

Lesson 3: Genesis 3-11, Fall, Flood, and Nations

Introduction

The Book of Genesis divides into two major parts. Part 1 is chapters 1-11 and it gives us our pre-history. The focus is on all of humanity with four major events: Creation, Fall, Flood and Nations. We took two lessons to cover Creation. In this lesson we are covering the rest, Fall, Flood, and Nations. That's a lot of ground to cover. The Fall sets up the whole narrative. The Flood and Nations describe the consequences of the Fall on all of humanity. So, we will focus in on text of Genesis 3 and then do a quick survey of the rest.

In Genesis 3, we start with the temptation of Adam and Eve and then move to the Judgement of Adam and Eve.

The Fall of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3)

The Temptation (3:1-7)

Let's read the story of the temptation. This is Genesis 3:1-7. **[Read Genesis 3:1-7]**

a. The Serpent speaks, verse 1

The story of Eve's temptation by the serpent is another example of a story where we would love to know more. Good observation of Genesis 3:1-7 raises a hundred questions. And once we have asked all of our questions, and we have done good observation, we then need to consider which of these are answerable in the text. The text has a purpose and a direction. And we are going to have to let go of some of our questions. Maybe they will be answered later by Moses or later in the Bible or maybe never at all. Letting go of some questions allows us to focus in on the questions that are answered by the text. What is Moses teaching us? What do we learn about ourselves, our world, our relationship to God?

We start with the serpent. Why a serpent? A lot of commentaries look for parallels in Babylonian and other ancient Near Eastern myths. And there are some parallels. But we have to ask ourselves how are we treating the story? Is this a new narrative that Moses created, so he was free to draw from pagan myths? Or is this an event that happened at the beginning of Creation? If this is a historical event, then we would be looking at parallels the wrong way around to think Babylonia influenced the choice of the serpent. The temptation of Eve came first. If there is any connection at all, it would go the other direction. Maybe ancient myths developed the serpent motif from the original event.

So, if it is not coming from the culture, why a serpent? I do not think that question is answerable. That would require getting into the mind of Satan. Which tells you what I think about the serpent. This is not explicit from the story. I am deducing this from the story. Serpents do not talk. And this serpent is particularly sinister. Though identified literally as a serpent, more is going on with this snake. I think the Devil's temptation in the wilderness of Jesus, the second Adam, parallels this temptation of the first Adam. Satan tried to ruin Jesus at the start of his ministry, just as he successfully undermined Adam and Eve at the start of theirs. I believe this is Satan somehow possessing the body of a snake.

More importantly for us than identifying the serpent is paying close attention to what the serpent says. Verse 1:

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'"

The serpent intentionally overstates the first question to Eve. Knowing full well that God has only made a limitation on one tree, he asks Eve whether God has forbidden the fruit of all trees. He is drawing Eve in, inviting her to make a response. With the word "indeed" or "really," however your Bible translates it, the serpent inserts an initial tone of doubt regarding the character of God. "Has God *really*," or "Has God *indeed* been so strict or unreasonable as to forbid all fruit?"

b. Eve Responds, verse 2

² The woman said to the serpent, “From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; ³ but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’”

Eve repeats the command of God, which presumably she heard from Adam, with only one change. She adds the phrase, “or touch it.” That seems a harmless embellishment. Maybe that is how the command was communicated to her. We do not know what Adam told Eve. On the other hand, a regular feature of biblical narrative is the repetition of the exact words of a speaker with slight changes. And when that happens, we are supposed to notice it. Since the words of God are given just a few verses above and Eve repeats them almost word for word, I think we are supposed to notice that she adds in a little bit of her own. And what she adds agrees slightly with the tone the serpent. So, on the one hand she is defending God. “Not all trees, only one tree.” On the other hand, she acknowledges that this one command is rather strict, “Not only are we not to eat that fruit, we are not even to touch it.”

c. The serpent speaks again, verses 4-5

⁴ The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Here he right out denies the word of God by casting God’s motives in a negative light. It is a cunning lie. He is painting the fruit as desirable. And makes it even more desirable questioning God’s intent. It is a classic temptation technique. “He just doesn’t want you to have what he has. He is just trying to keep you under control.” And Eve gives in. She believes it. And she acts.

d. Eve acts, verse 6

⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

Eve believed the serpent. She believes she will not die. And she believes that God is keeping something good from her. So, she eats. And she gives some to Adam, and he eats. Which is a surprise because we now realize that Adam is right there with her. It does not say when he shows up. I think we are to assume he was there all along, passively observing. He says nothing. He does nothing. He is just there, and he eats.

