

## **SESSION 25: FEAR**

Genesis 3:7-10

April 21, 2024

We are now past the moment of “the Fall.” In our previous session we examined the actions of the first couple, and the immediate, tragic results of their rebellion against Yahweh God. In the passage before us these two individuals were learn the cosmic consequences of their misguided choice: believing the lies of the serpent over the commands of their Creator.

At the end of our last session I concluded that the seemingly reflex decision of the man and woman to cover their genitals was *not* because of a newfound shame *between the man and woman*, but that something within them—spiritual, psychological, an emergence of the conscience—now drove them to cover themselves before *God*. That is, in their new experience of sin, they were now cognizant of a change in their relationship with their Maker—as we see played out more tangibly in v8.

I concluded, as well, that as pertains to Adam and Eve, I interpret v7 as a preamble to—a glide-slope into, as it were—v8.

**Read Genesis 3:7.**

**Read Genesis 3:8-13.**

**v8**

We stand amazed at the sudden reversal of fortune that has occurred in the garden. It seems just mere moments before that the man and woman were in close fellowship with Yahweh God; now they flee from His presence.

I have no doubt that Moses, like any chronicler, compresses time for the sake of the narrative. This does not mean he presents a false picture with his Eden narrative; much as other writers in God’s word, he just does not include every last detail of every event that transpires during those early days. So it is incumbent upon us to realize that the time span may be broader than is suggested by the text.

Even with that in mind, it has been an abrupt reversal, and we are left saddened by the tragedy of it all. Everything so far in Chapter Three has transpired before the first couple have any children, and before the first woman is even given a name! ❏ So I doubt that we're talking about decades here—or even many years.

*Then they heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day,*

The words in this first portion of the verse are a bit tricky, leading to a variety of subtle interpretations—although our common versions are in general agreement: “they heard the sound of...,” and “in the cool of the day.”

The word translated “sound” (“voice” in the KJV) is the Hebrew *qol*, which is commonly used for not just the sound of the human voice, but the sound made by just about any creature, from birds to water buffaloes. But it can also be used for the sound of inanimate objects, such as the high priest's robe in Exodus 28:35.

**“You shall make on its hem pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet material, all around on its hem, and bells of gold between them all around: a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, all around on the hem of the robe. “It shall be on Aaron when he ministers; and its sound ❏ shall be heard when he comes into the holy place before Yahweh and when he goes out, so that he will not die.” (Exodus 28:33–35)**

The man is first named “Adam” (which is synonymous with the word “man”) in 2:20. The woman is given her name, by her husband, in 3:20. “Eve” means literally living, life—hence, “because she was the mother of all the living.”

NASB: “tinkling”


The word translated “cool” of the day is a familiar word we have seen before, *ruach*, literally breeze, wind, breath—the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek *pneuma*. Most take this to be a reference to the late afternoon of the day in the Middle East, when the wind kicks up. Others, however, say this is not a reference to a time of day, but a reference to the nature, or *presentation* of Yahweh in this moment—akin to Job 38:1.

**Then Yahweh answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,  
“Who is this that darkens counsel  
By words without knowledge?” (Job 38:1–2)**

Whether it is the Lord God's voice or the sound of his footsteps on the garden path, whether it occurs during the breezy, cooler portion of the day or is another reference to God's manifestation to them, the more important takeaway is that v8 makes clear that this is how the man and woman have been communing with Yahweh.

*Leupold:* The almost casual way in which this is remarked indicates that this did not occur for the first time just then. The assumption that God had repeatedly done this is quite feasible.

Let us take a few moments to consider what is happening here (and, presumably, had occurred before)—specifically, *How is Yahweh God (Yahweh Elohim) presenting Himself to the man and woman?* If God is manifesting Himself to them in physical form, then we call this a *theophany*, a physical appearance of God—or even *a god*—to man. Thus the various appearances of the preincarnate Son of God in the OT were theophanies.

This phenomenon is not without its mysteries. Moses writes, in Exodus 33:11, that “Yahweh used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend.” Yet, even though the apostle John references Moses in v17 of his epistle’s first chapter, he goes on to state in v18, “No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.” Ronald B. Allen  addresses this in his commentary on Numbers12:8.

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*Allen:* To other prophets God may speak in a variety of ways... But to Moses there is a one-on-one relationship. Only Moses could approach the holy mountain and gaze on the Divine Person. What we are to make of these words is somewhat uncertain, given the language of mystery in the Hebrew Bible and the denial in the NT that anyone ever saw God at any time (John 1:18). At the very least, these words speak of an unprecedented level of intimacy between God and Moses.

John 1:18 states, “No one has seen God at any time.” In reference to that statement, D. A. Carson writes, “Apparent exceptions are always qualified in some way.” The few “apparent exceptions” in Scripture never state plainly that a human being has seen Yahweh God *in His native state*.

I conclude that what we have in Genesis 1-3 is either the preincarnate second member of the Godhead, or a manifestation of Father God peculiar (i.e., unique) to these early days of Creation. Whether that be a flesh and blood person or a glowing orb, who can say. Remember, this is not His first appearance; they would include (but not necessarily be limited to)

- God creating and speaking to the first humans (1:27-30);
- The detailed, “hands-on” creation of Adam (2:7);
- His setting of man in the garden and issuing His commands about the trees (2:15-17);
- His bringing the animals to Adam for naming (2:19-20);
- and when He presented the woman to Adam (2:22).

