

G Jones Bible Survey 2 of 4

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[0 : 00] Genesis 2 from verse 15. The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

And now chapter 3. Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of any tree in the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

[1 : 16] So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit, and ate.

And she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

And they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, Where are you? And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.

He said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.

[2 : 28] Then the Lord God said to the woman, What is this that you have done? The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. The Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock, and above all beasts of the field.

On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat, all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. To the woman he said, I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing. In pain you shall bring forth children.

Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you. And to Adam he said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it.

Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field.

[3 : 44] By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground. For out of it you were taken, for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

Then the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now lest he reach out his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.

Therefore the Lord God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim

and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

Say a short prayer. Our Father, as we look at your word, we pray that what we know not, that you would teach us.

[4 : 56] What we have not, you would give us. And what we are not, you would make us. In Jesus' name. Amen. Out of the night that covers me, black as a pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever gods may be for my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance, I have not winced, nor cried aloud under the bludgeonings of chance. My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears looms but the horror of the shade, and yet the menace of the years finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how straight the gate, how charged with punishments the scroll. I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul.

So wrote William Ernest Henley from his hospital bed suffering with tuberculosis. To be free, to be unconquerable, to be master of our fate and captain of our soul.

[6 : 12] It seems more and more these days to be the ultimate goal of life. More and more we are told that we have total freedom to be whatever we want and to do whatever we wish.

You can self-identify however you want. You can describe yourself, define yourself, whatever way you want. And to many people this sounds wonderful and it sounds freeing, it sounds liberating.

And yet while the world has focused more and more on this kind of self-determined freedom, the world is also getting sadder and sadder. The World Health Organization noted that between 2005 and 2015, there was an 18% increase of people living with depression.

In 2004, they said that unipolar depressive disorders were ranked as the third leading cause of the global burden of disease worldwide.

And they expect that to make the first place on that ranking by 2030. And if you think about what we saw last week when we looked at Genesis 1 and God creating the world, you will hopefully see that that actually makes sense.

[7 : 31] I mentioned a couple of terms that one writer has used, I think quite helpfully, to describe the two kinds of people that you have in the world. There are the oneists and the twoists, if you remember from last week.

A oneist is everyone who thinks that everything ultimately is a system of just one. Everything is one ultimately. And that term oneist, it can cover everyone from Hindus to atheists.

It covers everything from ancient Greece to the Enlightenment. It covers everything from Star Wars to the Lion King. Everything is one circle of life.

It's one balance of light and dark. It's all one. So there are the oneists and then there are the twoists. those who believe that there is the creator and there is the creation.

The one who makes and what he made. There is God and what he has freely chosen to create. So God isn't just at the top of the rank of this one system.

[8 : 36] There's a line between the creator and the creature. God is on one side of the line and everything else is on the other side of the line. But most of the world around us is very clearly oneist.

And so distinctions don't really matter anymore because everything is ultimately one. And so you're free to be whatever you want.

You can be whatever you want because the distinctions no longer matter. But deep down we know that on the flip side of hearing it doesn't matter what you are is to hear what you are doesn't matter. You don't matter. So be whatever you want. Who cares? So of course you can only matter. You can only have meaning if somebody made you for a reason.

For there to be meaning you need someone to mean it. And without a creator that had a purpose in making us of course be what you want.

[9 : 43] But it doesn't really matter. no wonder people are increasingly unhappy. But this sneaky seductive lie that you can be whatever you want and determine your own life.

You can be the captain of your own soul. This lie is not new. We can see that this lie dates back to the story that we read here in Genesis 3.

And there's three things I want to notice with you as we look at this story. We're going to look first at the truth about freedom. We're going to look about the myth of chains and then the promise of a conqueror.

Truth of freedom, the myth of chains and the promise of a conqueror. Let's look first at the truth about freedom. Adam and Eve had real freedom in the garden.

They really mattered. They knew that they mattered. They knew they had purpose because they knew that they had been made for a purpose. They knew that they were creatures. God had made them with meaning.

