

January 1, 2006 by Steve Brandon



In The Beginning

Genesis 1-3

- 1. The Creation (Genesis 1-2)**
- 2. The Fall (Genesis 3:1-7)**
- 3. The Curse (Genesis 3:8-19)**
- 4. The Hope (Genesis 3:15)**

This morning we begin our year-long trek through the entire Bible. Our text this morning begins with the very first page of our Bibles. We will look at the first three chapters of the book of Genesis. Appropriately, the title of my message this morning is, "In the Beginning," which is taken from the first three words of your English Bible in front of you. Of all the chapters in the Bible, these first three chapters of Genesis rank as high as any in their importance. In fact, should our Bibles not include these chapters, I don't believe that the Bible would make any sense at all.

The text begins with the most fundamental fact of the universe: there is a God, who has created the universe. These two truths are at the head of many of the historic, Christian creeds. These creeds commonly begin by affirming, "I believe in the God, the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." These two truths come out clearly in these chapters: (1) God is and (2) God is creator. These chapters also include the important narrative of the fall of man. It is considered important not because it was such a good event in the history of the world. Rather, it is considered important because it was such a terrible event in the history of the world, and it has affected all of us.

When Adam sinned, he took all of humanity with him into the depths of sin. And the entire rest of the Bible is an explanation of how God is so working in history to redeem a people for Himself out of fallen humanity. In fact, should you attempt to distill the story of the Bible down to a simple sentence, I believe that the sentence would go something like this: "The Bible tells the story of God's redemption of man through Jesus Christ." This is what the Bible is about. It tells us of how we have all gone wayward. It tells of the way in which God has provided Jesus Christ to reconcile us to Himself. And it all started with the fall of Adam.

Should Genesis 1-3 be ripped from the pages of our Bible, I don't believe that the Bible would make any sense at all to us. To miss these chapters is to miss the point of the entire Bible. Let's begin by looking first at ...

1. The Creation (Genesis 1-2)

We read in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Before God created the universe, there was nothing except God. Theologians often describe the creation of the world using the Latin phrase, "ex nihilo," meaning "out of nothing." When God created the universe, He created it from nothing, "ex nihilo." In Genesis 1-2, we have the account of the creation of the world. Nobody was there to see this creation except God. In His grace, He has recorded for us the manner in which He created the world. By faith, we take these words to be a straightforward description of what took place in those early days. Chapter 1 gives us the panoramic picture of creation. God starts with nothing. By the end of the chapter, everything in the creation has been made, and God declares it all to be "very good" (Gen. 1:31). Chapter 2 zooms in on one part of one day of creation. God zooms in upon the creation of first two people to walk the planet: Adam and Eve.

Let's begin this morning by looking at chapter 1. The chapter breaks down nicely into six sections, each of which describe a day in the creative work of God. Consider the first five verses:

Genesis 1:1-5

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. (Gen. 1:1-5)

There have been all types of discussion about the length of this day. Was it a 24 hour day? Or, was it a long, eon of time, perhaps billions of years.

You need to know why people come up with this question. It's not because they have studied their Bibles and have come to believe that this is what the Bible clearly teaches. Rather, it's because they have some type of preconceived understanding about the way that the world was created. Either through their science classes at school, or through the popular culture, they have it in their minds that the universe is some 20 billion years old, with the earth being only 4.5 billion years old. When they read that God created the heavens and the earth in "six days," they become suspicious. They say to themselves, "I have heard it said that the earth is 4.5 billion years old. But, I read here in the Bible that it says that the earth was created in six days. Something isn't right."

For those who don't want to believe the Bible, such a predicament allows them to simply dismiss the Bible away as a fairy tale, because it contradicts the clear teaching of science. But, for others, who attend church and believe the Bible, they tend to massage the message of the Bible, to make it fit into modern science. In this case, they either argue that there was a gap of several billion years between verses 1 and 2. This theory is often called "The Gap Theory." Or, they seek to synthesize the two accounts by quoting 2 Peter 3:8, which says, "with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like one day." And so, they reason that you can easily interpret this day as a day that lasted billions of years. After all, if a thousand years can be a day in God's sight, then certainly, so can a few billion years be as a day in God's sight. This theory is often called, "The Day-Age Theory".

