

Dr. Kenneth Mathews, Genesis, Session 3B, The Garden Story, Part 1 (Gen 2:4-3:24) Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Mathews, Genesis, Session 3B, The Garden Story, Part 1, (Gen 2:4-3:24), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Kenneth Mathews' lecture analyzes Genesis 2:4-3:24, exploring the creation narrative's portrayal of Adam and Eve's relationship, their fall from grace, and the introduction of evil via the serpent. He **examines the covenant relationship** between Adam and Eve, contrasting their initial state of innocence with the shame and consequences of their disobedience. Mathews **interprets the serpent** as representative of Satan, discussing various theological perspectives on its nature and the origin of evil. Finally, he **connects the Genesis account to the concept of original sin**, using Romans 5 to explain how Adam's transgression impacted all humanity and how Christ's sacrifice offers redemption.

2. 19 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mathews, Genesis, Session 3B – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Pentateuch → Genesis).



**Mathews_Genesis_
Session03B.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Mathews, Genesis, Session 3B, The Garden Story, Part 1 (Gen 2:4-3:24)

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Kenneth Mathews' lecture on Genesis 2:4-3:24 (Session 3B):

Briefing Document: Dr. Kenneth Mathews on Genesis 2:4-3:24

Overview: This lecture segment focuses on a detailed analysis of the Garden of Eden narrative, exploring the creation of humanity, the establishment of marriage, the entrance of the serpent, the temptation and fall, and the immediate consequences of the disobedience. Dr. Mathews emphasizes the cosmic significance of this event, the nature of the serpent, and the concept of original sin.

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Marriage as Covenant:

- Genesis 2:24 depicts the union of man and woman as a "leaving and cleaving," signifying a covenant relationship.
- "They form a unique covenant relationship of commitment, mutual surrender, and mutual love in order to achieve God's blessing for that union by becoming one flesh."
- This union is not about losing individual identity but about coming together for a greater purpose, particularly procreation and exercising dominion over the earth as blessed by God in Genesis 1:28.
- The loyalty to one's spouse supersedes loyalty to parents, establishing a new family unit. "The spouse comes first in loyalty, and then the kinsmen of family and clan and tribe loyalty to each of those spheres grows out of the commitment to the spouse."

1. Innocence and Nakedness:

- Before the fall, Adam and Eve were naked without shame. "The man and his wife, the man and his woman in the Hebrew text, were both naked. And yet, there was no shame."
- Nakedness is not inherently sinful, but rather becomes associated with shame after the fall. "Nakedness in and of itself is not sinful. It's when nakedness is out of bounds."

- The awareness of nakedness after sin indicates a loss of innocence and a disruption in their relationship with God and each other. "They realized they were naked...they were ashamed of their nakedness with their spouse and also certainly ashamed in the presence of God."

1. **The Serpent and the Introduction of Evil:**

- The serpent's appearance introduces a new and disruptive element into the established order. "Now the Serpent...this is introducing a new episode...this verse in chapter 3 introduces us to a change in the created order that is cosmic in its catastrophe."
- The serpent is described as "crafty" or "shrewd," suggesting a calculated intent to deceive.
- Dr. Mathews argues that the serpent is more than just a literal animal: "when you take the behavior and character of the serpent and compare that to the evil being Satan, then you see enough correspondence that will suggest that the serpent is representative of Satan."
- He cites the Apostle Paul's interpretation in Romans 16:20, and Genesis 3:15 regarding the battle between the serpent's offspring and the woman's offspring as further evidence for the serpent representing Satan.
- The serpent is ultimately a creature of God, not an equal power, subject to God's sovereignty. "The serpent then is not an independent, equal rival to God, but rather is subject ultimately to the sovereignty of God."
- Dr. Mathews notes the mystery of evil's origin, stating that the Bible does not provide specific details but does emphasize God's sovereignty over it. "The Bible does not specifically say the origin of evil...He never takes on the responsibility of evil...the Bible is silent."
- The serpent is both a symbol *and* a representative of a real evil being (Satan), as it has a lifespan, just as man does. "And I think the resolution to this is what we find in chapter 3, verse 14, where it uses the language of a being's lifespan...That's what we have with the serpent, who is representative of an actual evil being."

1. **The Temptation and the Fall:**

- The serpent uses trickery to tempt the woman, distorting God's command. "Did God really say that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?"