And there are immediate consequences.

e. Immediate Consequences, verse 7.

⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

Satan told this one truth. Their eyes would be opened. And their eyes are opened. There is a play on words between Hebrew word *arum* (עָרוֹם) or shrewd in 3:1, and the Hebrew word for *erom* (עֵרֹם) or nude in verse 7. Shrewd and nude, there is a play on the sounds like that in the Hebrew. Adam and Eve were described as nude and unashamed in the last verse of chapter 2. Everything was fine. The serpent is described as shrewd in 3:1. Eve sees that the fruit will make her shrewd or wise in verse 6, but the true result is that she and Adam see themselves as nude in verse 7 (Wenham, WBC: Genesis I, 72). Wanting to see as one who is shrewd, all they see is that they are nude. Something has gone wrong.

We need to unravel for ourselves what has just happened. We cannot trust the words of the serpent at all. So, what is going on here? Here is a helpful question. “What should have Eve done? What was her role? What was expected of her?” I have some sympathy for Eve. She is naïve. No one has ever lied to her before. She has never faced deception. She is able to be completely open, physically and emotionally naked before Adam because she trusts him.

And yet, she is still held accountable for her sin. “So, what should she have done?” Or maybe we should take a step back and ask, “What could she have done? What were her options?” What do you think? What could Eve have done when faced with the questions and accusations, the temptation of the serpent?

Well, she could have asked Adam to repeat to her again what God had said. Or she could have gone to God and asked for clarification. Those are both pretty much the same. Both are going back to the revealed word of God as the source of truth on the matter, to hold the tempter’s claims up to the light of God’s word. It is exactly what Jesus did when faced by Satan in the wilderness. Faced with three different temptations, Jesus responded with three different quotes from the Pentateuch, from Deuteronomy. Three times Jesus answered and said, “It is written...”

This is getting closer, not only to what Eve could have done, but to what Eve should have done. Like Jesus, Eve should have quoted the word of God back to the serpent. She should have said, “Thus says the Lord...This is what God really said.” And she should have condemned him for questioning the truthfulness, the goodness, and the authority of God. She should have judged the serpent. That was her job, her role. Back to Genesis 1:6, God made her and Adam in his image. And he said, “Let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” Eve’s role was to rule, to act as the queen of creation, passing judgment on those who do evil.

Considering Eve’s role makes us start thinking about one of the lies of Satan. And this is a mistake a lot of readers make, not putting this together. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a path to a certain kind of knowledge, but it is not the only path to knowledge about good and evil. We have sympathy for Eve because if she is going to judge evil, she needs a way to gain knowledge about good and evil, so as to be a good judge. We have to be careful ourselves not to believe the lie of Satan communicated here. The tree is not the only source. There is another source here for knowledge of good and evil. It is the revealed word of God.

Where do you get your wisdom from?

This is a major theme of the story. Where do you get your wisdom from? Temptation says that the only way to wisdom is through experience. How do you know if you have not tried it? The naïve person believes the lie, not understanding that trying out evil leaves a mark on you that you cannot erase. We are not left unaffected by sin. Our minds and hearts are darkened and wounded when we sin.

Proverbs chapter 2 describes three kinds of people who reject the revealed wisdom of God. The mocker calls that which is good evil and that which is evil good. He sounds wise to the other two, the naïve person and the fool. The serpent here is the mocker, twisting around good and evil. Eve is the naïve person. The serpent sounds wise to her, and she fails to go back to God. She believes the snake and sins and cannot go back. Her view of herself and of Adam is affected. Now she sees. She sees that she is naked, and she is ashamed. And she wants to hide from Adam, and Adam wants to hide from her. Sin has not clarified their vision. It has distorted it.

Where are you going to get your wisdom? Revealed wisdom takes time, thought, and trust. Will you trust the goodness of God’s authority? Will you take the slow road to true wisdom? Or will you listen to the lie that you can only know wisdom through disobedience?