Many of those who seek to harmonize the Bible with their scientific understanding of the world are well-meaning people, who are far more intelligent than I will ever be. Many of them have much "scientific" data that they can use to defend their case. But, we need to realize that the reason that they believe these things is fundamentally not because they understand that the Bible teaches this. Rather, they believe this because they have come to the conclusion about the age of the universe apart from the Bible and are seeking to synthesize their understanding with what the Bible says. That's how you come up with these theories. These theories don't start with the Bible and conclude these things. They start with their own understanding of things and synthesize the Bible with own understanding.

I believe that those who believe these things to be wrong. I believe that the first five verses of Genesis took place in 24 literal hours. There are many linguistic and semantic reasons for believing so. For instance, whenever a numerical adjective is used with the word "day" in the Bible, it always indicates 24 hour day. Whenever the phrase "evening and morning" is used in conjunction with the word, "day," it always describes a 24 hour day. Furthermore, in the law given to Moses, the existence of the Sabbath day pre-supposes a 24 hour day (Ex. 20:11; 31:17). Finally, many other words could have been used to designate a long period of time for the creation account, but none were. God specifically uses the word, "day."

Furthermore, there are many scientific reasons for believing so as well. For instance, some of the assumptions made about using radioactive decay to determine long ages of the world are being called into question. There is discussion about measuring the decay of the earth's magnetic field, which gives evidence for a young earth. There are measurements of the sediment accumulating on the floor of the ocean which casts doubt on the old earth theory. Also, the sodium levels in the ocean don't indicate an old earth. We don't have the time this morning to get into the nitty-gritty details about these things. If you are interested in these types of things, I can direct you to resources that can explain these things far better than I can do. [\[1\]](#)

But, let me give you two, very non-technical reasons why I believe that these are 24 hour days.

The first reason why I believe that these are 24 hour days is that six literal, 24 hour days is the conclusion that you come to when you take the passage at face value. When you read these verses, you don't get the sense at all that God sought to communicate anything other than a creation that took six literal days to complete. You don't. God could easily have written this account in such a way that long eons of time could have easily fit into it. For instance, Genesis 1:1-5 could have been written like this:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. From of old, the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep for many years. The Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. When the time came for creation, God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. This took place during the first time of creation.

But, God used no hints of indicating a long period of time for the creation. In fact, you can easily argue that God made the timing of the creation very clear. He talks about days. He talks about evenings and mornings. It is very plain terminology, and the meaning appears very straightforward.

My second reason for believing that the world was created in a literal six-days in recent history is because I believe in a powerful God. Several times in Scripture, we read that "Nothing is too difficult for God" (Luke 1:37; Genesis 18:14; Jeremiah 32:17; Matt. 19:26; Luke 18:27). The Scripture often describes God as the One who is in the heavens, doing "whatever He pleases" (Ps. 115:3; 135:6; Dan. 4:35; Job 42:2). Of all that I know that Scripture speaks about God, to conceive of Him creating the world in six literal days isn't too difficult for me to believe at all.

One of my favorite cartoon strips of all time illustrates this perfectly. This cartoon has a little boy and a little girl talking about the length of time creation. The boy says, "SIX DAYS?" To which the girl replies, "Yep." The boy again says, "Six, truly, really, days!" The girl again says, "Yep." With a frown on his face, the boy says, "You're sure it says SIX days!?" Patiently, the girl replies, "Yessss!" Finally, the boy responds, "I wonder why He took so long ...?" [\[2\]](#)

God could easily have created the world in an instant. However, He chose to do so in six days. I've heard one preacher say that for the majority of those days, God had his feet up.

Genesis 1 teaches that God created the world in six literal, 24 hour days. On the first day, God created the heavens, the earth, the light, and the night (verses 1-5). On the second day, God created the expanse (verses 6-8). On the third day, God created the dry land and plants (verses 9-12). On the fourth day, God created the sun, moon, and stars (verses 14-19). On the fifth day, God created the fish and the birds (verses 20-23). On the sixth day, God created the land animals and He created man (verses 24-31).

