



Sunday, June 1, 2025

Ephesians 3:1-7

As we've been walking through the first 11 chapters of the book of Genesis, I admit that we have not made it very far as of yet. There is simply so much depth to the origin of this world, and especially our existence. Over the past little while, we've unpacked the beauty of this world, the strategy with which God created it and His purpose in creating it for our good pleasure. We noted that creation is a response of God's great love. And that great love is positioned specifically towards humanity as the object of His great love. Therefore, all of the rest of creation exists as a monumental planetarium of sorts to support life and health for you and for me.

Two weeks ago, we talked about the creation of Adam and Eve and how God gave them the freedom of choice by placing the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden, along with the specific instruction not to eat from it. In doing so we raised the question of why? Why would God want to withhold the knowledge of Good and Evil from them? It's not that they did not already have the knowledge of good and evil, after all the tree in the middle of the garden with a parameter not to eat from it suggests that they did in fact, have the knowledge of good and evil. But there are two types of knowledge, one is head knowledge, and the other is heart knowledge. Head knowledge says I know, but heart knowledge says I, 'really know.'

We used the example of touching the glass on a hot fireplace or even a hot stove - the implication being that as kids, we know we shouldn't touch it - we've been told it will burn us. But there's a difference between knowing that truth and experiencing the pain of that truth firsthand. In the same way, Adam and Eve had a knowledge of good and evil in the sense that they knew it was the boundary God had drawn, but they didn't yet have the experience of it - until they actually crossed that line.

Some have gone as far as to suggest that God created evil the moment He placed the forbidden tree in the Garden. Others have said that it was the moment that Adam and Eve bit into the forbidden fruit. So which is it? I actually don't think it's either of them. In fact, I would likely go as far as

to say that God didn't create evil. And I actually think it's important that we figure out first how evil got its way into our existence, because how we understand the introduction of evil into our world will actually shape how we view what happens in the garden in Chapter 3 - and ultimately how we understand the character and nature of Jehovah God.

And the first, perhaps most obvious thing we need to see is a reminder of what I just said - that by creating the tree of the knowledge of good and evil with the instruction to not eat of it, this was not God creating evil. The presence of the forbidden tree was not an invitation to evil for Adam and Eve, nor was it the creation of it. Nor was Adam and Eve's fall into sin and temptation the introduction of evil, rather it was a response to it.

The argument against God creating evil states that if He truly did because He created everything, then you would conceivably have to go back to when He created everything and tell me on which day He specifically created it. Was it day one? Day three? Day six? No such day exists. In fact, we're told the exact opposite - that in no place inside or outside of creation did God create evil.

Notice the pattern of Genesis 1: at the end of each day, God surveys what He has made and does what? He declares it good. Day 1, day 2, day 3,4,5. And then on Day 6 after creating humanity He doesn't just call it good - He calls it very good. Everything God created was good. That means evil - by definition - cannot be something that God created, because all of God's creation is inherently good.

So how, then, did evil come into existence?

That question leads us to an even deeper one: What actually is evil? And how does it relate to what is good? Are these just adjectives? Nouns? Verbs? Or do they represent something more fundamental?

The first thing we need to understand is that neither evil nor good are 'things' in the way that trees, oceans, or animals are. They're not created entities and so it needs to be understood that evil is better defined as the corruption of what was originally created to be good.

Take this flashlight for example. When I turn it on, it produces light. That's what it's created to do. Wherever this light shines, darkness disappears. It is literally impossible for this flashlight to produce darkness. Darkness isn't a thing - it's simply what is left when light is removed.

In the same way, God - who is perfectly good - did not and cannot create evil. Evil is not something that flowed from Him; it's what happens when creation turns away from the light of His goodness.

This would also debunk the idea that when God created free-will, He created good and evil. This is simply not true. Two weeks ago we learned that free-will is necessary for true love to be expressed. Sure, God could have programmed us all to automatically love Him, but without choice, is it really real? Love requires choice. And the choice God gives isn't between two created options like 'good' or 'evil.' The choice is this: Will you receive and live in the goodness of God, or will you reject it?

Evil is the result of that rejection. It's not a created thing - it's what happens when a created being, whether angel or human, turns away from and rejects the One who is perfectly good.

