

Genesis 3:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

Analysis

And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and ... 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

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What theological truths about The Fall emerge from this passage?
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

מִתְבָּלֶג אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה קְרָב אַת תִּשְׁמַע וְ					
And they heard	H853	the voice	of the LORD	God	walking
H8085		H6963	H3068	H430	H1980
בְּגַן אֲשֶׁת וְבְּאֵד אָדָם וְבְּאֵד אִשָּׁה					
בְּגַן הַיּוֹם וְלֹר וְמִתְחַבֵּב אֶלְיוֹן					
in the garden	in the cool	of the day	hid themselves	and Adam	and his wife
H1588	H7307	H3117	H2244	H120	H802
בְּגַן עַז מִפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה קְרָב בְּתַרְבָּת					
from the presence	of the LORD	God	amongst	the trees	in the garden
H6440	H3068	H430	H8432	H6086	H1588

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 23:24 (References Lord): Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

Proverbs 15:3 (References Lord): The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Hebrews 4:13 (Parallel theme): Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Romans 2:15 (Parallel theme): Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)

Genesis 3:10 (Parallel theme): And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

Job 31:33 (Parallel theme): If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:

Jonah 1:3 (References Lord): But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to

Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

Job 38:1 (References Lord): Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

Deuteronomy 23:14 (References God): For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

Deuteronomy 4:33 (Kingdom): Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?

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