- The serpent subtly shifts the emphasis from God's generosity ("you may surely eat from any, any tree in the garden") to a perceived restriction ("you must not eat from the tree").
- The woman adds to the command ("you must not touch it"), which Mathews suggests may have been a positive application of the knowledge of "clean" and "unclean", and not necessarily a negative reflection on her.
- The serpent contradicts God, stating "You will surely not die," and promises wisdom and godlike status.
- While the serpent was partly correct in that they did gain knowledge of good and evil, he did not mention the consequence of their actions: death. "He only tells the positive side of the story...But also, importantly, they will die."
- The woman was deceived, but the man ate without reservation out of willful rebellion, according to Dr. Mathews.

1. **Consequences of Sin and Original Sin:**

- The fall is a "cosmic trauma" that dramatically changed humanity's relationship with God and with nature. "When it comes to Chapter 3 of Genesis, this is the most momentous marking of human life in human history."
- The judgment oracles in verses 14-19 show how the natural order is disrupted: the serpent is cursed, the woman experiences pain in childbirth and subordination to her husband, and the man labors through toil.
- "The cosmic disruption, the trauma, so much so that God would not have men and women live forever in this broken relationship."
- The expulsion from the Garden of Eden removes humanity from access to the Tree of Life and initiates the experience of death and labor. "You were born outside the garden. I was born outside the garden. Something dramatically has changed."
- Original sin, according to Dr. Mathews, is not merely the first sin, but a fundamental change in human nature that makes all people sinners. "men and women became sinners, and as sinners they produce sins."
- He highlights the cause and effect shown in Genesis, where the sin of the first couple leads to further sin, like the fratricide of Cain and Abel, and further down into the flood.

- He explains that "the character and nature of all men and women who have been born outside the garden have taken on the nature of the sin of their parents."

1. **Reversal of Order:**

- The created order of God, man, woman, and serpent in chapter 2 is reversed in chapter 3 to the order of serpent, woman, man, and God.
- In the judgment oracles, God re-orders this reversal of power, placing the serpent subject to the woman's offspring, the woman subject to the man, and the man subject to God through labor and death.

1. **Pauline Theology and Original Sin:**

- Dr. Mathews uses Romans 5:12-21 to explain how Paul understands original sin.
- Sin entered the world through Adam's disobedience, bringing death to all humanity. "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all people because all sinned."
- The concept of "corporate solidarity" is important: Adam's actions represent all humanity, while Jesus Christ's act of obedience offers salvation to all those who believe. "Adam represents the whole human family, for from him will come all of the human family. And Jesus Christ is the one who represents all of the human family who receive the grace of God because of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."
- Those who are "in Adam" are born sinners, while those who are "in Christ" are declared righteous. "Those all in Adam, including every one of us, would be born sinners...And then in Christ Jesus, we are born anew...those who are in Christ will be made or declared righteous."
- The law was introduced to increase the awareness of human sinfulness, but God's grace is greater and provides eternal life through Jesus. "But where sin increased, grace increased all the more."

Significance/Concluding Thoughts:

Dr. Mathews argues that the Genesis account is not just an ancient story but a foundational narrative that explains the human condition, the nature of evil, and the need for redemption. He emphasizes that the events in the Garden of Eden have a lasting and cosmic impact on humanity, influencing relationships, sinfulness, and the need for salvation. The lecture stresses the theological implications of the events of the garden and how they tie into the teachings of the New Testament.

This briefing document should provide a comprehensive overview of the key ideas and themes explored in Dr. Mathews' lecture on Genesis 2:4-3:24.

4. Study Guide: Mathews, Genesis, Session 3B, The Garden Story, Part 1 (Gen 2:4-3:24)

Genesis Study Guide: The Garden Story (Genesis 2:4-3:24)

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What does the phrase "one flesh" signify in the context of the marriage relationship, according to the text?
2. How does the narrative contrast the pre-fall and post-fall states concerning nakedness and shame?
3. What does the serpent's question in Genesis 3:1 reveal about his strategy in tempting the woman?
4. According to the text, how is the serpent, a created being, related to God's sovereignty?
5. How do the interpretations of the serpent vary, and what conclusion does the speaker make about the serpent's representation?
6. What is the speaker's main point about the mystery of the origin of evil, as discussed in the lecture?
7. How does the serpent distort God's command in Genesis 3:1 and what does it suggest about his nature?
8. What are the two major consequences for humanity of eating the forbidden fruit, as detailed by the speaker?
9. What narrative reversal is described when comparing the order in chapter 2 to that in chapter 3?
10. How does the Apostle Paul, in Romans 5, use Adam and Jesus Christ to describe the nature of sin and grace?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The phrase "one flesh" represents the union of a man and woman in a covenant relationship where they become a single entity, without losing their unique identities, in order to receive God's blessing. It signifies a deep commitment and mutual surrender, but not a loss of individual personhood.