Let me simply mention in passing a comment that I have heard on several occasions from those who have attempted to synthesize the Bible and evolution. They say, "Isn't it neat how the Bible is consistent with evolution? Look, the animals were created in just the same order that scientists believe that we all evolved! We began in the sea, and then migrated to the sky and then to the land. The Bible says that God first created animals, and finally man. God could have used evolution to create these creatures over long periods of time." They point out that life

began in the sea, then to the sky, then to the land. It was first the animals, and finally man. Along with the difficulties that I already mentioned about evolution, comes the difficulty that you have plants, which were created on day three. In evolutionary time, that means they would have had to exist for millions of years without the sun, which wasn't created until day four. This might not be such a big problem; certainly God could have kept plants alive by providing His own light for them, without the sun. However, such an explanation doesn't work for those who make this observation about harmonizing the Bible and evolution, for they are attempting to explain everything by naturalistic causes. To have God supernaturally providing light to plants for millions of years without a sun will contradict everything that they are attempting to do in their harmonization. And thus, the creation of plants on day three is sufficient to show that evolution and the Biblical account of creation doesn't mesh too well because you cannot sustain plant life without the sun.

I believe that all of the discussion surrounding evolution is an attempt to escape the authority of God as creator. When we think of God as creator, we need to realize that He is the potter, and we are the clay. The "thing molded" has no right to question God or resist His will! We have no right to question God! Isaiah 45:9 says, "Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker!" Those who believe in evolution are quarreling with their maker. Romans 1 points out that such people know God through the testimony of creation and yet, they suppress the truth, so as to believe the lie of evolution. And they do so to escape from the authority of God. God has created us. We are called to bend the knee and submit ourselves completely to Him and His servants. We are always to take the posture of the Psalmist in Psalm 123:2, "Behold as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, ... so our eyes look to the LORD our God, until He is gracious to us." We are to bend the knee and serve God fully.

Of all the days of creation, the climax takes place on the sixth day, when God created man. We read in verse 26, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and 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.'"

There are two observations that we ought to pull out of this verse. First of all, I ask, "Who is God talking to?" He uses the first person, plural several times in this verse. "Let **Us** make man in **Our** image, according to **Our** likeness." Is He talking to the other animals? Is He talking to some angels? It can't be either of these two options, because neither animals, nor angels are capable of creating. Rather, He was speaking to those who could create. So, who is God talking to? He is talking with the other persons of the God-head, who are capable of creating as well. In verse 2, we have already seen the presence of the Spirit of God. And now, we have an allusion to plurality within the Godhead. As the Bible continues on, we find out that there are three persons in the Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. According to Colossians 1 and John 1, Jesus was instrumental in the entire creation process. So, when you think of the creator God, think of the Triune, creator God, for they all were involved in the creation process.

Next, I want you to see the uniqueness of man in all of the creation. We are made in the image of God (verse 26). In verse 27, we read, "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." From the beginning of creation, there has always been a distinction between people and animals. We are all made in the image of God, whereas the animals aren't. There is a likeness that we share with God that the animals don't have. In some way, we reflect the nature of God unlike any other part of creation.

Many theologians have sought to figure out what "the image of God" means exactly. Some have argued linguistically that we are created in the image of God in that there is some physical resemblance between us and God, which isn't true of the animal world. This often the usage of these words, "image" and "likeness." Some have argued that we are like God in that we have abilities to sustain relationships and with others, just as the Trinity does. Some have said that we function like God, in that we have been given dominion over the animals and earth (verse 28). Perhaps the best way to understand this is to somehow combine all of these notions together to understand that we share a likeness with God, that the animals don't have. We can communicate on a level that the animals cannot. We are to have dominion. We have an appearance that is unique to us. Now, one of the reasons why this is important, is because the story of the Bible is the story of God's redemption of man. God doesn't redeem the animals. God doesn't redeem the angels. He redeems His image-bearers. He redeems those who are made in His likeness.

By the end of the creation account, we read in verse 31, "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." By the end of the creation, all is well in the world. God said that it was "very good." On six other occasions, God saw what He created and saw that it was "good" (verses 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). But now, God says that it was "very good." So good was this creation, that God "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done" (Gen. 2:2).

God also made the seventh day to be a special day. We read in chapter 2, verse 3, that God "sanctified" the day. Thus, God established the week. Six days of work, and a day of rest. The seven-day week is almost universal in all cultures. There is no other explanation, but that it all traces back to the creation. A day is the rotation of the earth on its axis. A month is the rotation of the moon around the earth. A year is the rotation of the earth around the sun. There is no explanation for the week, except that it comes down to us from the time of creation.

In chapter 2, we get a closer look at the creation of man. We read of the man's creation in verse 7, "Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." We read of God's care for him in verses 8-9, "The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed. Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:8-9).

God gave Adam the responsibility of caring for the garden. Look at verse 15, "The LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it" (verse 15). Our first ancestor was a farmer. He cared for the garden that God had made for Him. This garden was unlike any garden that we have ever experienced. There were no weeds in the garden (3:18). The fruit was good. The fruit was abundant! Look at verse 16, "The LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely.'"

