as well.

The serpent's very clever, very clever, and I don't think he doesn't use the same thing on us repeatedly, making that particular thing look so attractive and so right and something I'm actually going to pray for because I want it so badly. You know, that's how things work. Notice what Eve says.

She sees the fruit of the tree was good for food, pleasing to the eye, desirable for gaining wisdom or enlightenment. This is a different word for wisdom than the garden variety word for wisdom that's used in the Hebrew Bible. It's a different word.

Enlightenment might be a better way to translate it. So, she sees this chance to, well, you know, get ahead and get ahead in ways that look like they might be morally right. Good.

So, she grabs the fruit and eats it. And, of course, we have to deal with what happens. The reason we need to read this as a tragedy is because everything, every aspect of who they were and how they lived gets completely torn apart.

Every aspect. All the pains and the tragedies with which you and I wrestle on a daily basis come right back here.

First of all, they perceive they're naked. It hadn't bothered them before, but now it does. Again, this is a nitpicking point, and you don't have to write it down. I'm just kind of throwing it out there for you.

Kind of like, you know, the Jewish rabbis read Hebrew Bible texts very carefully. Much more carefully than we ever do. And one of the things they notice here is that the spelling of arumim in Hebrew is slightly different than it was at the end of Chapter 2. And so they're naked, but it's a different kind of nakedness.

It's a nakedness now that's full of insecurity, that feels the need to cover up, not only physically, but other ways as well. And so, all sorts of personal insecurities get built into this. Of course, as we know from reading this text, they start trying to use very ineffective coverings.

Fig leaves. How many of you have seen fig leaves lately? They don't grow up here, but some of you in California, anybody from Southern California? How big is a fig leaf? And how effective is it going to be to sow a fig leaf together with another fig leaf together with another fig leaf? It's not really a very good covering, isn't it? Even when they try and cover themselves, it's pretty ineffective. Garden-variety fig leaves, at least in Israel, got to set my Bible down yet again, are about like so.

It doesn't cover a whole lot, and it's got, you know, loops in it, too, holes. It creates a problem if you're trying to cover up. All right, perception of nakedness.

No, let's skip that. This is the first indication of fear. Chapter 3, verse 8. The man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

Again, they had an intimate relationship with God. This is clearly an anthropomorphism in some way, or God is choosing to manifest himself in their sphere. That's another way of looking at it.

But they hid from the Lord God. And then, of course, the Lord calls to man, where are you? And Adam answers, I heard you. I was afraid.

I was naked. I hid. So fear enters into this, and then clearly, that vast chasm is going to come between the Lord God and humankind, that vast chasm created by fear.

Now, fear will become a motivator. Tragically, fear will become a motivator for humankind ever since. And it even is a motivator that's built into the covenant

because fallen humankind is motivated not only by love, that's, of course, the best one, but also by fear.

And the scriptures acknowledge that. Well, we have some pronouncements made. The first one is clearly a curse.

Verses 14 and following. You know, whatever this serpent had been before, it seems to have been upright on legs, et cetera. But now we have it crawling on its belly, eating dust.

That's a literal, physical thing. But even within that literality with the serpent, it's kind of got an interesting quality built into it. Because what do serpents do? They twist.

I mean, they don't go in a straight line. They eventually get in a straight line, but their bodies are always twisting. It becomes a fascinating metaphor for deceit and for that kind of evil.

So, even in what literally happens to the serpent, we see some interesting metaphorical nature. Carrying on, verse 15 is where we're hopeful. I'll put enmity between you and the woman, between her seed.

I'm sorry, your seed and hers. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel. It is the same Hebrew word there.

NIV has again done us a little bit of a disservice. The seed of the woman, obviously it's looking forward, way forward to Christ. And this is the thought that Paul quotes, or alludes to, sorry, in Romans 16, 20, where he says, crushing, Jesus has crushed the head of the serpent.

That's what's going on here. He will strike your head, God, to the serpent, but you'll strike his heel. And that, of course, is indicative of all the things, the persecutions, the attacks, the torments that the serpent brings into human life.

It's all there. However, the thing to keep in mind in terms of our element of hope, this is, according to theologians, and probably most of you have heard this already. In fact, I suspect in New Testament you heard it.

This is the first articulation of the Gospel, often called the Protoevangelion, the first articulation of the Gospel. This next is often called the curse on the woman. That's really not appropriate.

It's not a curse. It is a pronouncement, however. And we need to look at it a little bit.

So, let me read it first. To the woman, the Lord God said, I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing. With pain you will give birth to children.

Your desire will be for your husband, but, I know your text says and. That little letter can easily be translated, but he will rule over you. All right.

What are we going to do with this? Let me salivate over my cough drop for a while I solicit some answers. What are we going to do with this? Trevor. Please.

Okay, the question is, what does the verse mean when it says enmity between the man and the woman? Are you talking in the literal sphere, or are you talking about the forces of Satan on the one hand and humans on the other? Oh, so I skipped over that, right? Forgive me, I guess I just made a presumption that's not a very good one. I think it's fairly clear that from this point on, in the spiritual realm, everything that's an offshoot of pride and deception and so forth and so on, that is represented and embodied in the serpent, is going to be in warfare with who God wants those children of his to be, who are his image bearers. So, enmity in that sense, very clearly.

You know, from a more literal perspective, most of us don't like snakes. I'm not sure that's where this verse really means to go, but it's kind of interesting. I remember being terrified of them as a child until my mother taught me how to play with them.

Carter snakes, not rattlesnakes. You know, so she helped me get over that fear that I think is intrinsically built into lots of people, not everybody, but lots of people. I have no problems with garter snakes.

I kind of enjoy them now, but I'm still a little bit... I'll take the back when I hear something rustling behind me if I'm hiking. Yes, Sarah? Adam and Eve have this knowledge... Yeah, question: what might Satan's motivation be for messing with God's creation, i.e., Adam and Eve? There are a lot of things I could say in response to that. Let me just try this, and then you can pick up with it.

When we read Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, which we'll be doing later on, even though those two passages are talking about human rulers, Nebuchadnezzar, Prince Attire, there are powerful allusions there to the malevolent force behind those and that malevolent force is someone who wants to be having the upper hand, even with God. And so I don't think this is just, you know, Satan sort of toying with God's creation to mess it up just for the sake of doing that. It's his thrust to be better than God, more powerful than God, and do a one-upman on God, basically.

I think that's part of what's going on here, Chelsea. So, what's this about animals talking? Yeah, good question. This isn't going to be the only time we have instances of animals talking.

What's the other classic one in the First Testament? Tim? Yeah, Balaam's talking donkey. And notice that Balaam is a prophet of some sort. We'll deal with what sort that is later on.

And he doesn't seem to have a nervous breakdown over the fact that his donkey starts talking. It's not just, I mean, maybe something's going on here that wasn't as odd as we might think it is from our Western perspective. I'm not saying that you'd go somewhere in the world today and you'd find talking animals, but pre-fall, this may not have been all that unusual.

And C.S. Lewis does it all the time, doesn't he? Not that I'm saying C.S. Lewis is inspired, but in some ways, C.S. Lewis has an excellent imagination. And I suspect that all the creatures in Narnia that can talk are coming out of his careful reading of what's going on here. Is it Matt? No.

Andrew, thanks. Did Eve have children in the Garden of Eden? Apparently not, although we just don't know. So that's why I say apparently.

Yeah, except, you're right, you're right, except that I would suggest that she's at least seen that birth process in the world around her, in the animal world around her. If she's seen death, she's certainly seen birth. And she's seen that it has some rigor accompanying it.

That's the guess. Yeah, it's the best I can do for you. If she had had children in the Garden of Eden, I think we might know about it.

We don't know that for sure, but I think we might know about it. Kristen. If the serpent figure, like someone who's maybe walking around, maybe he's more like, maybe he could have been more attractive and more easily able to talk to without it being weird.

Yeah, question: if you couldn't hear in the back, could the serpent actually have had prior to this curse a much more appealing figure? I think possibly so. I think possibly so. By the way, you know, we're going to do a whole lot more with this serpent idea when we encounter our little figure of Leviathan when we read Job.

That's going to add some other stuff into this, maybe. Anything about this pronouncement to the woman? Picking up on what Andrew said, perhaps? Clearly, the first pronouncement, which is a punishment, is that she's going to endure a great deal of pain in childbirth. Now, there's a lot we could say about that, but it's pretty clear that the medical realm for centuries, not just in the last hundred years in our country, has worked very hard to reduce the pain of childbirth because it's pretty grim, right? And by the way, infant mortality is a big part of that picture, too.

So isn't it interesting that we very carefully do that? Yet, the second part of this, at least some parts of us as God's people, aren't too keen on reducing it. Let me do what I... Boy, here we go again. Let me do what I think is a better translation of the second half of verse 16.