So if evil didn't begin with Adam and Eve at the tree, then where did the corruption of good begin?

Some scholars suggest that it can be clearly seen in the beginning of Genesis 1 - verse 2 to be exact. As the Spirit of God hovered over the waters.

Genesis 1:2

'The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.'

This is interesting because the waters weren't actually created until verse 4 - So what are these waters the Spirit is hovering over?

The Hebrew word is mayim, which often means 'waters' in the literal sense. But in this case, many scholars suggest it's a metaphor for chaos - unformed, unordered, disordered reality. Some even connect mayim to the English word mayhem. No picture better depicts mayhem than dark, tumultuous, stormy waters - a symbol of disorder and danger.

The idea here is that even before the creation of the material universe, something in the heavenly realm wasn't quite right. According to Revelation 12, a massive cosmic rebellion had already taken place. Lucifer - one of the highest-ranking angels - was no longer satisfied with the power he had. He desired to rival the authority of Almighty God.

In his rebellion, he managed to convince a third of the angels to follow him. But their insurrection failed, and they were cast down to the earth - where to this day, they wreak havoc as they await

their final judgment. These fallen angels are what we now call demons. And by the time we get to Revelation, Lucifer has acquired several names: the great dragon, the devil, and Satan.

But Revelation 12 takes it a step further as John now specifically decides to refer to Satan as, 'that serpent of old.'

Revelation 12:9a

'...So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan...'

This is important - because this is a full circle moment for the history of evil in the Bible. By calling Satan, the serpent of old, John is making it explicitly clear that this is the same 'serpent' that we see tempting Adam and Eve in the Garden in Genesis 3. And that even before the garden, this was the same entity that was causing a disturbance or chaos in the heavenlies.

Now, this connection of water with chaos is one that carries through the entire Bible and is one that builds from its inception here in Genesis. The idea being that when we see Leviathan in the book of Psalms, Job and Isaiah he's portrayed as a serpentine sea creature, often pictured in the midst of stormy, violent waters. Leviathan isn't just a creature though; he's a symbol of evil and opposition to God's order. He's portrayed as untameable and terrifying, lurking in the deep.

Even in the New Testament - when Jesus and his disciples cross over the Sea of Galilee to cast legion out of the demon-possessed man, the waters erupted as a storm all of a sudden appeared. The disciples, though seasoned fishermen, are terrified. This isn't just a bad storm - it's chaos manifesting, and Jesus silences it with a word. He doesn't just calm the sea; He demonstrates His authority over what the sea represented: disorder, fear, and spiritual resistance.

Now, in Greek and Roman mythology, it was believed that gods dwelled in the sea - and if you offended them, they would unleash their fury. But theologians have suggested that these so-called 'gods' weren't gods at all. They were spiritual powers - likely the fallen angels cast to earth after the great rebellion.

The ancient idea that the sea represents the home of evil and chaos is deeply biblical. It helps to explain why Leviathan always appears in stormy waters. It also explains why the beast in Revelation 13 rises out of the sea - not just any sea, but the sea of chaos and rebellion. And it's no coincidence that this beast has seven heads - a detail found in some ancient Jewish descriptions of Leviathan as well.

So if you're following the progression here when we reach the end of Revelation and read that the beast and the sea are thrown into the lake of fire, it's another full-circle moment. It's not just about the destruction of a creature or an ocean. It's the final judgment being pronounced upon chaos itself. It's the undoing of the disorder that was introduced before Eden, pictured in the dark waters of Genesis 1:2.

And that's why Revelation 21:1 says:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more."

This doesn't mean there won't be oceans in the new heaven and the new earth. It means the sea as a symbol of chaos, rebellion, and evil is gone. God's order has been fully restored. Creation has been made new.

Why this matters - because when we come to see that God did not create evil, but that evil exists when good is corrupted, it allows us to see Almighty God in the right light: as a deeply loving Creator who gave His creation the dignity of free will - the freedom to choose whether or not to follow Him.

So now, as we come to the forbidden tree and the serpent of old now in the beginning, we can clearly see that evil has already been established at this point. And this serpent is most definitely Satan: the father of lies, the angel of light, the accuser, the dragon, the devil itself.

