



Genesis - Chapter Three

I. Genesis 1:1-11:26 - Primeval History (continues)

1.b Genesis 2:4b-4:26 - Earth's First People (continues)

Summary of Chapter Three

The serpent twists the words God had spoken and lures the woman into a deadly trap. She takes the fruit from the forbidden tree and gives it to her husband to eat as well. Both are then enlightened to their sinful act by being ashamed of their nakedness.

God then rebukes the serpent for his part in the plot, indicating that there will always be enmity between his offspring and God's people. The woman, for her part, will bear children in pain and will feel subjected to her husband. However, it is the man who bears ultimate responsibility for he was the one instructed by God not to eat of the fruit of the tree. He not only failed in his duty but tried to blame both the woman and God for his actions rather than asking for God's forgiveness.

In an act of love God sacrificed at least one of his animals in order to provide clothing for the man and the woman and then banished them from the garden so they would not eat of the tree of life and thereby have eternal life in their sinful state. The garden was guarded by cherubim to prevent the man from returning to the garden until after redemption.

1.b.ii Genesis 3:1-24 - The First Sin and Its Punishment

The sudden and unexplained arrival of a cunning serpent presents a challenge of immense importance to the human couple. Their choice is to disregard God's instructions, an act of wilful rebellion that has terrible consequences for the whole of creation. As a result, God's creation is thrown into disorder, with chaotic

effects that result from the disruption of all the harmonious relationships that God had previously established.

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, ‘Did God say, “You shall not eat from any tree in the garden”?’

Genesis 3:1

The speaking serpent is suddenly introduced into the story with minimum detail. Nothing is mentioned about its origin, other than that it is implied to be one of the wild animals that the LORD God had made. Although the serpent is eventually portrayed as God’s enemy, the initial introduction is full of ambiguity regarding its true nature. While the brief comment that it is more crafty than any other possibly indicates potential danger, the Hebrew term ‘*arum*’ does not carry the negative moral connotations of the English words crafty, cunning and even wise.

Similarly, the serpent’s initial question may have sounded quite innocent, although it does deliberately misquote God as saying that the couple shall not eat of any tree in the garden. Did the serpent merely misunderstand what God had said? He did not dare to tell a lie but he does suggest one in his question! In these ways the subtlety of the serpent’s approach to the woman is captured by the narrator, as Paul also states: <<*But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ*>> (2 Corinthians 11:3). It is noteworthy that the serpent also deliberately avoids using God’s personal name Yahweh or LORD when he addresses the woman. Here is another hint that his presence in the garden presents a threat. Although his initial words appear deceptively innocent, his subsequent contradiction of God leaves no doubt about the serpent’s motive and purpose.

The text does not indicate when or how the serpent became evil. As the narrative proceeds, it becomes clear that more than a simple snake is at work here; an evil power is using the snake. As indicated by God’s declaration that ‘everything he had made was very good’ (1:31), clearly evil entered the created world at some unknown point after God’s work of creation was completed. Likewise, nothing in the Bible suggests the eternal existence of evil.

² The woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; ³ but God said, “You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.”’

Genesis 3:2-3

The woman's response largely echoes the divine instruction given in 2:16-17 regarding the tree of knowledge, although she fails to identify the tree clearly as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and adds the comment nor shall you touch it. The woman appears to defend the instruction given by God but is falling for the trickery of evil that makes such schemes seem not only appealing but acceptable. These minor variations are possibly meant to convey, even at this stage, that the woman views God's instructions as open to human modification. For more on the meaning of the covenant, refer to the comments on 2:17.

⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die; ⁵ for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'

Genesis 3:4-5

The serpent not only directly contradicts what God has said but goes on to present the fruit of the tree as something worth obtaining; by eating it, the couple will be like God, knowing good and evil. The irony of the serpent's remarks should not be overlooked. The couple, unlike the serpent, has been made in the image of God (1:26-27). In this way they are already like God. Moreover, being in the image of God, they are expected to exercise authority over all the beasts of the field, which includes the serpent. By obeying the serpent, however, they betray the trust placed in them by God. This is not merely an act of disobedience; it is an act of treachery. Those who were meant to govern the earth on God's behalf instead rebel against their divine King and obey one of his creatures.

There are many human philosophies that would like people to think that they can be like God or like the gods they believe have authority over the earth. There are some that do not make this link quite as specific but instead teach that humans have the power within themselves to do all things apart from God and this is part of the treachery in the rebellious human heart: <<*I will ascend to the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High*>> (Isaiah 14:14), and: <<*Mortal, say to the prince of Tyre, Thus says the Lord God: Because your heart is proud and you have said, 'I am a god; I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas,' yet you are but a mortal, and no god, though you compare your mind with the mind of a god*>> (Ezekiel 28:2).

You will not die. It is sometimes claimed that the serpent is correct when he says these things to the couple, for they do not immediately die, at least not physically, for Adam lives to be 930 years old (5:5). Further, their eyes are opened (3:7) and God acknowledges in v.22a that <<*the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil*>>. Yet the serpent speaks half-truths, promising much but delivering little. These half-truths are thinly disguised lies which are the essence

of all he ever speaks, as Jesus has taught: *<<You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies>>* (John 8:44).

Their eyes are indeed opened, and they come to know something, but it is only that they are naked. They know good and evil by experience, but their sense of guilt makes them afraid to meet with God; they have become slaves to evil. And while they do not cease to exist physically, they are expelled from the garden sanctuary and God's presence. Cut off from the source of life and the tree of life, they are in the realm of the dead. What they experience outside of Eden is not life as God intended, but spiritual death.