It says your desire will be for your husband. The word desire is only used three times in the Hebrew Bible, and it's not, oh, I love you, you know, I just can't wait to embrace you. It's not that kind of desire.

In fact, the very same word is used in the next chapter, where when God is rebuking Cain, he says, in the middle of verse 7, sin is crouching at your door. It desires to have you. You must master it.

Do you see that? In fact, the same structure is there. Sin is crouching at your door. It desires to have you, but you must master it.

Eve, go back to chapter 3. Your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you. I'd suggest to you that what is being said here to Eve is that the place where they had had harmony, the most intimate harmony amongst themselves, between themselves, Adam and Eve, is now going to experience horrible, terrible friction. The desire is a clutching desire.

Sin doesn't just desire to have us. Sin grasps at us. If you haven't figured that out yet, you probably will.

Sin grasps at us. Cain is told you must master it. And so, I would suggest that what's being said to Eve is, you know, there's going to be a one-upmanship in your relationship.

You're going to want this. It's going to be a powerful, strong desire, whatever this happens to be. Your husband's going to be mastering you, and it's always going to be that kind of thing.

Possibly, the Apostle Paul had this very passage in mind. Keep in mind that he's a rabbi. He's a trained rabbi, which means he knows his First Testament exceedingly well and is always alluding to it.

Possibly he has this in mind when, in Ephesians 5, he tells his audiences, Submit to one another. Submit to one another. And then talks about husbands loving the wives, as Christ loved the church, and wives putting yourselves under your husband.

Both of those go directly contrary to what fallen human nature is inclined to do. And we see fallen human nature kind of put into a pithy little statement right here in

Genesis 3:16. Of all people, we in the church ought to be working against that so that there's going to be harmony again, a re-established harmony in Christ. There's a lot more to say about that.

That's the pronouncement to the woman. Let's go on to a curse pronounced not on Adam, but on the ground. Pain and toil.

It's going to produce thorns and thistles. Verse 18, by the sweat of your brow, you're going to eat your food until you return to the ground. Remember the psalm that we read this morning.

Psalms 90. Returning to dust. Well, here it says, For dust you are, and to dust you will return.

And so, the curse pronounced on the ground is actually going to be the ground that will not only make work hard for Adam, shortening his life perhaps, but also be the ground that will embrace him when he returns to dust again. So, some sobering things are taking place in this context. Sobering, to say the least.

But let's go on and look at some indications of God. Any further questions you want to ask by that? I know I've gone over it probably faster than I should have. Susanna, right? Yeah, good question or good statement, to which I'm going to respond anyway.

It is that in the second half of the verse, your desire shall be for your husband, and he's going to rule over you, which is actually a model. I'll respond to that in two ways. I recognize that that's often said.

But two things are going on. First of all, the first half of the verse presents something that is really, as I said earlier, something we need to be working against. In that context, I'm having trouble seeing the second half of the verse being a positive statement of how things should be.

So, I would simply say this whole thing is descriptive of what happens as a result of the fall, not prescriptive. And I think that then allows us to read it in context a little bit better, not only the context of that one verse, but also reading that second half in conjunction with chapter four, which has some of the same parallel kinds of statements, and they aren't nice. But thank you.

I meant to say that there are a lot of people who read it as a prescription for how we need to be. I'm not real convinced, actually. Becca.

Yeah, good question. Since Adam was given the mandate to tend the garden and care for it, how does the nature of work change here? Let me answer that in just a

couple of ways. Maybe this won't be complete, but we can try. Yes, the tending and caring job that Adam has in chapters one and two, because chapter one talks about ruling over the creation, presumes a creation that is going to, if I may say it this way, be working with him.

And it's not going to be something that seems always to be contrary. How many of you plant gardens? Does anybody plant gardens anymore? You know, the weeds always grow faster than anything else. Not sure why that is.

They always do. So, you know, just the very fact that we now have a fallen universe means that those things that are deleterious to the good are going to be there in profusion. And so, it's going to become harder work.

What's interesting is that the terms that are used here in this pronouncement are toil, agony, and anguish. Those very terms show up again in Ecclesiastes chapter one when the author of Ecclesiastes is talking about some of the frustration of living in a fallen world. We'll come back to that.

