

Genesis 3:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Analysis

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.... 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

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does this verse contribute to the biblical doctrine of creation, fall, or redemption?
2. What obstacles prevent us from living out the truths presented in this verse?

3. What connections can we trace from this verse to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection?

Interlinear Text

וַיַּעַשׂ	יְהוָה ה	אֱלֹהֵי ים	לְאָדָם	וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ	כְּתָנֵי אוֹת
make	did the LORD	God	Unto Adam	also and to his wife	coats
H6213	H3068	H430	H120	H802	H3801
עֹר	וּלְבָשָׁם:				
of skins	and clothed them				
H5785	H3847				

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 61:10 (References God): I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (References God): For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Genesis 3:7 (Parallel theme): And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Romans 3:22 (References God): Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: