

## The Creation of Clothes

**Genesis 3** Now the snake was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God really say, “You must not eat from any tree in the garden?”’

The woman said to the snake, ‘We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, “You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.”’

‘You will not certainly die,’ the snake said to the woman. ‘For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, ‘Where are you?’ He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.’ And he said, ‘Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?’ The man said, ‘The woman you put here with me – she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.’ Then the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The snake deceived me, and I ate.’ ...

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, ‘The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live for ever.’ So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he

drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

**Mark 5:25-34** And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, ‘If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.’ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realised that power had gone out from him. He turned round in the crowd and asked, ‘Who touched my clothes?’

‘You see the people crowding against you,’ his disciples answered, ‘and yet you can ask, “Who touched me?”’

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.’

### Notes

The story so far: *Gen. 2:4-25*

- (i) creation of Adam from dust
- (ii) planting of the Garden
- (iii) one rule: eat anything, except ...
- (iv) creation of Eve + comment about marriage (v.24)
- (v) unashamed nakedness of the couple

Development, Pt 1: *Gen. 3:1-13*

- (i) the crafty snake
- (ii) the temptation of Eve
- (iii) Eve’s fall
- (iv) 1st consequence: both aware of nakedness: fig-leaves
- (v) 2nd consequence: hiding from God

Development, Pt 2: *Gen. 3:20-25*

- (i) naming of Eve
- (ii) God’s provision of clothing

(iii) expulsion from Eden

What's it all about?

- (i) shame (at nakedness, etc.)
- (ii) vain attempt at cover-up ("fig leaves")
- (iii) hiding ashamed from God
- (iv) God's way of dealing with his children's shame
- (v) our new identity in Christ through grace alone

### Questions

1. If you were asked to speak in public or to a small group on *Genesis 3:1-13*, what approach might you take? Why?
2. What technique does the snake use to tempt Eve into eating the forbidden fruit? What does this suggest about our own experiences of temptation?
3. How might Eve have resisted the temptation to disobey God? How have we tried to resist? And with what success?
4. How do we respond to the suggestion that today people are more bothered by shame than by guilt? What's the difference between them?
5. The author of *Genesis* offers no explanation of the meaning of Adam and Eve's experience in the Garden of Eden, nor does the story reappear later in the OT. But there are a few references in the NT (eg. *Romans 5:14*, Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come. *1 Corinthians 15:22*, For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. *1 Corinthians 15:45-47*, It is written: 'The first man Adam became a living being', the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. *1 Timothy 2:13*, Adam was formed first, then Eve.)  
What do we deduce from all this?
6. What pastoral issues are raised by the common experience of shame?
7. What sort of "fig leaves" do people use to try to cover up their shame?
8. How do people try to hide from God? How can

they be helped not to? And by whom?

9. How shall we deal with "the accuser of our brothers and sisters" (*Rev.12*)?
10. What is grace, in its biblical sense?
11. "I am a new creation, no more in condemnation; here in the grace of God I stand."  
How does this state of affairs come about, and what does it mean to us personally?
12. Why does the woman in *Mark 5* probably feel excluded (NB *Leviticus 15:19-23*)? What can cause some Christians to feel excluded or isolated? What, if anything, can be done about this?

### Some (imaginary) cases to discuss

- (i) A young Christian student becomes aware of his homosexual orientation, but, fearing disapproval by church members, decides to keep it a secret. Finally, deeply frustrated and ashamed, he comes to you for advice.
- (ii) A church member feels ashamed of having been abused in childhood but cannot bring him/herself to let it be known. Finally he/she plucks up the courage to share the fact with you.
- (iii) A teenager known to you from a church family is being bullied at school and online for attending church on Sundays, and feels both fearful and ashamed. Eventually he/she comes to you in despair.
- (iv) An older church member is beginning to suffer from depression and spiritual doubts. Somewhat ashamed and fearful of setting a bad example to younger Christians, he/she keeps quiet about this, but the truth slips out in a conversation with you.
- (v) A lady, well known in the church, feels utterly worthless and inferior, though no one has guessed this. She shares her feelings with you over a cup of coffee.

### Prayer

Discuss how to pray for and/or with the kind of people mentioned in the case studies. Then get on with it.