Nothing has changed from the cosmic rebellion of earlier. He still wants power. And if he can't do it in heaven, then he'll try to do it on earth. And where better to start than with the apple of God's eye - His beloved of all creation, humanity.

Genesis 3:1-7

'Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' "

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

This section really has everything to do with lies, deception and temptation. And the model in which Satan attempts to destroy humanity from the very beginning is the exact same model that he is using on us today. So we’re going to briefly walk through this text and I want you to see some things here that are important.

The first thing I want to point out is that contrary to popular belief, I don’t think that the serpent got Eve alone and tempted her outside of community and that is part of the reason why she fell. Many preachers use this point to highlight the importance of church community as a defense against temptation. Now, that point is absolutely true - community is one of God’s greatest gifts to us for spiritual strength. But this passage in Genesis is not the best place to make that case - because, in fact, it suggests the opposite.

Read verse 6 with me:

Genesis 3:6b

‘...she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.’

In the original Hebrew, the term, ‘with her’ actually means exactly that: with, beside, among.

What this means is that when Eve took the fruit and ate, Adam was with her. He was there. He saw it. He heard it. And he ate the fruit too. The problem wasn’t the absence of community - it was the absence of discipline, discernment and spiritual responsibility. Adam wasn’t off in the garden somewhere, unaware. He was completely present and he was completely silent.

Sin entered the world not just because Eve was deceived - but because Adam abdicated his role. Let me take you back to mid-way in Genesis 2. It is in verse 15 where God instructs Adam to be the caretaker of everything in the garden - kind of like spiritual stewardship. And then in verse 17 where God specifically gave Adam the instruction to stay away from the tree. Keep in mind, this is all be-

fore Eve is created. Adam is the first recipient of this instruction and therefore the primary bearer of responsibility because it is implied that Adam was to pass this instruction on to Eve. Which we know to be true, because if Eve did not know this, she would not have responded to the serpent the way she did.

So, the picture painted before us is one of dual responsibility, where one failed to be obedient to the instruction, and the other failed not only to be obedient to the instruction but in failing to lead in the moment it mattered most.

This is why, Paul says in Romans 5 that Adam, not Eve, is held responsible for sin entering the world.

Romans 5:12, 17

‘...Sin entered the world through one man...

‘By the trespass of the one man, death reigned...’

And you don’t have to like this for it not to be true. We talked about this in the book of Ephesians in Ephesians. You simply can’t get around this concept of headship. Paul says that in the family husbands are the head and wives of the body he relates this to the church where Christ as the husband is the head of the church and the church - the bride - is the body. Both head and body are absolutely integral to the strength of relationship, especially when we look at it through the lens of the two becoming one flesh language. However, the picture being painted before us today suggests that there is still responsibility that husbands and fathers have that is unique, purposeful, and beautifully meant to strengthen the family unit.

Now, God help us, because Jordan and I don’t always get this right. We are still trying to figure out what this looks like in our family because it doesn’t mean that I only do spiritual things and she only does other things. It doesn’t mean that at all. It does mean, however, that there are certain things that I need to protect my family from. When it comes to temptation, sin, and the flesh and the allure of the world, there needs to be a line drawn in the sand that as Joshua says,

‘...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.’

I don’t know exactly how it works, but I just know that in families where the husband and father deeply loves the Lord and His church and is serious about his relationship with Jesus, not as duty, but as love, there is just a different tone in that family. Because genuine love for Christ and His church

trickles down and it impacts everything.

Now, when I stepped into this message, I had no clue that this is where we were going to go today. It certainly wasn't even on my radar, however, I believe that the Lord is trying to get our attention here. And let me be the first to say this challenge is for me too. This gets me to my core.

Because at the end of the day I want to be the kind of man, the kind of husband, the kind of father who hears what God says and holds the line.

Who doesn't shrink back when the serpent speaks.

Who draws a line in the sand and says,

'Not in this house. Not today. Not on my watch.'

And if you're here this morning and you're feeling the weight of that too - not condemnation, but conviction - then I believe the Lord is stirring something in you like He's stirring something in me.

This isn't about shame. This is about calling. About returning to the role God gave us - not to control, but to protect, to speak, to stand, and to lead in love.

So if you're feeling that same stirring... I want to invite you to respond - to repent if need be, to recommit if necessary, and to step into the role that God has already called you and me to walk in.

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