Whatever shape Yahweh God took for this fellowship, we can also place this in the category of worship: subservient man meeting, in humility, with God. And thus, in this precise moment, that fellowship—that worship—has been broken.

*Adam Clarke:* The time for this solemn worship is again come, and God is in his place; but Adam and Eve have sinned, and therefore, instead of being found in the place of worship, are hidden among the trees! *Reader, how often has this been thy case!* (emphasis added)

We will return to Clarke’s last line in a few minutes.

*and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of Yahweh God in the midst of the trees of the garden.*

Clarke speaks as well to the dramatic change that has just come over the first man.

*Clarke:* A short time before Adam was so wise that he could name all the creatures brought before him, according to their respective natures and qualities; now he does not know the first principle concerning the Divine nature, that it knows all things, and that it is omnipresent, therefore he endeavors to hide himself among the trees from the eye of the all-seeing God! How astonishing is this! When the creatures were brought to him he could name them, because he could discern their respective natures and properties; when Eve was brought to him he could immediately tell what she was, who she was, and for what end made, though he was in a deep sleep when God formed her; and this seems to be particularly noted, merely to show the depth of his wisdom, and the perfection of his discernment. But alas! how are the mighty fallen! Compare his present with his past state, his state before the transgression with his state after it; and say, is this the same creature? the creature of whom God said, as he said of all his works, He is very good—just what he should be, a living image of the living God; but now lower than the beasts of the field?

It is astonishingly easy to read this account—just as we read the accounts of the temperamental Israelites constantly whining and complaining to Moses—and for us to cluck our tongues at the first man and woman. *Of course you're cowering in fear; you disobeyed Yahweh's explicit command! What do you expect? Why did you listen to the serpent?*

But we return to Clarke's line: "Reader, how often has this been thy case!" My guess is that no one in this room should throw stones.

How many times have we sinned against God and shunned His presence? How many times have we avoided prayer, set aside the reading of God's word, because our hearts have been darkened by some form of rebellion against Him? Would not we too, sensing His presence near, have cowered in fear behind the trees?

For years I have kept near my chair in my prayer closet a small piece of paper containing words of rebuke and consolation for times such as this—those times we feel too dirty to approach our God. The counsel is from our local pastor, probably written for an early Pastor's Pen article. Let me pass along just a few lines I have highlighted—although every word of the article is precious to me.

*Pastor Jeremy:* These fears not only keep me from the throne of grace, they are rooted in a deep slander of the person and character of God. When I find myself feeling this way, like a dog cowering in the corner with its tail between its legs, it is because I do not believe this wonderful truth about my Savior... [that He] suffered and was tempted (in part) to fully enable Him to sympathize with us in our weakness, and to offer us help when we most need it... Never, no never, will the one who trusts in Christ ever be turned away from Him when He comes in faith and repentance... When we least deserve to be in His presence, let us boldly draw near by faith to our sympathetic Savior and High Priest—not because of who we are but because of who He is and what He has done for those who trust Him.

It is true, of course, that Adam and his wife did not have that advantage of a "sympathetic Savior and High Priest," an Advocate who had shed His own blood so that we would be forgiven our transgressions. Because they do not, these two will experience immediate judgment for their sin; they do not have what even Job cried out for, an "adjudicator between us" (Job 9:32-33).

To wrap up our discussion of v8, we might answer Clarke's ruminations about the change in Adam with this: *Sin* made Adam stupid.

v9

**Yahweh God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"**

Not for one moment do we imagine that God is literally searching for the absent man, as in, *Where, oh where are you, Adam?* I tend to think a more accurate paraphrase of this verse would be, *What have you done that you are hiding from Me, Adam?* or even the more succinct, *Show yourself, Adam.*

*Leupold:* God is not seeking information. God's questions are pedagogic. Man is to be made to realize that something must be radically wrong when the creature, who hitherto had his chief delight in associating with the good and loving Father, slinks away in hiding under the trees deep in the garden.

v10

**And he said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."**

Even though I appreciate (and favor) the more generic "sound" over "voice" in verses 8 and 10, I also appreciate that "Thy voice" has the first emphasis in v10, and just sounds silly when rendered, as in *Young's Literal Translation*, "Thy sound I have heard in the garden..." Nonetheless I favor the translation "sound" for it leaves it open to either interpretation: a voice can utter a sound, and a footfall or one brushing past tree limbs can produce a sound. ❏ But, again, this is not the most important takeaway from this verse.

To Yahweh's rhetorical query Adam replies, "...I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." Which doesn't answer the question, does it, but reinforces the idea that what Yahweh is actually asking is, *Why are you hiding from me?*

Adam's response is "a compound of half-truth, evasion, and attempted deception" (Leupold). He had never before been afraid to be naked before his God; what has changed?

Sin. ❏

I also like the NIVs' simple "I heard you in the garden..." for the same reason.

*Leupold:* "One cannot but marvel at what a wreck of his former good self man has become. The damage wrought by sin is almost incomprehensibly great. The tongue of man can hardly describe it, except where inspired utterances like those of this chapter lie before us. Here is one of the most telling indictments, of the viciousness and supreme sinfulness of sin."

# SESSION 25

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Genesis 3:7-10

## Timeframe

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## Theophany

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## Consequences

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