

The conflict between the seed of the woman (the righteous remnant culminating in the Messiah) and the seed of the serpent (his spiritual offspring who are at enmity with the faithful) runs throughout Scripture (see some references in “Going Farther”).

Creation has been subject to futility in hope of its liberation (Rom 8:20-21).

GOING FARTHER

Because of man’s sin in Genesis 3, what is man’s need and how does God address it in (1) the rest of Genesis; (2) the rest of the Old Testament; (3) the New Testament?

How is the promise of the skull-crushing seed developed in Genesis 22:17-18, 24:60, Num 24:17; 1 Sam 2:10; 2 Sam 7:12-16; 2 Sam 22:43; Jer 30:23; Ps 2; 110:6 (chiefs=head); Mic 7:17; Luke 10:18-19; Rom 16:20; Rev 12?

PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT STUDY

Read Genesis 4–11. Given that God begins something new with the promises to Abraham in 12:1-3, what is the point of Gen 4–11? Why is it here? How does it prepare us for 12:1-3?

How is the conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent apparent in these chapters?

Study Gen 9:24-27. What is this all about? What does it mean “may he live in the tents of Shem” (v27)?

SOURCES CITED

T. D. Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promised Land*, 2002.
Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 2003.
James Hamilton, “[The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman](#),” *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*, 2006.

GENESIS 3: THE FALL AND THE SEED

OUTLINE

- I. God’s creation of the world is marred by the sinfulness of man (1:1–11:26).
 - A. The account of the heavens and the earth: God creates man as his own image who then rebels against him (2:4–4:26).
 1. God expels man and woman from the Garden of Eden because they disobey (3:1-24).
 - a. The man and woman follow the counsel of the serpent over God and their eyes are opened (3:1-7).
 - b. The man and woman hide from God in shame (3:8-13).
 - c. God curses the serpent and predicts a final defeat by the seed of woman (3:14-16).
 - d. God curses the ground and predicts the final death of man (3:17-19).
 - e. God graciously provides clothing for man (3:20-21).
 - f. God graciously removes man from the Garden of Eden (3:22-24).

PREPARATION FOR THIS STUDY

1. Read Genesis 3. Try to determine the author’s main point.
2. What is the nature of the sin? How is Eve guilty? How is Adam?
3. How do the curses in Gen 3:14-19 relate to Gen 1–2?
4. Study Gen 3:15. What does it mean?

NOTES

The man and the woman both fall because they want more than what God has given them. They are not content with his provision, and they effectively question his goodness.

When Adam and Eve choose to disobey God, they know evil personally and experientially, not from the fruit itself but from their action.

The woman was deceived because she believed what the serpent told her. The man was not deceived; he knew what was right but decided to rebel against God.

The act of sin is so simple and so brief (one verse), but its consequences so lengthy and devastating (1,185 chapters).

The man and the woman do not repent when (1) they see their nakedness; (2) they hear God coming; (3) God questions them. Instead, they cover up, hide, and blame others.

Adam and Eve recognize their shame but do not recognize the cause of it: disobedience.

The seed of the serpent are not literal descendants (baby snakes) because the serpent is a supernatural creature who does not give birth. But those who follow in his ways are his spiritual descendants. And they will be at war with the seed of the woman. This is seen in the nations warring against Israel, in Haman's attack on the Jews, the "brood of vipers" in Matt 3:7 and 23:33, and ultimately in the crucifixion of Jesus.

The curse of the serpent entails the promise of a redeemer, the seed of the woman that would be harmed by the serpent but would in the process destroy him.

Even at the moment of the undoing of God's creation, God is ready at hand with a promise to restore it, and to do so through a man.

Gen 3:15 is the Protoevangelium – the first good news. Indeed, this is the first bit of good news, though the fullness of what it means will be developed in later revelation. Clearly victory is promised and it will come through one born of Eve, not through an alien, not apart from her, but through her.

That which God made good and gave to the man as his gift is now cursed. The ground isn't cursed for what it did, but for what Adam did. But Adam will suffer because of it. Adam isn't separated from

the ground, but the ground is resistant to him (just as Adam had been resistant to God).

The immediate restoration of Adam and Eve requires clothing and removal from the garden.

QUOTATIONS

"The flagrant rebellion against the divine word by the pinnacle of creation, which has just been invested with the divine rule, is a heinous crime against the cosmos and its Creator" (Dempster 2003: 66).

"In the light of the immediate context, the triumph of the woman's seed would suggest a return to the Edenic state, before the serpent had wrought its damage, and wresting of the dominion of the world from the serpent" (Dempster 2003: 68).

"The seed of the woman will restore the lost glory. Human – and therefore divine – dominion will be established over the world. The realization of the kingdom of God is linked to the future of the human race" (Dempster 2003: 69).

"Since in the future every birth will be accomplished only through pain, this pronouncement reverses in part God's initial blessing that human beings should be fruitful and increase in number (1:28)" (Alexander 2002: 117).

"The story of the fall brings to a bitter end the harmony that was the hallmark of God's creative activity. We witness in particular a breakdown in relations between animals and human beings, between men and women, and, most importantly of all, between God and humanity" (Alexander 2002: 117).

GENESIS 3 IN LATER REVELATION

The concept of "seed" (often translated as "descendants" or "offspring") is absolutely critical throughout the Bible. "Seed" can refer to a collective group (numerous descendants) or to a single individual (see Gal 3:16).