

Genesis 3: Eating from the forbidden tree



WARNING! The story of the so-called “fall” is not about women having pain at childbirth, not a pessimistic view of humanity, nor how evil came into the world, nor the origin of death, nor about going to hell, nor about sin, nor about women being subservient to men.

Chapter three in Genesis is about me, it's about you. Chapter three is about feeling guilty when we do or say something wrong. No one dies in this text, but when Adam and Eve, and Dennis and Jerry do wrong we feel guilty. And God reminds us, unlike the conservatives or those untrained in the Bible, that our garden of life is an act of graciousness.

A Sumerian penitential prayer reads; “Who is there who has not sinned against his god; who has always obeyed the commandments? Everyone who lives is sinful.” I remember Jesus saying the same thing.

Our story is about us falling out or apart when we try to become like God. When we are exposed to our wrongdoing, we feel naked and we blame others for our mistakes. We are all exposed at times to shrewd elements in the world created by God, and

how we respond determines how we trust in our loving, creative God.

Genesis 3:1-6

Chapter three brings us into the middle of a conversation between a snake and two human beings. The snake is an animal of the field, a creature created by God. This story about a snake, gives snakes everywhere a bad name.

The snake is a device to introduce a new agenda. Our snake is portrayed as being more crafty, more clever, shrewder, and more sensible than the other animals. The snake is a citizen of the garden the same as Adam and Eve. In a way, the snake symbolizes most of us crafty, sneaky people.

Our snake is not from some other world, nor is he/she out to seduce humans away from God. Our scheming snake is sincere and wicked at the same time. With a snaky smile and a wicked heart, he works at getting the couple in lots of trouble. Does that sound familiar?

We all need to ask ourselves; do we believe that God has our best interest at heart? Do we trust God? When we lose our trust in God, we let other people lead us astray and we, like the snake. Creep around causing harm to others.

Chapter 3:7-13 Knowledge has consequences

Upon eating the fruit, apples are never mentioned, our two lovers take a good look at themselves and see for the first time, their naked bodies. The two madly go to work, gathering large leaves and sewing them together to cover their naked bodies.

Brueggemann believed that many of us who realize our wrongdoing become anxious and we turn to consumerism. We seek to escape from our anxieties by shopping at Macy's, going on a cruise, or filling our closets with expensive clothes or overspending on our Visa credit card.

Wearing our new fig leaves apparel God comes strolling along and says, "WHERE ARE YOU?" First thing they learn about being duped is their nakedness brings them shame, loss of body integrity, an inner wholeness. After playing with the embarrassed couple, God says, "I see you."

Our anxious couple, like us, forgot the Four omnis of God:

All knowing	omniscient
All powerful	omnipotent
All loving	omnibenvolence
Source of refuge	omnipresence

Isaiah 41:16 "do not fear, for I am with you..."

Genesis 3:14-19 Consequences or just plain reality

Reality is what the couple have now come to know. God does not strip them of their humanness, their goodness. God merely tells the kids to move out and try it on their own. God casts the couple out of the garden, but he does not abandon them.

To the fractured relationship between Adam and Eve with God we live in a place of human limitations. We call it REALITY. Therefore, Jesus was sent to us and his own body was beaten and tortured.

Genesis 3:20-25

Eve is given her name, meaning mother of all and God continues to interact with them by making garments from skins and covers them with his love and refuge.

THEREFORE: Here comes a moral. We, like the residents in the garden, are divided from one another and from God. A garden of perfect peace, love and harmony is inaccessible to us. We are all wounded and we continue to wound one another.

THE FAMILIES WHO CREATIVELY WROTE CHAPTERS ONE THROUGH THREE DID IT BETWEEN 960 TO 550 B.C.E, BEFORE THE CHRISTIAN ERA. GENESIS OFFERS US AN ALTERNATIVE MYTHOLOGY, INFORMED THROUGH THEIR IMAGINATION.

WHY DO WE LACK IMAGINATION TODAY?

Dennis Siebert