

# Genesis 3:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

## Analysis

**So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sw...** 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

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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

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does understanding this verse shape our doctrine of humanity, sin, or salvation?
2. What specific changes in thinking or behavior does this verse call us to make?

3. In what ways does this narrative foreshadow or typify aspects of Christ's redemptive work?

## Interlinear Text

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וְיָצַא רַשְׁתָּוּ	אֶת	בָּאֵד מְלֵאָה	וְיָשַׁבֵּן	מִקְדָּם	לְגָן	עַד
So he drove out	H853	the man	and he placed	at the east	of the garden	of Eden
	H1644		H120	H7931	H6924	H1588
בְּמִתְהָפֵךְ כַּת		לְפָט	לְכַבֵּב יָמָם			
Cherubims	H853	and a flaming		sword	which turned every way	
	H3742		H3858	H2719	H2015	
לְשֵׁמֶר	אֶת	דֶּרֶךְ	עַז	בְּמִים:		
to keep	H853	the way	of the tree	of life		
	H8104		H1870	H6086	H2416	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Hebrews 1:7** (Parallel theme): And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

**Psalms 104:4** (Parallel theme): Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

**John 14:6** (Parallel theme): Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.