

Pastor Luccas Rodor: I would like to invite you to take advantage of our free offer this morning. This offer is called "The Savior & The Serpent," and so if you would like to receive this, you could call 866-788-3966 and you could ask for offer number 798. If you're in continental North America, so in the United States or in Canada, you can text SH1462 to the number 40544 or if you're somewhere else, you can go to study.aftv.org/SH146, and you could get a digital download of this study.

I would like to invite our choristers to come out before we begin, and they have a beautiful song, a beautiful song of praise to lead out for us.

♪♪♪

♪ The Lord's our Rock, in him we hide, ♪
♪ A shelter in the time of storm; ♪
♪ Secure whatever ill betide, ♪
♪ A shelter in the time of storm. ♪
♪ Mighty Rock in a weary land, ♪
♪ Cooling shade on the burning sand, ♪
♪ Faithful guide for the pilgrim band, ♪
♪ A shelter in the time of storm. ♪
♪ The raging storms may round us beat, ♪
♪ A shelter in the time of storm. ♪
♪ We'll never leave our safe retreat, ♪
♪ A shelter in the time of storm. ♪
♪ Mighty Rock in a weary land, ♪
♪ Cooling shade on the burning sand. ♪
♪ Faithful guide for the pilgrim band, ♪
♪ A shelter in the time of storm. ♪
♪ O Rock divine, O Refuge dear, ♪
♪ A shelter in the time of storm. ♪
♪ Be Thou our helper ever near, ♪
♪ A shelter in the time of storm. ♪
♪ Mighty Rock in a weary land, ♪
♪ Cooling shade on the burning sand. ♪
♪ Faithful guide for the pilgrim band, ♪
♪ A shelter in the time of storm. ♪♪

Shawn Brummund: It is good to be able to worship together with my church family as we come together for study. And one of my favorite books, one of the--well, the foundational book of the entire Bible. Without Genesis, we're lost in a lot of ways in regards to the rest of the information that God gives us, to us, in the Bible. And so, we're going to go back to the very beginning in review of last week a little bit.

As we looked at our first lesson study in Genesis 1 and 2, we discovered that it was God who created the heavens and the earth. And not only that, but then when it was all finished, was it good? Yes, it was incredibly good. And I can only imagine, after that incredible task was finished as Jesus and his Son were not alone, but they would be accompanied by millions, perhaps more angels that were there watching God speak into existence this new planet of life and the awesome feeling of amazement, admiration, that those angels had as they watched, once again, the Creator of the universe take this dark, void, water-filled planet and make it a teeming with all kinds of different amazing life forms and species. And they could hardly believe their eyes, I'm sure every time that they saw God declare things into existence. And it was beyond their understanding, but they saw it with their own eyes. And so, they looked dumbfounded but also in awe at the beauty that was before them.

The Bible record tells us that when it was all said and done, God said that it was, it was very good. And they're on this beautiful, new, teeming planet, teeming with life was the head of all species, which was Adam, noble Adam sitting--standing there in the beautiful Garden of Eden with his beautiful wife Eve at his side, both of them created in the very image of God Himself, the great privilege and full dominion that God had given to them over the entire planet, over all other life forms and species on the planet.

They had everything that life could ask for, everything and more. Eternal life was given them, they could live forever was part of that gift. And in the midst of this Garden where there must have been at least dozens, probably hundreds, maybe even thousands of beautiful fruit trees, mature fruit trees that were loaded, heavy laden with these--with a great variety of delicious, nutritious, life-giving fruit. They would be pleasant to the eyes, amazingly attractive to look upon.

And in the midst of these dozens, hundreds, perhaps thousands of trees, there was two unique trees that the Bible tells us in those first two chapters of Genesis. These two trees were unique. The first one, tree number one, was the tree of life. This was the contact point that God had created that they might have, that humankind might have access to be able to eat from that tree and to find themselves revitalizing their bodies, their minds, to keep their bodies and minds in full and perfect condition for all of eternity. The true fountain of life was available to them at all times.

And so, of all the trees, even amongst the two that were unique amongst all the other trees that filled that first part of the planet in which they were to multiply and be fruitful and fill the entire earth, in which they were to expand from, there was only one tree that was off bounds. God said, "There's only one tree that I ask you. I don't only ask you, but I command you to stay away from." Did God have good reason? Yes, He did. It was the knowledge of the good--the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Now, when God created Adam and Eve, He declared that it was very good. He didn't say that it was very good with a little bit of evil on the side. No, it was just very good, was it not? When God--when Adam and Eve got up in the morning, all they thought was pure thoughts. Their motives were always completely 100% selfless. Selfishness was a completely foreign concept for them. And so, of all the trees, God said there's only one tree that is off limits. Was that well within reason? Yes, it was.