[10:48] He did it deliberately. Not by accident, as some myths would have, but God made them deliberately. And they had work to do. They had a garden to develop and to keep and even to protect as well.

And beyond that, we saw that was part of the climax of creation, but the ultimate climax of that week of creation was the seventh day, when the work was done and God blessed that day.

It was a day of rest, but that day is the great climax. God has done his work and entered rest. And God having made man is inviting man to work and enter rest.

As a sign of that blessing of rest, there is a tree in the garden called the tree of life. And we discover at the end of chapter three, they haven't got there yet. It is what they were looking at, what they were aiming for, was to enjoy life, blessed eternal life, living forever with God.

But they hadn't yet got there. There was one simple thing they had to do, but they failed to get access to this tree of life. They did have the whole garden to enjoy.

[12:04] the man is told, you can't eat from any tree here. You have this whole place for yourself to enjoy it. But then what would be the work required to enter this rest?

God had worked and rested, so what would Adam have to do? In a sense, he just had to obey God. He had to do what we know is right and wrong, kind of implanted in him. He knew that he shouldn't kill his wife.

He knew he shouldn't worship anything or anyone else. He knew that he should be faithful to him. He knew lots of good things he should be doing. But then he is given this one particular thing to do, just to show that he was willing to obey God.

Makes it a very specific question, a very specific test. Just don't eat of this one tree. Just this one. Eat of anything else, just not this one.

There wasn't anything special or magical or supernatural about this one tree. This is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is the tree that will reveal whether you will choose good or evil.

[13:15] It's a tree that will show you to be good or evil. It's a tree where you can judge someone. This is the tree that will show you whether you will choose to rule yourself, choose what is good and evil for yourself, or whether you will obey me as your creator.

will you obey or will you reject God to become the master of your fate and the captain of your soul. If you do this, you'll live, you will live forever with blessed friendship with God.

And if you do this, just this one thing, just not eating of this one tree, you will die. And God says, here's a chance now to choose. And this is a choice he gets to make in the context of this wonderful garden, this wonderful life, having purpose and meaning, all he could ever want, and this prospect of this eternal blessing.

But having heard that, then somebody comes in to whisper in his ear the myth of chains. Secondly, let's look at the myth of chains.

Having heard that, then along comes a serpent. serpent who somehow supernaturally can speak, serpent that should tell you something is up here, probably the garden is now under threat.

[14:39] Your job to keep the garden, this is where this comes into play, you should keep it from this threat, you want to be throwing this serpent out, preferably killing him.

But this serpent is allowed to stay, and he speaks to the woman. But later on in the passage we discover that the man was right beside her all along.

So he's just as guilty and just as involved, potentially more guilty, as we'll see later. As this woman was being duped by the serpent, he was right there, not challenging a thing.

And so the snake starts to get this woman questioning the status quo. So he comes to someone who is enjoying glorious freedom in the garden with meaning and purpose and great blessing, who is wonderfully free, and he says, did God put you in these chains?

Well, she's not in chains, but that's in effect what he's saying. Did God do this to you? How awful. He says, well, no, but then, well, I guess, maybe, kind of, sort of, maybe a little bit.

[15:56] And do you spot in verse 3, when she said, no, he didn't say that, but she does add to what he said. You mustn't eat, but neither must you touch it. God hadn't actually said that.

She's beginning to believe this idea that God is actually a bit of a killjoy. And all this time, Adam is there saying nothing. But now the snake has got her.

he's got her to believe that God is really, not really looking out for you, and God is lying to you. He just wants to control you.

He wants to keep you oppressed. He's just jealous. He doesn't want you to get to the same point where he is of determining good and evil. And she buys it. She sees the fruit, and she says, it's good fruit.

If God is such a good God, why can't I have this fruit? Why can't I have everything that I want, if God is so good? And so while she forgets the wonderful good things that she already has, the eternal blessing that is offered her as well, she takes this one fruit, and she eats it.

[17:10] And the man is right there doing nothing to dissuade her. He's there just blithely letting her eat what he knows will kill her. And then he says, I too will be the captain of my soul.