But yeah, it's a good question. Well, how about thinking just a little bit about the mercy of God in this whole context? We've already talked about the fact that God does promise redemption, the Proto-Evangelion again, in this promise that the seed of Eve will crush or strike the serpent's head. He also provides coverings.

The fig leaves, as I said, are not that useful and they certainly don't last. And so, he provides coverings of animal skins. And there's just a couple things, and I note them here for you, that are important to think of.

In the ancient Near East, clothing wasn't just clothing. It symbolized inheritance. We're going to see that again, by the way.

That's a theme that's going to come back to us again, so don't forget it after this. It symbolizes something important about this is my inheritor. That's exceedingly important.

Adam and Eve have just disobeyed God. He could have ditched them. The very fact that he provided coverings for them says they're continuing to be my children.

Fallen, yes, but they're continuing to be my children. That's an extremely important and encouraging statement. Covering them means we are still his children.

We as descendants of Adam. In addition to that, there's the possibility that this is the institution of animal sacrifices. Don't know it for sure.

Reading between the lines. But by the time we get to Chapter 4, we have the sacrificial system operating because Abel and Cain are bringing two different types of sacrifices. Physical death, also indication of the mercy of God.

We may not think so because death is sad, but eternal life as fallen, odiously evil creatures is even more horrifying. Physical death is a mercy. Well, we've got time to at least look quickly through Cain and Abel because I'm assuming you know this narrative fairly well.

As you know, from reading Chapter 4, Cain brings some of the fruits of the ground and Abel brings something better. Abel kept the flocks. Cain worked the soil.

In the course of time, Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil. Abel brought the fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. I hope you're seeing a difference in the quality of the offering that they bring.

And again, it's presumed they knew. Cain's bringing some of. He's not even bringing the first fruits of.

This is a distinction between blood sacrifice and grain sacrifice because grain sacrifices later on are going to be shown to be acceptable. He's just bringing some of. Cain knows to bring the fat.

In our culture where cholesterol is a big deal, and your doctor keeps telling you don't eat the fat, etc. We're not too keen on this. It's the fat that's part of the meat that really gives it that wonderful aroma, gives it the taste, gives it the tenderness.

You can afford those things and your level of cholesterol doesn't go way up. God, in requiring the fat portions, is really requiring the best. And so, when Cain brings the fat portions, sorry, Abel brings the fat portions, he's bringing the best.

Now that, as we know, means that the Lord will look with favor on Abel. Cain doesn't look with favor. Cain gets angry and as a result of his anger, he commits the first murder.

When God confronts him, we see again God's mercy. Cain's sent to wander. A measure-for-measure punishment, if we wanted to talk about that kind of justice, would have been the death of Cain.

It's not, as we can see. Just a couple more things I'll say here, and then we'll stop. The New Testament has some things to say about this.

Not only in 1 John 3:12, but in other places as well. For example, Hebrews 11 talks about the faith of Abel. But the New Testament comment in 1 John is particularly striking.

Don't be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one. Remember? Sin desires to have you, clutch at you. So, he murders his brother.

Why did he murder him? 1 John says that his own actions were evil and his brothers were righteous. Do you know how that works? Sometimes, when we're doing things wrong, the people who are doing what's right really make us mad. I mean, they're probably not out to murder them, but perhaps we make disparaging comments about the God squad on campus or something like that.

I don't know what they're called now, but that used to be the disparaging term about five years ago. Those kinds of words are inappropriate for people who are trying their hardest to do what's right and live for God. At any rate, as you look at the genealogy at the end of chapter 4, you see some fascinating parallels with the line of Seth in terms of names.

I don't have time to go into that. Not yet. We may do it on Monday.

What I want you to notice are two things in terms of the development of culture. We've got some fairly significant things going on here. Father of all who play the harp and the lyre.

Musical stuff. Forging all kinds of tools out of iron and bronze. This is talking about some kind of level of civilization at some point back there.

I don't know when this was, but it's interesting. Now, maybe it's a later author just reading into it, but it's interesting nonetheless. There are also some other aspects of culture that are pretty ugly, and that's Lamech, who says, I've killed a man for wounding me.

If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times. We're going to close, not with that ugly thing, but the fact that I think possibly Jesus, when he tells Peter, you've got to forgive seventy times seven when Peter says, how many times do I have to forgive somebody? Jesus is referring right back to this illusion when he says, not seven times. That's minimal.

Seventy times seven. That's the forgiveness we need to offer as opposed to Lamech who's taking vengeance on the spot.

On that happy note, Shabbat Shalom.