Now, I think it's important for us to stop and clarify and really let that sink in because I've heard more than one person, as the devil has convinced more than one person, that somehow this was unreasonable, that God was not being fair when he planted that one tree in the Garden of Eden. Because of the fact that Adam and Eve had made the wrong choice, it must not be fair. And yet, God had given them more than enough.

You know, one of the things about God that He reveals, both in the Old Testament, in the present, and especially in the future when you look at the new heavens, the new earth, the New Jerusalem, and so on, God is not interested in just giving us our needs. Have you noticed that? God is interested in

supplying so many of our desires, as well as our needs. And this was no exception. God had given them way more than they actually needed. God had given them every desire that they could ever imagine that could come from the pure and holy heart in which He had created them with. And so, for God to tell them that this one tree was off limits was completely within reason.

Now, as the Bible expands through, both in the first chapters of Genesis, as well as the rest of the Bible, we discover that it was in this tree that God had warned them about, that God had commanded them not to eat of it, not to have anything to do with it, not to touch it, why? Because this was the only contact point, this was the only access that the serpent--because the Bible says that the tree was not alone. There was not only fruit in the tree, but there was also, there was also a serpent. There was an intelligent being.

Now, one of the things that I've discovered about Genesis, as the years have gone by and as I've studied, is that Genesis is a very brief record. We have to remember that Genesis covers about 2500 years of history, and it's only 50 small chapters. And so, is God required to be brief? Sure He is. God was required--if you cover 2500 years of history in 50 very small chapters, you have to be very brief. And that's what we find.

But God knows that in the brevity of the record of Genesis, that there's enough clear--if you spend enough time there and you park in Genesis and you pray over it, you meditate over what is before you, you ruminate over what God has given to us, you can take that information and the Holy Spirit's help, He can help you connect dots there that aren't obvious at first. He can help you discover that there's some very obvious implications if you spend enough time there. And one of those implications is that when the Bible record tells us in Genesis 2 that, "you shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for the day that you eat of it, you shall surely die," that that was just a very brief summary of the conversation that God had with Adam and Eve that day, that indeed, God sat Adam and Eve down, and they--and He had the talk.

And He began to give a bit of a history lesson to Adam and Eve and say, "Listen, this is the first day of life for you, but there is an intelligent being, one in which I've loved for who knows how many eons, the one that was at My right hand next to Jesus Himself, the highest of the two highest ranking angels of all of heaven one day decided that he knew better than Me. And he began his own program, and he began to sin and rebel against Me. And he began to convince a third of the angels to rebel with him, and war broke out in heaven.

And there's this preexistence of evil that has preexisted you, Adam and Eve," as He gave that talk, sharing the fact that--and indeed, when we come to the Genesis record of chapter 3 in our lesson study this week, it makes it very obvious that sin preexisted planet earth. Sin had to have preexisted Adam and Eve, and that's why the tree was there. It was representing the fact that there was already a great controversy going on. There was already a war between good and evil, between darkness and light. And so, God had the talk and said, "Then day that you eat of it, you shall surely die."

Adam and Eve were instructed to stay solid in their loyalty to God and had every reason to. God had given them this beautiful planet, eternal life, the tree of life, communion with angels and with hundreds of different species of birds and fish and animals and so on upon the planet, more food and variety than they could ever imagine or dream of and desire. Every holy and fulfilling desire that a human being could ever desire was set before them. And so, God gave them every reason to be loyal to him.

Obedience was easy because as long as the tree was avoided, it was a natural thing. Why? Because again, Adam and Eve didn't have that struggle. Adam and Eve didn't have that carnal nature that you and I battle with. Adam and Eve, again, when they made their way through the day, it was easy to be holy. It was easy to make selfless decisions all the time because their heart was 100% selfless. As long as they avoided that tree, that natural nature for good would always exist within their planet and within their lives.

And so, the million-dollar question that all of the universe, all of heaven and the angels and the intelligent beings of God's creation, the million-dollar question that they asked was whether Adam and Eve would avoid dealing with such a dangerous tree. Were they willing to take God at his Word? Would they always choose God in complete love and trust, even as the loyal angels that were watching had already chosen and continued to choose? Well, most of you know the answer.

In different details, we're going to look at Genesis chapter 3. And as we open our Bibles to Genesis 3, which is the only chapter that we look at in regards to Genesis for this week's study, we look at how Satan chooses a beautiful creature of the earth that God had created. And even as God tells us, He created everything good. Was the serpent originally a good creature? Sure, it was. It was very good. It was incredibly good, just like the rest of the creatures of the earth. But Satan was channeling. He had chosen to channel through one of the most beautiful creatures on the earth.

Now, this serpent had to be much different than the one we know of today. We know that it wasn't creepy and crawly. We know it didn't have venomous fangs. We know that it didn't--wasn't covered in cold scales. How do we know that? I'll give you two good reasons. Number one, because the Bible tells us in Genesis 3 that this serpent succeeded in attracting and seducing a woman. Now, I've been married for 31 years to a woman, and I happen to know that that woman is very adverse to serpents, okay? When she sees a snake, she doesn't get intrigued and say, "Oh, I'm so attracted to that serpent. I want to go and pet it and spend some time with that serpent. Oh, it talks. I want to talk to that serpent." No.