This story is not about sex, as some traditions have construed it, but we can easily see that sexual temptation works as a pretty good example. The wise person, says, “Do not go there. Wait for marriage. This is the true and good plan of God.” The world speaks for the serpent, “Why not go there? God is too strict. You are crazy to call all sex bad.” But notice we are not calling all sex bad. That’s like saying all the trees are off limits. The Bible is for great sex. It’s hard to multiply and fill the earth without sex. The pleasure of sex was God’s idea. Read the Song of Solomon for the Bible’s endorsement on romantic love. God forbids the fruit that distorts and damages, not the fruit that blesses and provides. God gave sex as a gift to be enjoyed in the context of marriage. We affirm sex in marriage.

The world then responds, “How can you know you will enjoy sex in marriage if you do not try it outside of marriage? There is important knowledge to be had here. And it is good. There are no consequences, nothing to worry about. God is just trying to keep you from the freedom and knowledge and joy that he would reserve for himself.” So, what will we do? Do we believe that there are no lasting consequences to sex outside of marriage? Do we believe God is holding back from us? Do we believe there is no knowledge except through disobedience? Or do we trust that our Creator knows what he is talking about? Do we trust that our Creator has our best interests in mind, to provide for us and to protect us and to lead us into abundant life? Do we go to him and his word to learn about sex and intimacy, relationship and marriage? Or do we reject his wisdom and his morality and do exactly what he told us not to do?

Again, this story is not about sex. But sex provides a solid example. The principle works in every area of life. Where are you going to get your wisdom from? From the Word of God? Or from the experience of sin?

Authority, Leadership, and Responsibility

Along with the theme of wisdom, we have here the theme of authority and leadership. We have to ask, “What in the world was Adam doing?” We can see to some degree what Satan was doing. I still do not know precisely why Satan chose to possess a serpent, but I believe the story suggests why he chose an animal and did not simply appear as an angel. God’s creation has an order. God rules as King of kings. Adam and Eve are his vassals, ruling over the creation, with Adam taking a leadership role in that partnership. The animals are under the authority of Adam and Eve. By possessing an animal of the creation, Satan reverses the order. The animal challenges Eve. Eve gives in to the animal and offers the fruit to Adam. Adam takes the fruit from Eve, disobeying the Word he received from God.

Recognizing this line of authority explains why Adam is the one held responsible for sin and death. Paul writes in Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...” Paul does not let Eve off the hook. She is intelligent, moral, and responsible. She is in the image of God. She is not treated as lower than Adam. She is responsible for her part, as Paul points out in 1 Timothy 2:14, “And *it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.” Eve is responsible for her actions. Even so, Eve is not the one held ultimately responsible for sin and death entering the world. Adam is. And I believe that affirms the interpretation of Adam as having a special leadership role in his partnership with Eve. Because of that leadership role, he is held ultimately responsible.

It will fall on Jesus, the second Adam, to overcome the failure of the first. Whereas Adam stood by in a show of passive leadership and failed to judge the serpent but instead entered into disobedience, Jesus rebuked Satan in the wilderness, lived a life of complete obedience, even offering himself up on the tree of judgment, the cross, to pay for the sin of Adam who failed at the tree of judgment. We get just a hint of what must come in Genesis 3:15, so let’s move on to the judgement. This is the rest of chapter 3, verses 8-24.

The Judgement (3:8-24)

We could ask whether the serpent was right to say, “You shall not die.” It is the type of half truth that accompanies successful temptation. Adam and Eve did not fall down physically dead after eating the poisonous fruit. They did, however, die in every way that matters. Immediately, they died spiritually in their loss of relationship with God. And they entered into a state of death, a lingering corruption that would result in physical death and make their spiritual death eternal. Adam and Eve did die when they ate.

The effects of corruption are seen immediately. They become ashamed of who they are. They lose trust in one another. They want to cover up and hide from each other. Their shame and guilt creates a fear of God. Adam says, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.” Relationship with God is broken.

When God asks, “Who told you that you were naked?”, we should not assume they were unaware of their nakedness previously, like they did not realize they were naked, but rather, before the sin, they were not ashamed of their nakedness. They were whole and vulnerable, open and transparent. There was never a reason for fear or hiding. God’s question highlights a new corruption that has immediately begun to grow in Adam and Eve in how they view themselves, how they view each other, and the effect that has on relationship.