God was so good to provide Adam with all that he needed. God was so good to provide Adam with such good food to eat! In verse 18-25, we also see God providing Adam with a needed wife! God imposed but one mere restriction upon the man. It comes in verse 17, "but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." It is this prohibition that leads

us to our second point, ...

2. The Fall (Genesis 3:1-7)

This comes in the first 7 verses of chapter 3. Of all verses in the Bible, perhaps these are the most tragic! It describes how Adam and Eve fell from a state of perfection and pleasure into a state of sin and despair. This account begins (in verse 1) with a "crafty" serpent, who "was more crafty than any beast of the field." Revelation 12:9 tells us who this serpent is. He was none other than Satan, himself. This serpent begins to instill doubt into the mind of Eve as to the character and intentions of God. He asked the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" (verse 1).

The serpent got it entirely wrong at this point. There was only one tree that God had prohibited Adam and Eve from eating. God never prohibited all fruit eating. But worse than that, Satan put the emphasis of God in the entirely wrong place. He twists the kindness of God all around. God had told Adam to "eat freely" from any tree in the entire garden, with the exception of one tree in the middle of the garden (2:16-17; 3:3). But the serpent seems to exploit the prohibition of God: "You shall not eat from any tree?" This is such a common characteristic of sin! Though someone may show abundantly kind intentions to you, it is the one, minuscule, perceived evil intent, that entirely clouds your thinking. No longer do you think of the kindness and goodwill that flows in abundance toward you. Rather, you think of the one point of contention. Satan sought to exploit this one, little prohibition. He used the prohibition to attempt to get Eve to think of God in a negative light: "God doesn't have your best in mind. He is out for His good, not yours."

In verses 2 and 3, we see Eve responding appropriately, attempting to set the record straight. She told the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; 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.'" (verse 2-3). Though Eve gets it basically right, there are a few areas in which she gets God's prohibition a bit wrong. She was absolutely correct in the sense that there was one tree in the garden to stay away from. However, she subtracted from God's words by failing to say that they may eat freely from all of the other trees. Moreover, she added to God's words by saying that God prohibited Adam and Eve from even touching the tree. Her response fails to show God's abundant goodness to her and Adam. Her response seems a bit to indicate a mean-spirit in God, prohibiting them from even touching the fruit. But, overall, she knew well that there was only one tree that Adam and Eve needed to stay away from.

I believe that these subtle differences in her response was precisely the crack that Satan needed to wedge the door of doubt wide open and deceive Eve to be led away from "the simplicity and purity of devotion to" God (2 Cor. 11:3). Satan, the father of lies (John 8:44), speaks forth the lie that deceived Eve to eat of the fruit (1 Tim. 2:14). He said (beginning in verse 4), "You surely will not die! 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." This flaming arrow (Eph. 6:16) finds its way into the heart of Eve, who, for the first time, begins to doubt the goodness of God in His commands. She let the temptation flow from her mind to her flesh, gazing upon the fruit, finding it desirable. When temptation gets out of your mind into your flesh, the battle is over.

Verse 6 describes the dreadful event, "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." I cannot even begin to explain to you the results of this sinful act. It opened the eyes of Adam and Eve to the evil that they had done. Suddenly, for the first time, they felt shame in their naked bodies. Their intimate relationship with God was forever changed, rather than loving Him, they were afraid of Him. In a little bit, we will see the curse of God that comes as a result (3:14-29) The curse results in pain and labor and hardship. Soon, they will be banished from the garden, never to return again. They will never be able to eat from the tree of life (3:22). Instead, they would die (Gen. 5:5).

The results of this sinful act upon Adam and Eve pales in significance when compared with the results upon the rest of mankind. This sinful act took all of future humanity from a state of sinlessness to a state of sinfulness. It took humanity from a state of blessing to a state of condemnation. It took humanity from a state of friendship with God to a state of hostility against God (Rom. 5:10), and from the love of God to the wrath of God. This one act had implications for billions of people. In Romans 5:18, Paul said it this way, "Through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men." In the next verse, He said it like this, "Through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Romans 5:19). This is why these first three chapters are so important for us to understand, even thousands of years after the fact. What happened in the garden affects us all. We are sinful people, under the curse and wrath of God because of Adam's sin in the garden. Consequently, Paul calls us "children of wrath."