Okay, the fact of the matter is that we know that women, in general, there is the odd exception, but we know that women in general are not all that attracted to snakes, to serpents, in the way that we know them today, are they? So, we know that it couldn't have been in the form that we know of today.

Number two, the second reason we know it's not in its original form, that it must have been very attractive and very beautiful originally is that it crawled on its belly only after Adam and Eve had sinned. That was part of the curse. That was the aftermath. And so, as we come to the original conversation of the serpent with Eve, we know that Eve is talking to a very beautiful and attractive creature. It's interesting.

And this is the third reason that I just thought of recently, and that is that there's evidence that the original serpent had wings. Now, I know it's so hard because every Christian artist always paints and draws a snake as we know it, you know, curled around a branch somewhere in the tree talking. And so, it's hard, even as I think of wings, I have to kind of force my mind to get this picture of a snake, as we know it, with wings on it because that's not really what it was. Again, it had to be beautiful in all of its forms because that's what attracted and enticed and seduced Eve in the first place.

When we come to Genesis chapter 12, and verse 3, it tells us that the dragon was cast down to this earth. And then it calls it this serpent, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan. And so, a dragon is used to represent the serpent of old. Now, have you ever seen a wingless dragon? No. Even when you go outside of the Bible descriptions of what sometimes is described in Job and other places as a dragon of some sort, even when you go to all the different legends that carry through the centuries in different cultures in different countries around the world in history, you always see a dragon with wings. And a dragon is what God has chosen to represent the serpent in symbolic prophecies, such as Revelation. And so, the evidence is there. There is some evidence that there is--there was originally wings upon the original beautiful serpent. And so, it was just a beautiful, gorgeous creature in a beautiful, attractive fruit tree.

And so, we have to remember that the knowledge of good and evil, that tree did not look different than any other tree. It looked just as beautiful, just as appealing to the eyes, just as attractive. The only thing that was to keep Adam and Eve away from that tree was not its appearance, but the Word of God. So, let's go to it.

Let's go to Genesis chapter 3, and verse 1. It says, "Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." So, not only was it beautiful and attractive, but it was also very intelligent. "And he said to the woman--" And, of course, there's a greater intelligence behind this species that is channeling through this creature called a serpent. But it is a created creature. It calls it a beast. It's an animal. "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?'" Is that how God worded it? Let's keep our thumb there.

Let's go back to Genesis 2 and actually look at the original statement. Is he quoting God word for word? No, he rarely does. You know, the serpent and the devil behind that serpent, that serpent of old called the devil and Satan, he always is spinning things. He takes the things--he takes the words of God and he spins them. He spins them to be able to deceive us, to make it say something that God wasn't originally intending to say. And this is no exception. In fact, this is the first example of it.

So, we go back to Genesis chapter 2. And we read verse 16, and we quote from God Himself. "And the Lord God commanded the man." What did they do? God commanded. This is the first commandment, the holy commandment. Now, notice there's not ten, there's only one. The other ten didn't have to come into until they had broken the first commandment. Because again, when Adam and Eve got up, they didn't say, "I better be honest. I better make the honest choice." No, they just were honest naturally. It was instinctual for them. And then when there was different women or men to be able to look upon as the world began to be multiplied, they wouldn't say, "Oh, boy, you know, that looks like, you know, a very attractive man or a very attractive woman outside of my marriage. And I start to go down the road of adultery." They would never think that. Their minds were pure all the time. They never had to fight against impure thoughts.

And so, the only command that they had, the first holy commandment was, "Do not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." So, let's read it again. "The Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat.'" Does that sound positive? Yes. All right, so that's the way God said. He says, "Now, look, of all these trees, you may freely."

Now, let's go back and see how the devil spins that. We're exposing the way the devil operates. So, we go back and he says, "Has God indeed said you shall not eat of every tree of the Garden?" Notice how he takes something that's very positive and he turns it into a negative. Something that God said, "Freely eat of all the trees." And then the devil says, "Isn't it true that God says you can't eat of every tree of the Garden?" He puts it in a negative. He puts it in a restrictive form. He's saying, ah. You start to plant a seed in the mind of Eve and telling Eve, "Listen, you know, God has some good things that He's given to you, but as I'm going to continue with my conversation, it turns out that He's restricting you. He's a restrictive God."

Have you ever heard of that before? Through the years, I've heard different people and public speakers I've seen with auditoriums packed with thousands of people and she'll say, talk about how restrictive the Ten Commandments are. You know, "Do not do this, don't do that. Don't do this, don't do the other thing." That's the same spin that the devil is working on Eve with his--is it true that God said that, "You shall not eat of every tree of the Garden"?