2. Before the fall, the man and woman were naked and felt no shame, indicating a state of innocence. After the fall, they recognized their nakedness and felt shame, prompting them to cover themselves, signaling the loss of innocence and the introduction of sin.
3. The serpent's question challenges the generosity of God by misrepresenting His command, framing God as stingy, and casting doubt on the legitimacy of His rules. This implies that the serpent's strategy is to subtly undermine faith and trust in God.
4. Though the serpent is crafty and shrewd, he is ultimately a created being subject to God's sovereign will. This means that the serpent is not an equal power to God, and his actions occur within God's ultimate control.
5. Interpretations vary, with some viewing the serpent as a demon-possessed animal, while others see him as symbolic. The speaker concludes the serpent is a representation of an actual, evil being - Satan - who is an enemy of God and humanity.
6. The origin of evil is a mystery because the Bible does not provide a specific account of where it came from, despite discussing its presence. The Bible does indicate, however, that evil is subject to God's control, without God being responsible for its creation.
7. The serpent frames God as overly restrictive by asking if they can't eat from *any* tree in the garden, implying God is withholding goodness. This is a distortion of the actual command and demonstrates his deceitful nature.
8. The primary consequences are the loss of innocence and the gaining of the knowledge of good and evil, resulting in the recognition of their nakedness and, ultimately, physical death, an outcome they did not intend.
9. The initial order in chapter 2 is God, man, woman, and then the animal world, including the serpent. In chapter 3, this order is reversed to serpent, woman, man, and finally, a broken relationship with God, reflecting the impact of sin.
10. Paul uses Adam as a representation of how sin and death entered humanity and how all became sinners, while Jesus is the new Adam, whose obedience provides grace, righteousness, and life to all who believe in Him.

Essay Questions

Instructions: Choose one question and compose a well-structured essay, using examples from the text.

1. Analyze the significance of the "leaving and cleaving" described in Genesis 2:24, and discuss how it establishes the basis for covenant relationships, family structures, and loyalties within the text.
2. Explore the ways in which the narrative describes the serpent, considering how he is presented as both a literal figure and a representative of evil. What are the implications of interpreting the serpent in these dual ways?
3. How does the text portray the consequences of the fall in terms of both the immediate changes experienced by Adam and Eve, and the long-term impact on humanity, including the discussion of original sin in the lecture?
4. Compare and contrast God's actions in Genesis 2 and 3, focusing on both the provision of blessing and the imposition of judgment, and how these actions reveal His character.
5. Discuss the literary structure of Genesis 2 and 3, and explain how the reversal of the initial order in Chapter 2 to the reordering in the judgment articles of Chapter 3 is essential for understanding the theology of the text.

Glossary of Key Terms

Covenant: A relational agreement, not merely a transaction, characterized by mutual commitment, surrender, and love. In the context of Genesis, this is used to describe the relationship between man and woman.

One Flesh: A metaphor for the deep union of husband and wife, signifying their unified identity and purpose in marriage. It does not imply loss of personhood, but rather signifies a deep relational commitment.

Shame: The feeling of exposure, guilt, or embarrassment. In Genesis, it is associated with the knowledge of nakedness after the fall, indicating a loss of innocence and broken relationship with God.

Serpent: A character in the Genesis account who is depicted as both a literal animal and a representative of evil, often identified with Satan.

Sovereignty of God: The belief that God has ultimate authority and control over all creation. This is used to explain how the serpent, while powerful, remains under God's control.

Crafty/Shrewd: Terms used to describe the serpent, indicating his cunning and deceptive nature.

Original Sin: The concept that humanity is born into a state of sinfulness due to the actions of Adam and Eve, leading to both a personal tendency towards sin and universal guilt inherited from Adam.

Pre-Fall: The state of existence before Adam and Eve disobeyed God, characterized by innocence, harmony, and a direct relationship with God.