At this point, you might easily say, "Hey! That's not fair! How can I be condemned because of what somebody else did? It's Adam's fault. He should pay the consequence of his sin, not me!" If this is the way that you think, please be careful. Should you believe this to be so, then you should also believe that you cannot be justified because of what somebody else did! It goes both ways. We are condemned by Adam's sin, though we didn't do anything to deserve it. Likewise, by faith, we are justified by Christ's act of righteousness, though we didn't do anything to deserve it. Do you remember the verses that I read for you in Romans 5? I read only a portion of the verses. Let me now read them all.

Romans 5:18, "As through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men."

Romans 5:19, "As through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."

Here's the point: In Adam, we were condemned. In Jesus, we are justified. In Adam, we were made sinners. In Jesus, we are made righteous. Through the act of one man, our condemnation came. Through the act of one man, our justification comes! Right here is why evolution is so damning. The way in which we are made righteous is the same way in which we were made sinners. We were made sinners through one man. We are made righteous through one man. In this, we have an historical parallel between two real people. Should we have evolved from apes, there would be no single Adam that brought the sin to all of us. The parallel of how our sin is removed from us would not exist. We would still be in our sins, for we would need many Christs to atone for our sin.

At this point, another question might come to mind: "Steve, why are you talking so much about Adam? I thought that Eve was the one who sinned first. She ate. Only after eating did she give the fruit to Adam who then ate. Why doesn't Eve get the blame?" It's a good question. But, let me ask you another question to answer this one: "When Eve ate of the fruit, where was Adam?" Did she take the fruit and eat, and then need to go look for Adam to find him to trick him into eating the fruit as well? Look carefully at verse 6, "she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband **with her**, and he ate." The Bible tells us that Adam was standing right beside his wife during this entire encounter with the serpent. And his mouth stayed shut. He passively watched Eve take of the fruit!

At this point, Adam should have become the world's first preacher. He should have preached to Eve a sermon similar to the following:

"Eve, bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh (Gen. 2:23). Remember what our Lord and master has told us. He told us not to eat from this tree (Gen. 2:17). He told us that we would die in the day that we eat of this tree (Gen. 2:17).

"Eve, have you any reason to doubt God's words? He has been so good to us, hasn't He? Look and see the beauty of this garden that God has made for us. The leaves are green; the fruit is good. Look over here at the rivers, which flow out of this garden (Gen. 2:10-11). The water is pure and clear and tastes wonderful. Just look around and see of all the trees that He has given to us for our enjoyment. This fruit tastes wonderful.

"Eve, God has given us everything. He has given us each other! When God found that no animal would be a suitable helper for me, He created you (Gen. 2:18). You are perfect for me. I'm perfect for you. God has never failed to provide for us anything that we needed.

"Eve, everything that He has told us has been true. He has never lied. There is no reason to doubt his words now! He told us not to eat this fruit! Surely, God has our good in mind when He told us not to eat of this fruit, didn't He? We should trust Him!

"Eve, don't eat of the fruit!"

Adam should have grabbed the fruit from her hand and prohibited her from eating. But, alas, Adam didn't do any of these things. He sat by and watched it all take place, like many passive men to today. And thus, the sin is every bit Adam's responsibility as it is Eve. To be sure, it was Eve who was first deceived (1 Tim. 2:13), and yet, it was Adam's who has born the main responsibility for their sin because the man is the head of the marriage union.

Men, take responsibility for your home and steer it in the way of righteousness. Say with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). Preach to your house the wonders and the goodness of God. Tell your wife and your children that the commands of God are given to us for our good! Tell your wife and your children that the prohibitions of God are to protect us from hurting ourselves! Step in when you need to! Sadly, Adam and Eve sinned and plunged the world into despair.

We have seen, (1) The Creation; and (2) The Fall. Let's now turn our attention upon ...

3. The Curse (Genesis 3:8-19)

It didn't take God much time at all to figure out what happened. Soon after Adam and Eve ate of the fruit, the LORD God came, "walking in the garden in the cool of the day" just like, I suppose, He had done before (Genesis 3:8). Adam and Eve attempted to hide from God (3:8). What a feeble exercise! You can't hide from God! They were like a child, playing, "peek-a-boo, where are you?" under a blanket with his parent. If you're a parent, I'm sure you have seen this before. A little boy covers his eyes with a blanket and assumes that since he cannot see mom, she cannot see him. Hiding from God is no different! Prov. 15:3 says that "The eyes of the Lord are in everyplace, watching the evil and the good." God knew where they were. And by their behavior, He knew what they had done.