Well, the woman had it pretty straight. And again, verse 2 and 3 reveals that God had a very clear talk, a very extensive talk with Adam and Eve. "And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 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.'"

So, there's the warning. Verse 4, the serpent said to the woman, "You shall not surely die." And so again, we find here that the devil is doing something that he quite often does. He'll say, you know, take something that God has clearly said, and he'll say the opposite. In this case, God has said, "Do not eat of it, for the day that have you eat of it, I'm telling you, you will surely die." Death is the ultimate and

inevitable result from eating that tree. The serpent comes along and says, "That's not true. You will not surely die."

So, not only is this the first lie on record from the serpent, from the devil, but it also reveals how the devil works. He calls God a liar. He spins it around. He says, "No, no, no, I'm not a liar, God's a liar." Because the moment he said that you shall not surely die, he called God a liar, did he not? Sure he did.

Okay, so now Eve is in a predicament because now she's got two sides. She's got God saying that, "in the day that you eat, you shall surely die." And now she has another intelligent being telling her that in the day that she eats of it, she will not surely die. In order for her to believe--was Eve deceived? Yeah, she was deceived. Verse 13, she actually says it from her own mouth. When God held her accountable, she says, "The serpent deceived me." And then when we come to, I think it's 1 Corinthians as well as 1 Timothy, Paul, in both of those places, talks about how Eve was deceived. And so, the Bible makes it very clear, it's confirmed in those two places that when Eve said she was deceived, that's true. She was deceived.

Deceived means that you were tricked, that you were lied to and you accept it and believed it. But we have to remember, we don't want to be too easy on Eve because, again, sometimes we can come to the wrong conclusions say, "Well, God's not being very fair here. He's not being just. He's taken this woman. He's allowing her to be lied to, and now she is sincerely deceived."

We can be guilty even while we're being deceived. Did you know that? That's what this is revealing, okay? Did God still hold Eve accountable? Yes, okay? Was she sincerely deceived? Yes, you have to remember that she had sufficient information already before the lie was presented before her. "In the day that you eat of it, you shall surely, you shall surely die." So, here she is.

In order for her to believe and be deceived by the serpent, she had to disbelieve God. She had to disbelieve her Maker, and that's where she got in trouble. And sometimes that's where we get in trouble because sometimes people, relatives, our employer, our friends, and so on, they'll convince us that God doesn't know best, that God's Word can't be trusted, that God's Word is not right on this count or that count, and that you actually are missing out on something. And so, you have to--you're in a predicament now, just like Eve. "Am I going to choose to believe my friend, my relative, my employer, whatever it is, my children, or am I going to believe God? Is the Word of God going to be number one in my life? Do I trust Him implicitly on this point in regards to what He tells us in His Word?"

And so, that challenge that Eve faced is still facing us from day to day. This is real stuff. This is relevant. This is not just history, but this is revealing different challenges that you and I face even today. Verse 5 says, "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."

Were Adam and Eve created like God? Well, the answer is kind of yes or no, isn't it? All right, yes, in a large way because when God in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit were discussing in discussion, Genesis chapter 1, I think it's verse 26, it says that, "Let us make man in Our image." So, God created us, you and I, in God's very image. What a great privilege.

Does that mean that we were created equal with God? No, we were created similar in the image of God. In other words, if you look in a mirror, we were very similar. Our form was the same, our creative abilities were similar to God in a way that no other creature on earth is similar to, our intelligence is light-years ahead of every other creature on the planet. And so, in many ways, we reflected the Almighty, but we weren't equal with the Almighty, were we?

Adam and Eve, but here we find that the serpent comes along and says to Eve, "You know, listen. God is holding you back. Yes, He's created a lot of things in the same way. You guys look the same. You talk the same. You can have conversations, intelligence, very similar, but He's still holding some things back from you.

You see, the reason that you can't believe God when He tells you through His Word that in the day that you eat you shall surely die is because He's--it's a coverup. It's a conspiracy. And God is trying to hold back from you something that He doesn't want you to have. And so, it's a coverup."

And so again, Eve has to decide, "Do I believe, not only the words of God, but all the evidence of everything around me that cries out that God loves me, He cares for me, and He has my best interest for me? Was God really covering something up? Is this really a conspiracy that I need to be made aware of?" Well, you and I know that the answer is no and the rest of the Bible tells us so. But in verse 6, it says very sadly, "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, it was pleasant to the eyes--" Again, this tree was just as beautiful as the other fruit trees. "And a tree desirable to make one wise--"

Now it had an extra attraction. It looked just as beautiful. It supplied the same nutrition and amazingly tasty food that hung from its branches as the rest of the trees, but now there was an additional attraction that she had fallen into, why? Because she chose to disbelieve and distrust God, and therefore believe the lie that Satan was bringing before her. And now it is also attractive because it was desirable to make one, to make one wise. And so, she took off its fruit and ate, and she also gave it to her husband with her, and he ate.

