



LOCKINGCASTLECHURCH

Life Group Notes – 8th May 2022

Origins: Genesis 3:1-13 Satan's deceit

Please visit the LCC website to listen to the talk or read the transcript if available.

Genesis 3:1-13 The Fall

3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'" **2** The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, **3** but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. **5** "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. **8** Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. **9** But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" **10** He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." **11** And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" **12** The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." **13** Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Comment

You only have to browse the news for a few minutes to be reminded that all is not right with the world, but it is when evil or suffering affects us on a personal level that our questioning suddenly becomes overwhelming. We echo the cry of the prophet Jeremiah who said 'Why is my pain unceasing?' (15:18)

The problem of evil is particularly difficult for Christians because at the core of our faith is the axiom that God is Love. How could an all powerful God of love allow such suffering to continue? The Atheist will point to this apparent contradiction as proof of God's non-existence. Yet any good parent knows that they will allow a toddler to fall over whilst they learn how to walk. Christian philosophers also point out that even in apparently tragic situations, we cannot determine for certain how God might ultimately orchestrate greater good as final outcome. We could only judge with an eternal perspective. Genesis 2 tells us that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was placed in the centre of Eden, which suggests that evil already existed as a by-product of creation. The problems really began when evil is combined with God's unique gift to humanity of free will and temptation. The crafty serpent, described in Revelation 12:9 as 'that ancient serpent, called the devil, or Satan, who leads the world astray' is also described by Jesus as the *Father of lies* in John 8v44. In a quest for more power, he tempts Eve by raising doubts about God's word, backed up by manipulative half truths. When Adam and Eve capitulated, they gave authority to the serpent, who John 12:31 tells us then became the ruler, or prince, of the earth. This is the same strategy that the devil used to tempt Jesus himself in the desert – yet Jesus resisted and overcame by holding fast to God's Word and his mission. One of the central themes of the Bible is how God sent Jesus to reclaim this lost authority over creation, in order to reconcile everything back to its rightful order and proper place. Romans 8v20 tells us that the whole Creation is waiting for us to reclaim the authority that Jesus won back for us on the cross. But until Christ returns and the kingdom of God is fully realised, we live with something of a tension. On the one hand, like Jesus, we are to confront suffering and banish evil by invoking the authority he gave us, but on the other hand we also may have to endure suffering just like Jesus did at the hands of his oppressors. In the meantime we take our hope from Jesus' final words: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'. By saying this he was announcing his full victory over the devil and the suffering of disordered creation. So we can be confident of ultimate healing. In other words, if we pray confronting evil, suffering and disease, we can be assured that we will ultimately be healed - whether in this life or the next.

In the same way we can have full confidence that when Paul says in Romans 8v28 'God brings all things together for good for those that love him', he will deliver on his promises.

Questions

- 1) In what ways did the serpent try to sow doubts and temptation in Eve's mind during their conversation?
- 2) Looking at the passage and following verses, what were some of the first effects of Adam and Eve's sin?
- 3) How do you understand God's love to operate even when there is suffering around us?
- 4) When should we try to confront evil and suffering rather than patiently endure it?
- 5) What are some ways we can help each other resist temptation and the lies of the devil?