Post-Fall: The state of existence after Adam and Eve disobeyed God, characterized by sin, shame, and a broken relationship with God.

Judgment Oracle: A pronouncement of judgment from God after the disobedience of the man and woman, resulting in a reordering of their relationship with each other and with God, as well as the serpent.

5. FAQs on Mathews, Genesis, Session 3B, The Garden Story, Part 1 (Gen 2:4-3:24), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions about the Garden of Eden Narrative

1. **What is the significance of the phrase "one flesh" in Genesis 2:24?** The phrase "one flesh" describes the union of a man and woman in marriage, signifying a deep and intimate covenant relationship. It's not simply a physical joining, but a spiritual and emotional coming together where they are united in a mutual commitment to love and support each other, working together to receive God's blessing in procreation and exercising dominion over the earth. This union is portrayed as a return to the original unity from which they were created, yet they retain their individual personhood.
2. **How does the nakedness of Adam and Eve before and after the fall differ, and what does it symbolize?** Before the fall, Adam and Eve were naked and unashamed, which indicates their state of innocence and harmony with each other and God. After the fall, their eyes were opened to their nakedness, and they experienced shame. This shame is linked to their sin and broken relationship with God, and their attempt to cover themselves with fig leaves represents their effort to hide from God and the loss of their original innocence and unity.
3. **Who or what does the serpent represent, and what is the significance of its craftiness?** The serpent is presented in the narrative as a creature created by God, not as an equal rival, and is ultimately subject to God's sovereignty. While the serpent is an animal, it is seen by Jewish and Christian interpreters as representative of Satan, the adversary of God and humanity. Its craftiness signifies its deceptive nature and its ability to twist God's words for its own purposes. The ambiguity of the serpent in ancient cultures being associated with both wisdom and evil adds to its effectiveness as an agent of deception.
4. **What was the true nature of the prohibition against eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and how was it distorted by the serpent?** God's command was both generous and restrictive. He gave permission to freely eat from any tree in the garden, except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The serpent distorted this command by suggesting that God was being stingy or withholding something good, implying that knowing good and evil would be beneficial and that God was selfish in denying it. The serpent also introduced the idea of death as a lie, contradicting God's forewarning.

5. **What consequences did Adam and Eve face after their disobedience, and how do they relate to the reversal of the original order?** After eating the forbidden fruit, the harmonious relationships established by God were disrupted. The serpent was humiliated, the woman's relationship with her husband became one of struggle, and man was alienated from God and subjected to a life of toil and death. These punishments are framed as a re-ordering of the relationships between God, man, woman, and serpent, reflecting the consequences of their choices. Specifically, the man was expelled from the Garden of Eden, losing access to the Tree of Life, and was condemned to work the ground from which he was made, experiencing hardship and eventual death.
6. **How does the concept of "original sin" as described in the source relate to the Fall of Adam and Eve?** The idea of "original sin" refers to the concept that humanity inherited a sinful nature from Adam's transgression. This does not merely denote the first sin, but emphasizes how Adam's rebellion led to a broken nature passed on to all human beings born outside the Garden. This inherited sinfulness, the source of sin, is what causes people to commit individual sins, and not simply an act of one's own choosing.
7. **How does the New Testament, specifically Romans 5, interpret the fall of Adam in relation to the saving work of Christ?** Romans 5 contrasts the consequences of Adam's disobedience with the saving work of Jesus Christ. It explains that through Adam, sin and death entered the world, affecting all humanity. However, through Christ's obedience and sacrifice, grace, righteousness, and eternal life become available for those who believe. Adam represents the origin of sin and the broken nature that results from it, while Christ is presented as the "last Adam" who provides a way out of this inherited condition. This demonstrates the corporate solidarity that connects humanity both in sin and in grace.
8. **What are some key themes in the text beyond the literal interpretation of the story?** Beyond the literal narrative, the story explores themes of relationship, temptation, deception, and the consequences of disobedience. It highlights the contrast between the harmony and beauty of God's original creation and the brokenness introduced by sin. The text also presents the importance of God's sovereignty and the ongoing battle between good and evil. Additionally, the narrative underscores the consequences of poor choices and reveals the character of God, who provides a means of redemption even after humanity's disobedience. Finally, this narrative sets the stage for understanding how broken relationships on earth point to the need for a savior.