Sadly, this is the saddest, most tragic, biggest verse in all the Bible. I hate this verse. Every time it comes to this verse in this chapter, for the most part, I hate it. Why? Because it reveals how our world fell apart from that point forward. It reveals why our hair start to go gray as we get into the latter half of our life. It reveals why our skin starts to lose its elasticity. It reveals why my joints start to hurt after I turn 50. It reveals why I can't run as far as I used to when I was 20.

It reveals all of these different things. It reveals why I battle in my mind with impure thoughts, and it reveals why I have to continually make choices against evil and fight against the resistance that you and I deal with from day to day. It reveals why I have to put a lock on my door and make sure that it's locked before I go to bed. It reveals why I have to push my FOB after I parked my car and make sure that it's fully armed. It reveals why I have to be careful and cautious and watch out for my daughters or my wife when they're going down a dark alley at night. It reveals all of these things and where they came from. It all came from chapter 3. It all came from verse 6.

Adam and Eve both tragically made that decision to eat from the tree. And it wasn't the eating of the fruit, there was no magic in the fruit. Sometimes we believe this is almost like some kind of Snow White Disney movie and story or something. There was no potion within the tree itself. The fruit did not have any kind of different molecular structure to it than the rest of the fruit on the rest of the trees.

It wasn't the external that made the difference, but as Jesus continually tried to get across to the religious community around him in Israel, it's not what's on the outside, it's what's on the inside that counts. That's where the battle is, that's where the brokenness is. That's where we're broken and that's where Adam and Eve broke their heart and mind and purity that day.

You see, when they reached out and grabbed the fruit of the tree and they decided, by their own free will, to believe the serpent and therefore disbelieve God, something very tragic happened inside the heart. Now, of course, we know it's not our biological heart, but scientifically, we know that that's in the frontal lobe. It's that part of our mind that we make ethical and decision choices. That's where our conscience is located. Something broke that day the moment that they reached out and ate from that tree.

And so, from that point forward, our DNA changed and now we not only had a knowledge of good, but now we also have a knowledge of evil. And that's why you and I struggle with selfishness. That's why one of the deepest statements that my favorite author Ellen White once said that she says that the moment that we become a Christian, the moment that we give our hearts over to God, the greatest battle that you and I will ever fight is with ourselves. Why? Because she is--she had a full personal and theological knowledge of the fact that you and I are broken.

We are born broken. We are born with a bent to evil. We have a propensity towards evil that you and I have to fight on a daily basis. That's why Paul said, when he came to the end of his life, he said, "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. Therefore there is a crown of righteousness laid up for me on that day when the Lord appears, and not only for me, but all who have loved, he's appearing."

Paul knew that every day when he got up in the morning, he had to get on his knees and surrender before his Lord and say, "Lord, overcome my selfishness today. Help me to fight against that natural propensity to be selfish and self-centered and arrogant and proud and sinful and carnal and lustful," and all these other struggles that you and I face. And we're coming back to the very origins of the brokenness of our heart. In verse 7 it says, "The eyes of both of them were opened."

Now, we don't want to miss this. Let's go back to verse 5 because the serpent had promised something to Eve and then through Eve to Adam. Verse 5 it says, "For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be-- will be opened. And he says, "And you're going to have a higher plane of existence. You're going to be like God." And, of course, we have people on talk shows like "Oprah" and others, you know, that we're watching. We have new-age gurus and talk show hosts and guests and so on, they're all telling us the same thing, that you have God within you. You can be like God. You only have to discover the God within you. There's so many different parallels that still exist today. The devil is just as rampant and just as active today with these same principles and lies that he is way back then.

Then the eyes, in verse 7, when we come to verse 7, it says, "Then the eyes of both of them were-- were opened. All right, so their eyes indeed were opened. That part of the serpent's promise is true. He says, "In the day that you eat of it, your eyes will be opened." But the rest of the promise was a lie, was it not?

That's where the deception was found because indeed their eyes were open, but it wasn't to a higher plane. It was wasn't to a greater sense of existence and joy and satisfaction and purity and holiness and security and trust. No, it says the eyes of both of them were opened, they knew that they were naked. And so, they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Now, so often we think when they looked and their eyes were opened, they realized, "That's what a naked body looks like." No, earlier on in Genesis chapter 2 it says after the wedding and during their honeymoon in verse 25, they were both naked. And the man and his wife were not ashamed. So, they very well knew what a naked body looked like, okay? So, verse 25 in Genesis chapter 2 clarifies that for us and helps us to make that needful distinction again. Again, do you see how we can connect the dots? But you have to spend enough time here.

