

Genesis 3:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

Analysis

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:.... This chapter narrates humanity's tragic fall from innocence through temptation, sin, and divine judgment. The serpent's subtle questioning of God's word, Eve's addition to and misquotation of God's command, and Adam's passive participation demonstrate the progression from doubt to disobedience to disaster.

The consequences affect every dimension of human existence: spiritual death (separation from God), physical death (mortality), relational dysfunction (shame, blame, conflict), vocational difficulty (cursed ground, painful labor), and cosmic disruption (groaning creation). Yet within the curses, God provides gracious provisions: proto-evangelium promise of redemption, clothing to cover shame, and preservation of life despite deserved death.

Theologically, this chapter establishes the origin and nature of sin, the reality of Satan's activity, the universality of human fallenness, the justice of divine judgment, and the necessity of redemption. Understanding the fall illuminates why the world contains suffering and evil, why humans rebel against God, why salvation requires divine intervention, and how Christ as the second Adam reverses the first Adam's failure (Romans 5:12-21, 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45).

Historical Context

The serpent in Genesis 3 reflects ancient Near Eastern associations between serpents and chaos, evil, or deceptive wisdom. Unlike pagan myths where serpents might be deified, Genesis presents the serpent as a mere creature, though Satan's instrument (Revelation 12:9, 20:2). Ancient curse formulas from various cultures parallel God's pronouncements, but Genesis uniquely embeds redemptive promise within judgment.

The agricultural curses (thorns, sweat, difficult labor) would have resonated deeply with ancient subsistence farmers for whom crop failure meant starvation. The pain in childbearing acknowledges a universal female experience that ancient cultures attributed to various causes, but Genesis traces it to sin's consequences rather than divine cruelty or inherent evil in creation or sexuality.

Archaeological evidence of humanity's ancient struggles with agriculture, disease, death, and violence aligns with Genesis's portrayal of a fallen world. Ancient wisdom literature from Mesopotamia and Egypt grappled with suffering's origins, but Genesis alone provides the theological explanation: human rebellion against God brought cosmic corruption. This account would have answered Israelite questions about why their promised land required hard labor, why they suffered pain and death, and why they needed redemption.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does understanding this verse shape our doctrine of humanity, sin, or salvation?
2. How does this passage challenge modern cultural assumptions about identity, purpose, or morality?

3. How does this verse fit into the broader biblical story culminating in Christ?

Interlinear Text

וַיּَוֹאמֶר אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה וְאֶל־הַנָּחַשׁ מִפְרֵץ אֶת־פְּרִי־הַבָּנָם מִפְרֵץ אֶת־פְּרִי־הַבָּנָם
said And the woman unto the serpent of the fruit of the trees
H559 H802 H413 H5175 H6529 H6086

וְאֶת־פְּרִי־הַבָּנָם
We may eat
H1588 H398

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