In verse 11, God began to question them, "Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" Adam and Eve's response shows that rather than taking responsibility for their sin, they came up with some excuses. The man blamed the woman (verse 12), and the woman blamed the serpent (verse 13). That's just like what many people do today. I had a great illustration of this yesterday. Several of my children were asked to do something several times. However, it didn't get done. When I came to confront them on it, I met with several responses. One of them responded with a repentant heart right away, saying, "Dad! I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I feel really bad. I'm sorry." But, another one of them responded with a bit of defiance, saying, "Dad! I thought that I had done what you said. I didn't know what exactly needed to be done. I did what I thought needed to be done." When I disciplined them, the one admitting guilt responded much better than the one who attempted to create excuses. So, when you sin before God, it is far better that you confess your sin than attempt to make an excuse for it! Tell God that you blew it. Stop with the excuses. It will be better with you if you do so, for God looks with favor upon those who are contrite of spirit who admit their guilt and say, "God, I'm sorry!" Seek for mercy and don't make excuse.

Beginning in verse 14, we see God responding as His justice demands. He pronounces His curse upon the serpent and upon this world. He says to the serpent (in verses 14-15), "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel." (Gen. 3:14-15)

It's no accident that snakes are despised animals today. It's no accident that snakes slither along the ground today. It's all because of what Satan did in the garden. Spiritual warfare takes place in this world. It's no accident that many in this world fight against Satan and his powers. It's God's curse upon the serpent.

When God turned to the woman, God said (verse 16). "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth. In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." Mothers, have you felt the curse? Wives, have you felt the curse? Children come through the pain of childbirth, because of what took place in the garden. Marriages face power struggles because of what took place in the garden.

Turning to the man, God said, "Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gen. 3: 17-19). Men, have you felt the curse? If you have ever tried to grow a garden, you certainly have experienced the curse. If you have labored to the point of total fatigue to provide for your family, you have experienced the curse. When you die, you will experience the curse.

Perhaps the most tragic thing about the curse is that it kept us from eternal life! Verse 22 says, "Behold the man has become like one of Us [again, a reference to the plurality of the Godhead], 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." And in verse 23, we read that the LORD God sent man out of the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve died in their sin, never being able to take from the tree of life.

Notice the results of the curse. They weren't a psychological disposition placed in our hearts. They were physical changes made to our physical world. The appearance of an animal was changed. We experience pain, sweat, toil and hardship because of sin. Sin is a powerful thing. Pain and anguish is always the result of sin. Should we understand the hardship that sin will bring, perhaps our hearts would be more attuned to choose the path of righteousness. This world in which we are living today is a changed world from the one that God had created. The world at the end of Genesis 3 is far different than the one at the end of Genesis 2. It's the world in which we live. We can't escape the consequences of sin.

But, there is hope! In wrath, God remembered mercy (Hab. 3:2).

4. The Hope (Genesis 3:15)

Hope is found in Genesis 3:15. I touched a bit upon this verse last week. I'll do so again this morning. God said to the serpent, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

This verse has been called the "protoeangelion," which means the "first gospel." It is hope in the midst of the curse. Though there is enmity between Satan and the woman, there would come a day when her seed would arise, defeat Satan, and become victorious. This seed that would come is pictured as being bruised on the heel. This seed is pictured as bruising Satan on his head. The seed would receive a flesh wound, but Satan would receive a mortal wound. We know that this took place on the cross of Calvary, when Satan so worked to put Jesus upon the cross. In so doing, Jesus was wounded in His flesh. But Satan never defeated Jesus. When Jesus rose from the dead, He defeated Satan, by conquering death, the ultimate weapon that Satan can use. Thereby, Jesus had crushed Satan's head. In Hebrews 2:14, we read that Jesus "rendered powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil."

It is through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ that the sting of death is no longer upon us. Through faith in Christ we have the victory! Those of you who read through the Bible with us this past year, you read this week how it ends. It ends with those who have been redeemed eating from the tree of life and living forever. The tree from which Adam and Eve longed to eat but were prohibited from doing so, we will get to do! (Rev. 22:14, 18-19)

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on January 1, 2006 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] The website <http://www.answersingenesis.org> is as good as any website that I know of for this type of information.

[2] This cartoon is found on page 160 of the excellent book entitled, *The Lie*.