So, what did he mean when he said that their eyes were opened and they discovered that they were naked? They're talking about the heart here, aren't they? They're talking about this overwhelming sense of guilt. They've never--you have to remember up until this point, they had never ever, ever experienced guilt before. In fact, they had never experienced a negative emotion up until that point. Not one thought, not one feeling was ever negative up until this point. And now all of a sudden, their eyes are opened, and they feel this overwhelming negative feeling and emotion and thoughts that they'd never ever, ever had experienced before that.

Can you imagine how horrible that would be? I don't know about you, but I feel different negative emotions on a regular basis. We're accustomed to that. But you have to remember, they weren't accustomed to that. And so, the contrast must have been incredible. And so, they looked at themselves, and they feel horrible. And so, they started to--you know, and again, we have all these classic paintings, you know, just the private parts are covered with the fig leaves. Okay, that's a Middle Ages theology. Okay, no, again in verse 25 in verse 2--chapter 2 tells us that they weren't ashamed to be naked in front of them because they were husband and wife. They were companions. They had that security within their loving relationship as lovers. So, that's not what it's talking about here.

What it's talking about is the nakedness of the heart, this overwhelming negative emotion that they were experiencing. And so, they began to cover their whole bodies as much as they could with these fig leaves, trying to make up for this fall that they knew this overwhelming sense of guilt. And so, their eyes

were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And so, they tried to cover themselves. In Galatians, Paul says that this covering was a desperate, futile attempt to be able to make up for their lack of righteousness for this fall from righteousness and holiness that they were experiencing. God says that this is a symbol of righteousness by works, rather than righteousness by faith.

And so, they were trying to make up for their falling, for their shortcoming for this overwhelming new emotion and feeling that they were totally new to. In verse 8 it says, "And they heard the sound 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 among the trees of the garden."

Why were they hiding? In the past when God came, they would freely come out and meet him, and that was the highlight of the day. They got to walk in the Garden of the cool the day with the Lord Himself face to face. And so, what used to be the highlight of the day now was the low light of the day because now we find that they're hiding in the trees, in the bushes. Why are they hiding? Because they're overwhelmed with guilt and all these horrible, negative feelings of guilt and betrayal and failure, and all these other horrible negative emotions.

Verse 9 says, "Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?'" Did God know where Adam was? Sure He did. This is what we call a rhetorical question. In other words, He's not saying it for His sake. He's asking it for Adam and Eve's sake. He wants Adam and Eve to know that He's there, that He hasn't abandoned them despite this horrible place that they're in in their hearts, and that He does still love them and care for them. "Where are you?"

And by the way, ever since then, God has called out to all of us. He called out to me as this worldly, irreligious, self-centered, arrogant, selfish, self-absorbed young man of 20 years of age. And He called out to me when I was 20 and said, "Shawn, where are you?" By God's grace, I thank God I responded and now I'm here today, teaching you about the grace and the goodness and the renewal that comes from Jesus Christ. And so, "God calls out, 'Where are you?' And so he said, 'I heard your voice in the garden, I was afraid because I was naked. And I hid myself.'" Now again, he's not afraid because he's naked and the fact that, you know, yes, he was shrouded with a light of glory.

Yes, it is true as this lesson study points out, there's a couple of points in the Psalms where there is some dots that you can connect that they did have a shroud of light. But again, the nakedness that they're speaking of here is much deeper than the shroud of light. It's what's in the heart. "I was naked. I was guilty. I've been overwhelmed with this new, foreign, horrible feeling of guilt and betrayal and failure that I've never experienced before." In verse 11, "And He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?'"

God always holds us accountable, doesn't He? You know, the first thing, the first step to reconciliation with God and with our own conscience is to own our sin. And so, God says, "Listen, you need to be able to own your sin. I'm asking this question, not because I don't know the answer again, but because it's for your sake. I'm giving you opportunity. I'm inviting you to own your sin."

If we don't own our sin, God can never forgive us. If we don't own our sin, we can never mend our hearts. And so he says, "Have you eaten from the tree which I commanded that you should not eat?" In other words, "Did you just obey Me? Did you break My commandment? Did you sin against Me?" In verse 12 it says, "Then the man said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.'"

And so, there goes the blame game right off the top. He's saying, "It's kind of your fault, God, because you gave me that woman, and she made me eat of the tree." Verse 13, "And the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?'" So, now he turns to the woman and as he directs his attention to her, the woman said, "Well, the serpent deceived me, and I ate." "It's kind of the serpent's fault because he lied to me." Verse 14, "So the Lord said to the serpent," now he has this conversation with the third

party involved. And he talks to the serpent and he says, "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life."

And so, when he turns to the ultimate culprit, to the origin of sin and he speaks to the one that did indeed deceive and lead Adam and Eve down this pathway, even though Adam and Eve also have their part and are also held accountable, he holds the serpent accountable first. Even as it says that the serpent and the devil will be the final scapegoat, which all sin originally we fall on the head of. And so, it's no different right to the end of the book of Revelation.