It comes out in Adam’s response to God’s query over whether he had eaten from the tree. Defensively, Adam succeeds in blaming both God and Eve at the same time, “The woman you gave me, she gave it to me.” Eve’s response may also be seen as shifting of guilt, “The serpent deceived me.” In order of authority blame is shifted down from Adam to Eve to the serpent. The judgment appropriate to each will be stated in reverse order from the serpent to Eve to Adam.

Now, the curse on the serpent is delivered as the curse of an animal and can be taken as affecting a whole subclass of reptiles. If so, it makes you wonder whether serpents originally had legs, since the curse now declares that they are going to move on their bellies. And I think that is the wrong way to view the serpent. I think the curse is not on snakes in general. It is on the one who possessed this particular snake. I think snakes had always traveled on their bellies, and I do not think they literally eat dust. I think that is a figurative statement of shame.

I think God is using the snake to say to Satan something like this, “You may think you are wise and crafty. The serpent may appeal to your nature. I say it reveals your nature. Though you were created beautiful and intelligent and powerful. You sought to grasp hold of more and in doing so have become lower than the animals of the earth, even as low as a snake. You think you are so much higher than humanity. I say you are not. You are deceptive. You are a belly crawler. You are shameful.” In this sense, the curse of the serpent is figurative for the true curse which is aimed at Satan.

So then, in verse 15, the enmity between snakes and people is not the focus of the text. It is a good illustration. It is figurative of spiritual reality. People really do seem to be scared of snakes, and snakes don’t seem to mind biting people. But the enmity prophesied here is the spiritual enmity between the line of Eve, those who would follow God, and the line of the serpent, those who would follow Satan. Satan will continue to strike out at God’s people, using people to do so. He will use people against people. Ultimately, this will lead us to Jesus, the true seed of Eve. Satan will strike him, hurt him, convince the masses to chant, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” But in death, Jesus will win, stamping on the head of Satan, saving many out of his grasp, and initiating his final ruin.

That’s the judgment on the serpent. In the judgements on both Adam and Eve, we see that their roles to fill the earth and cultivate the earth do not change. They still have purpose. They still have work to do. But God does allow the physical world to fall into corruption. Eve will bear many, but she will be in pain. And her relationship to her husband will be strained, tense, difficult. Adam’s work of cultivation will become a struggle. He will toil just to grow what is needed to survive. Just for bread.

We can imagine why God does this. When you allow a sinful man to live in a pleasant, soft, easy world, he remains blind to the death inside of him. What good is it to live an easy life, never turn to God, never see any need and so, fade away forever into eternal separation and death. It is better that our outer world reflects our inner reality of corruption so that we might strain and struggle and see our need for God. Paul writes about this in Romans 8:20, “For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of him who subjected it...” God caused the created environment, which he declared good, to be twisted and corrupted along with the fallen King and Queen for whom that environment had originally been designed.

There is hope in Adam’s naming of Eve in verse 20. Though death has entered the world, he calls her Eve, which means life. And then in verse 21, God clothes Adam and Eve. I have heard that the point here is one of sacrifice. God clothed them with animal garments, taking away their shame of their nakedness, but not without price. Animals had to die. I agree that the clothing symbolizes a removal of shame, but there is an ancient practice other than sacrifice which might be in mind here. In the

Ancient Near East, a son's robe represented his family status. It is probably the problem with the robe Joseph received at the end of Genesis. To the other brothers the robe was a declaration that Joseph had been given the special position of first born. So, while a son who gets a robe is being given position in family, a son who was disinherited is disrobed and sent out. If the father chose to allow the son back into the family to re-inherit him, then that son was to be re-robed. This may be the significance of verse 21. God is re-robing Adam and Eve. They must still bear the consequence of their sin. The curse still stands. And they must leave the garden. But by dressing them, God takes away their shame. He symbolically declares, "You are mine."