And he eats as well. And in that one move, this man, as sort of representative for all of humanity, he transferred the allegiance of all our hearts from God to the serpent under the false illusion that we are somehow becoming the masters of our own fate.

he bound himself and he bound all of humanity in the serpent's chains, just by that one act. And he knew what he was doing.

We see later in the way the woman speaks of it and in other ways people describe it throughout the Bible that yes, the woman, who is later called Eve, she was genuinely tricked.

She was deceived. And she should have known better, but she was genuinely deceived. The man seems to always know what's going on and yet choose evil.

[18:21] It is a truly high handed sin. And what happens next is shocking. Because God had every right to wipe them out.

He had every right just to kill them straight away. Right there and then. And yet throughout everything we see amazing grace.

Even as he curses them, tells them things will have to change now, there is amazing grace. So if you look at verse 16, instead of saying you are going to die now, it says I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing, in pain you shall bring forth children, your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.

But do you see that there is clearly life to come? you will have children. You're not going to die now, but your life will continue. And to Adam, he said in verse 17, down at the bottom of verse 17, cursed is the ground because of you, in pain you shall eat of it, all the days of your life.

There's life still to come. Verse 19, by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread. You shall eat bread, you will keep eating and enjoying the world, and yet there will be death in the end.

[19:46] Things can't continue as they were, there will be the curse of death, and yet you will be preserved for a while. But the key wonderful promise we see in verse 15, in the words he directs to the serpent, because at this point God promises to do two things.

In this third thing we can see, here we can see the promise of a conqueror. the promise of a conqueror. Verse 15, God makes a promise of a conqueror who will do two really key things.

The first thing he promises, I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. There will be continuity, there will be offspring on both sides, and so much of what will follow will be tracing the story of the two sides, the seed of the woman, the seed of the serpent, not just baby snakes, but people who follow in the pattern of the serpent, and people who follow in the pattern of the woman, and he will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

The key thing there, he will put the enmity there, he will basically conquer their hearts back. This isn't a verse to say, and they won't like snakes anymore, even though I like to use that as justification for my absolute hatred of snakes.

What he's saying is, I will so transform their hearts that they will say, no, enough of that. They will make you their enemy once again.

[21:23] They will say to the serpent, once again, having pledged allegiance to him, no, you are my enemy now. They will turn against you. And God will do that in their hearts. he will change their hearts to turn away from him.

I will put enmity. And then the second thing, he promises that one to proceed will defeat him decisively. So her offspring will bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.

Yes, you will hurt him, but he will ultimately destroy you. He's promising to do something in people's hearts and promising to do something in history where there is a decisive defeat.

From this point, we are now looking for the seed of the woman who will bring that decisive defeat. And how do they respond to this great promise?

Verse 20, Adam calls his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all living. That is an expression of Adam's trust that this will come true.

[22 : 35] She will be the mother of all who live. Because the seed will defeat the serpent. This is Adam saying I believe this promise. And then God makes provision for them by covering them, covering their shame by skins.

He sacrifices an animal in a sense to cover their shame. These are more hints of what's to come. So as you read the Bible, it's been said very helpfully by some people, it's like watching a plant grow.

The DNA is the same, but it'll look different at different stages. A seed looks very different from its tree, and yet the DNA is the same at every point. So the DNA that you'll find throughout the whole Bible is already here.

There will be the one who comes to make that decisive break, and he will defeat the serpent. I wonder if you can guess who that might be.

We'll come to him next week. So this is what sin is. This is the problem in the world. If you heard the wonderful descriptions of last week, and you thought, alright, that sounds great, but what went wrong?

[23 : 52] This is what went wrong. that we decided to go it alone, to go it on our own, to decide that we can define everything for ourselves.

Here's how one writer put it. Sin is the despairing refusal to find your deepest identity in your relationship and service to God.

Sin is seeking to become oneself, to get an identity apart from him. this is why just to hear that God is a creator is good news.

It means you can have meaning, and you can have a relationship with him because of the seed who is to come, who we'll hear about next week.

Let me just say a short prayer for us. Let me just tell you a Let me just tell you a story. Let me just tell you a story. Let me just tell you a tell you a