It's interesting here that we find that the serpent then is morphed into a totally different kind of creature. He goes to one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful animal that God had created. He plucks his wings off, and he turns them into this pathetic, slithering, legless, wingless, scale-covered, ugly creature that most people do everything they possibly can to be able to stay away from. And He says that, "Now you're more cursed than all the cattle."

Notice how it says that "You are more cursed than all the cattle or every beast of the field." That means that all cattle and all creatures were cursed from point. That's why in Romans chapter 8, it tells us that indeed all creation groans. All creation groans for the time in which Jesus comes to recreate us back again. Why? Because the entire ecosystem, the entire animal kingdom was cursed that day. And the implication, again, do you see the implications? It doesn't come right out and say it, but the implication is there, isn't it? When He says to the serpent that "you're cursed more than all the other cattle and the beasts of the field, that means they're all cursed. But the serpent was cursed the most. Did you pick that up?

All right, verse 15, we have the good news. God doesn't stay there. Well, the first part of 15 is still the bad news. He continues on and he reveals, not only to the serpent but, of course, within earshot is Adam and Eve. And so, the mother and father of all mankind is listening and God says to the serpent, "I will put enmity between you, serpent, between you, Satan, and the woman, And between your seed and her seed."

And so, the first part of this statement, this powerful, huge verse that we're looking at here, we find here that God is revealing that from this point forward, there'll be two camps now. Before that there was only one camp, purity, holy, holiness, loyalty to God through Adam and Eve and any children that they would have had in the future. But now God is saying from now on, there's going to be two camps. There will be the descendants of Adam and Eve that will choose the serpent, whether either by conscious choice or by default.

Jesus says, "If you're not with Me, you're against Me." When He made that statement, He's reiterating and reconfirming what He told Adam and Eve in the Garden that day and that is that there's only two camps we can be in. If you don't choose Jesus, you, by default, are choosing Satan. If you don't choose the kingdom of light and Jesus, you are, by default, choosing the kingdom of darkness, whether you want to or not. That's where you are. And, so God is saying, there's only two camps, but sadly, there's going to be two camps.

The descendants of the woman, the woman from this point forward, God always uses to represent God's faithful, His church, believers, those of the kingdom of light. And then He says, sadly, there will also be those who will be descendants and the seed--seed here is an old term that they use for descendants. And so, the descendants of all mankind in the second camp will choose Satan, either by choice or by default.

And so, the great controversy that was taking place already in heaven between the angels of heaven is now taking place between mankind, two camps in heaven, two camps on earth. And then, "He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel." This is the first gospel.

Now, before God actually addresses Adam and He addresses Eve, because we know the rest of the story. Many of us are familiar with the bad news. God says, "Listen, these are all the bad consequences that are going to take place for you and all women that will follow. And Adam, this is the bad results and consequences of your choice that will come upon all men and their children throughout all of history." And then He tells us that indeed in the midst of this seed in the descendants of the woman, there will be one seed, a singular seed, a male seed. "And He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

Now, the bruising of the heel--and by the way, bruise here is not the best translation. It should be crush, you know, a mortal blow, a major blow to the head. Now, of course, a major blow to the heel hurts a lot, doesn't it? But it doesn't do you in. That represents Jesus on the cross. Yes, He gave up His life, but He said to Pontius Pilate before He died, He said, "I give My life, and I have the power to take it up again." And He did. So, it was a temporary wound. But if you get a really strong blow to the head and it crushes your head, you're gone. And that's what Jesus did on the cross that day as well.

I wish we had more time, friends. We're out of time. But friends, this is the good news gospel. Jesus gives the gospel to Adam and Eve before He gives them the bad news. You notice that? He didn't even ask them. He said, "You want the good news first or the bad news first? I got both." No, He goes, "Now you know the answer." If you want a Bible answer and somebody says, "You want the bad news first or the good news? I got both." You can say, "Always give me the good news first because that's what God gave Adam and Eve."

He said He gave them the good news that He's going to die on the cross, that He's going to help rescue them from other sin and give all mankind hope to be reconciled with God. And then He gives the bad news. You know, "You shall have pain in childbirth, and there's going to be marital struggles. And there's going to be--by the sweat of your brow, you're going to eat your bread. And there's going to be thorns and thistles and all these other horrible things that will come up as well."

Well, friends, it's been good studying with you. It's a bit of a cruel thing to be able to go through that chapter in one Sabbath school's lesson because it's just impossible to look at all the nuances there. But I'm glad we could look at some of the highlights.

I want to invite you to take advantage of our free gift offer if you never saw the beginning of our program, and that is on the same subject that we're looking at here, the great battle between good and evil. "The Savior & The Serpent" written by our lead pastor, Pastor Doug Batchelor. Go ahead and dial into 1-866-788-3966. Ask for free offer number 798, and we'll be happy to send that out to you if you live in North America or any of the US territories.