Verses 22-24 describe the final moment, the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden. God says, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." It is difficult to know precisely what it means to say that he "has become like one of us, knowing good and evil." I believe the "us" is a reference to God himself, maybe, possibly a foreshadowing the trinity. He had declared in 1:26, "Let us make man in our image." So, God is using the plural for himself. Another question is whether there is irony here. I think there is. This was what Satan promised. The wording is nearly the same as in verse 5, "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." That was the promise of the lie. And God repeats it here. But as we have seen that statement come true only in a sense. I think it is spoken here as irony or sarcasm. You received what you wanted. You have gained knowledge like God, but you did not do it in line with the holiness of God. You sought the shortcut of disobedience. You rejected God's way and sought to establish your own way. And they are not completely like God. There is a difference in the way they go about gaining knowledge. And their hearts and minds have experienced the effect of separation from God. That is why they cannot take of the tree of life to live forever. It would be to live forever in a state of death, zombie like. They have been cursed. They are fallen. They are separated from God. So that eternal death is what must be prevented. Adam and Eve must be cast out of the presence of God's holiness, so that they first might be redeemed and then brought back in to live forever.

The story of redemption is going to start with promise God makes in Genesis 12 to Abraham. That's the second half of Genesis. The beginning of that story. Between here and there, chapters 4-11 the inevitable effects of sin on the entire human race is made clear. We are going to survey those chapters now. There is a lot here. Since I want us to move us along, I am going to keep my focus in 4-11 on the effect of the fall and the struggle, the ongoing struggle between the seed of the serpent and the seed of Eve. I apologize in advance for the good material I am going to have to skip over.

Overview of the Fall, the Flood and the Nations (Genesis 4-11)

The story of the effects of sin picks up in chapter 4 with Cain and Able. It is a simple, but powerful story of jealousy and desire for approval. Cain falls short, and he wants to be approved. But rather than take responsibility for his own shortcomings, he blames Able. And God, warns him. God says, "Sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." Cain gives in to sin and commits the first murder. The chapter then traces Cain's line down to Lamech who treats his wives as property, boasts about murdering a man, and declares vengeance on anyone who would defy him. This is the line of the serpent. But the chapter ends with the birth of Seth. His descendants will be the line of Eve. They are the focus of chapter 5.

That chapter starts repeating the declaration from chapter 1 that Adam is made in the image or likeness of God. Then we have a long list of descendants. I will highlight the main idea. So, listen for it.

Adam became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth...so, all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

Seth became the father of Enosh...so all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.

Enosh became the father of Kenan...so all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years, and he died.

Kenan became the father of Mahalalel...so all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died.

Mahalalel became the father of Jared...so all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, and he died.

Jared became the father of Enoch...so all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died.

Enoch became the father of Methuselah...so all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

Methuselah became the father of Lamech...so all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died.

Lamech become the father of Noah...so all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died.

So, what's the point? And he died. And he died. And he died. And he died. You get the repetition. Enoch certainly stands out as a strange anomaly. He did not die. God took him. But Enoch is not the main point. Enoch is an exception that helps highlight the rule. The main idea of the chapter is that Adam was created in God's image, but Seth, Seth was in the likeness of Adam. He was fallen man, the image of God twisted or polluted, still there but corrupted from its original form, so that in the line of Eve there is death. Eat of the fruit and you will die. That is what has happened. And that is what we see here. The sin of Adam and Eve affects all the seed of Adam and Eve, including each of us. We are in the image of God, but also in the image of Adam, fallen, polluted, sinful from birth, destined to die.

If you calculate the numbers, you will find that Methuselah dies the year of the flood. Eve's line has run its course. The line of the serpent dominates. I take the sons of God in Genesis 6:2 to be those who follow God, the line of Eve through Seth. It is not a group of angelic beings but those who are believers, followers of God. And the daughters of men are of the line of Cain and Lamech. They are the pagan society that has rejected God and do not follow him. And as they intermarry, they produce the mighty men of old, who gain renown in the world. But intermarriage has not raised the wicked line up but rather lowered down the righteous line, a pattern we see through the Old Testament and into our modern day. Marriage rarely works out in leading a non-believer to trust and follow God. The resultant society is described in 6:5, "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

On all the earth only Noah and his immediate family follow God. They are the remaining remnant of the line of Eve. So, God judges all of humanity, he and executes his judgment through the flood. But he saves Noah and his family through the waters of chaos. He brings them to dry land and renews covenant with them.¹ This is 9:9, "Behold, I myself do establish my covenant with you, and with your descendants after you." There is a dark note here in this chapter. Even though Noah showed incredible faith, the story in chapter 9 ends with Noah getting drunk and with something sketchy happening in his tent that has to do with Ham and the nakedness of Noah. We don't get the details of the story. But we see that Noah did not escape the curse of sin. He brought it with him in the ark through the flood waters.