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Brad: So, I grew up in a nondenominational house or the Pentecostal side. I really didn't read the Bible that much. I knew of Jesus, but I really didn't have that relationship. I attended the church, but it was more like check, I did it. So, it's just like, all right, I've got fire insurance. I'm not going to go to hell

because I'm going to church and I know enough to be a good person. Post education, working in Denver, Colorado, and the company that I worked for said, "All right, we're closing the Denver office. Brad, would you like a transfer letter, or would you like a severance package?" I went ahead and took the transfer. My family and I moved to Woodlands, Texas. Here for about three and a half years, and the company that I was with was acquired, so I found myself unemployed.

I started to stress out. A lot of anxiety and depression started to soak in. We were just trying to figure out what to do. My anxiety was so bad, I started to pace. I was starting to get like these shocks. Up till that time, I was a social drinker, so I drank and I chewed tobacco quite often. And with the worry, anxiety that was starting to come in, I started to do that more frequently.

So, it came to the point of my wife had to have a lot of conversations with the kids of, "Dad's working through this. We just got to pray for him." And I didn't want to let them down, but you get so self-absorbed just trying to figure out, "I want the best for him, but I don't know what to do. I don't know the next step to take." The anxiety got so bad, it was like the feeling you get when you get pulled over by a cop. It's that gut-wrenching feel day in and day out.

At that time was when we started to seek out other resources. I was admitted into a mental facility. So, when I went there, they drug me up on a couple different medications, which really didn't help out much. My cognitive skills went down. I really couldn't remember what was going on. After being there for eight days, I was let go. My wife's mom pointed us to Dr. Neil Nedley with his depression and anxiety recovery program. So, they sent us some DVDs and got me on a plant-based diet and a strenuous workout program.

Then in October, I flew to Weimar and was in his ten-day depression and recovery program, which that there helped out. The anxiety was still there, but it was starting to subside because I was starting to reframe my thoughts and starting to incorporate some of the things I learned through Dr. Nedley's program. He gave me these study guides from Amazing Facts and said, "Just read these when you get back home."

And that's where we get introduced to Amazing Facts. So, we started to go through the guides and learn about the Sabbath and the other topics. We were able to study together as a family, so some of the biblical truths went from my head to my heart, and then that's when the change started. It just wasn't me studying it. It was collectively, us as a family, because I just don't want to be changed, I want the whole family to be changed.

On top of the study guides, I also downloaded the app of Amazing Facts. So, we started to watch a lot of videos. And us, as a family, we all got baptized, and my wife and my son got rebaptized. But if it wasn't for the resources from Amazing Facts, I would not be the father, I would not be the husband, that I am now. My name is Brad. I want to thank you for changing my life.

Announcer: Amazing Facts, Changed Lives.

Female: Well, my conversion story is when I was in the Philippines, I just graduated as a nurse. And afterwards, I did not have any religion. And one time I found myself inside a small church, Catholic Church in Manila, and before a big cross. And I was kneeling before, and I could hear Jesus telling me to enter the convent, save myself and also my family. And I said, "Lord, I would like to follow you all the way."

At that point, I seemed to be happy externally, but because inside the convent we don't read the Bible, we don't study about the Word of God. We prayed the rosary. We also, at the same time, studied the lives of the saints and also our founders and the encyclicals of the Pope and the Virgin Mary. And so, I do not know the truth, and I had this torture of conscience, the guilty feelings that cannot be resolved. So, I would confess to the priest in the confessional box saying, "Father, forgive me. Since my last confession was last week, since then I have committed the following sin, including the root cause, why am I falling and falling in that same sin over and over again?"

And still for 21 long years, I struggle, and I struggle, and I struggle. I realized that I was totally empty. I was totally helpless and hopeless and so depressed and so desperate that I would like already to end my life. I was working for five years as dean of the University of St. Augustine College of Nursing in Iloilo City, one of the islands in the Philippines. After five years, I received a commission from my parents to help my sister who is being a battered woman. This is one of the reasons why I came over to United States. It is because my sister needs my help.

As I was working in the hospital in New York, my boss, Seraphim, he was so gracious enough to give me an invitation to the Millennium Prophecy. As I was listening to Pastor Doug Batchelor's presentation, my heart really was beating so fast and my mind, I'm able to grasp the truth that this is the truth that I have been longing to hear all my life, that I've been seeking for so long. My personal relationship with Jesus, I can see Jesus as my personal Savior. He is not only the Savior of the whole world, but He is my personal Savior. He was the One who delivered me mightily from the depths of sin, from the miry clay.

Pastor Doug Batchelor has been used by the Lord in my conversion. The Amazing Facts, I owe to them. The Lord really blessed this ministry, and I'm so proud that I was able to attend this Millennium Prophecy. My life has never been the same. It has given me that peace, that joy that never--I have never tasted in my life. And now I'm set free to be able to work for Him and to follow Him.