Chapter 10 starts another genealogy list, the list of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. Coming after the flood story, this sounds like a positive repopulation of the earth, but at the end of each son's list there is the foreshadowing of a serious problem. At the end of each list, we are told that the descendants are each according to their own family, land, and languages. We are also told in verses 5 and 32 that they have been separated out from one another. And this sounds simply like a reporting of fact with no good or bad to it. But how did this separating out occur? And how did the division into different language groups happen?

¹ Dr. Niehaus argues Jeffrey J. Niehaus. *Biblical Theology, Volumes 1, The Common Grace Covenants*. (Wooster, Ohio: Weaver Book Company, 2014) 212.

Chapter 11 tells us what happened. It is the tower of Babel. Whenever God blesses people, those people, over time take credit for the blessing. We seek our own glory and our own name. There is a 4100-year old ziggurat in Ur in modern day Iraq. It is a step pyramid with 3 layers or steps. It is 150 feet tall. And the top is like a helicopter pad. The idea of the ziggurat is to make a stepping stool for the gods. They can step down onto the platform and it is just three god-sized steps to the ground.

In the story of the Fall, God had already made Adam and Eve in his image. But they did not trust him. They believed that God did not want them to be like him. They were missing something and not satisfied with the identity God had given them, so they reached out their hands to make themselves like God, to take more, to eat the fruit. At the tower of Babel, the voice of the serpent lives on. God had established covenant with Noah. Human beings would derive their name, their identity from relationship with God. But that was not enough for the descendants of Noah.

So, 11:4 states, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the earth.” Well, scattering abroad over the face of the earth, that’s the original covenant. That’s the idea. That was the purpose. “Multiply and fill the earth.” They don’t want to do that. They want to make their own name for themselves. They rejected that mission. And instead, they sought lift themselves up to the heavens to meet God on their own terms, by their own strength. It is this idea, “I will be the captain of my own soul. I will do it my way.” It is a rejection of the definition of God and of the glory God has assigned to man. We will define ourselves. And we will seek our own glory.

In response to this rebellion against his purposes, God confused mankind. He broke them apart and scattered them himself. They had come to believe the lie that they were independent of God. They were good in themselves. They were not in need of saving. To this point in time, God had dealt with humankind all as one. He made a covenant with all men through Adam. And he renewed that covenant with all men through Noah. History is about to change. God switches to a divide and conquer strategy. And instead of dealing with all men at once, he is going to choose one nation to be his special people. And through that one nation he is going to reach the rest. And he is not going to choose any great nation, no Babylonians or Hittites or Egyptians, not for his plan of salvation, so that no empire of man can say that we did it by our strength and our might and our wisdom. God is going to start over with a barren couple who, so far from being a nation, do not even have one child. God makes a promise to this couple in Genesis 12. And we will pick up there in our next lesson.

Reflection Questions

1. What stands out to you as you read Genesis 3:1-7? What do you notice as interesting or important or strange or confusing? What questions come to mind in regard to the temptation of Eve?
2. Where do you get your wisdom from? What do you think Eve should have done, and how does that apply to you today?
3. What stands out to you as you read Genesis 3:8-24? What do you notice as interesting or important or strange or confusing? What questions come to mind in regard to the judgment of Adam and Eve?
4. Considering Genesis 3:8-24, what seems to have changed after the Fall of Adam and Eve, and what has not changed?
5. Go back and look in Genesis 1 for the phrase “after their kind.” How many times is that phrase repeated? Now look at Genesis 5:1-3. Whose kind was Adam originally made after? Whose kind is Seth and his descendants made after?
6. Consider your answer to question 4 as you think about the big picture point being made in chapters 4-11, starting with Cain and Able in chapter 4 through the Tower of Babel in chapter 11? How would you summarize the big idea being made about humanity in these chapters?
7. Thinking back over this whole lesson, what one insight stands out to you the most, or has made the biggest impression on you?