⁶ 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.

Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw. Like all the other trees in the garden, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was 'pleasant to the sight and good for food' (2:9). The irony is that somehow the serpent has made the woman discontent with the permitted trees, focusing her desire on this one. Its deadly appeal to her, apparently, is its ability to make one wise, refer to the comment on 2:17; wise, however, not according to the 'fear of the LORD' (Proverbs 1:7 and 9:10).

A key phrase here is that the tree was to be desired. Such desire is often the root cause of man's downfall: *<<But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death>>* (James 1:14-15), and: *<<Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world – the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches – comes not from the Father but from the world>>* (1 John 2:15-16).

She also gave some to her husband, who was with her. Although Paul correctly writes: *<<For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor>>* (1 Timothy 2:13-14), the fact that Adam was with her and that he knowingly ate what God had forbidden indicates that Adam's sin was both an act of conscious rebellion against God and a failure to carry out his divinely ordained responsibility to guard or keep (2:15) both the garden and the woman that God had created as *<<a helper as his partner>>* (2:18). The disastrous consequences of Adam's sin cannot be

overemphasised, resulting in the fall of mankind, the beginning of every kind of sin, suffering and pain, as well as physical and spiritual death for the human race.

This is part of the subtlety of the evil one. He does not use many words to beguile but plants seeds of doubt or desire into the human heart. Just as God produces a harvest by planting seeds in good soil so too the evil one can produce a crop by planting his seed into a receptive heart. To defeat him one must stay close to God at all times and in all ways.

Introduction to Genesis 3:7-13

Eating the fruit transforms the couple, but not for the better. Now ashamed of their nakedness, a complete contrast to 2:25, they attempt to clothe themselves. Conscious of the Lord God's presence, they hide. When confronted by God regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the man blames the woman, who in turn blames the serpent.

⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

Genesis 3:7

They knew that they were naked. This is not a feeling of vulnerability but of perceived shame. There is, of course, no shame in married couples seeing each other naked but the realisation here went beyond the nakedness of their bodies right through to the self-revelation of their now corrupt souls. They tried to cover the latter by making loincloths of fig leaves to cover the former.

This is how the evil one rewards those who accept his ways. They are left with feelings of guilt and shame, and become alienated from God, their only true source of love and goodness.

⁸ They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:8

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden. This amazing statement provides no details for this scene, yet it is later promised that God will be with his people in this way: <<*And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people*>> (Leviticus 26:12), and: <<*Because the LORD your God travels along with your camp, to save you and to hand over your enemies to you, therefore your camp must be holy, so that he may not see anything indecent among you and turn away from you*>> (Deuteronomy 23:14).

The bible also reveals that <<**God is Spirit**>> (John 4:24a). He is also omnipresent and therefore one would not expect him to walk anywhere. Some believe this to represent the first of many apparent theophanies of the pre-incarnate Christ meeting with his people in visible form. Even if this is not the case, the image does provide deep insight into the heart of God to want to be so closely associated to the humans that he had created.

The man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God. No doubt they had heard the voice of God in the garden before and would have run to meet him. How things have changed through one act of disobedient folly. The idea that anyone can hide from the sight of God is quite laughable, especially by hiding among the trees of the garden, for: <<**There is no gloom or deep darkness where evildoers may hide themselves**>> (Job 34:22), <<**Ha! You who hide a plan too deep for the LORD, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, 'Who sees us? Who knows us?'**>> (Isaiah 29:15), and: <<**Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them? says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the LORD**>> (Jeremiah 23:24). King David, knowing it was impossible to escape from God's sight, wrote: <<**Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,' even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you**>> (Psalm 139:7-12). Jonah tried to run away to Tarshish rather than go to prophesy in Nineveh and throughout the ages people still try to avoid God's presence in so many different ways and for so many different reasons.

⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' ¹⁰ He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' ¹¹ He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' ¹² The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.'

Genesis 3:9-12

The LORD God called to the man, and said to him 'Where are you?' God, of course, knew where Adam was but he asks the question so that the man will come to him. God always calls people to him! It should be noted that both man and you are singular in Hebrew. God thus confronts Adam first, holding him primarily responsible for what happened, as the one who is the representative or head of the husband and wife relationship, established before the fall; refer to the comments on 2:15-16.

I was afraid. Reverential fear before God is both natural and a sign of the awe that people hold for their God: <<*You shall not cheat one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God*>> (Leviticus 25:17), <<*So Samuel called upon the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel*>> (1 Samuel 12:18), and: <<*Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God*>> (2 Corinthians 7:1). However, Adam's fear is because he knows he has sinned and yet is not prepared to ask a gracious God for forgiveness.

I was naked; Who told you that you were naked? The man trapped himself by revealing that he now had knowledge that was previously kept from him for his own protection. God being omniscient knew what the man had done, in fact, he would have known what he was going to do even before he created him. Yet he still says: **Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?** This is for the benefit of the man so that he may know that God is aware of what he has done and it is time for repentance. The response is perhaps incomprehensible for, instead of seeking God's forgiveness, he states: **The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.** Thus he blames his wife for offering him the fruit and, worse still, God for giving him a wife in the first place. Spurgeon writes, '*He was guilty of unkindness to his wife and of blasphemy against his maker, in seeking to escape from confessing the sin which he had committed. It is an ill sign with men when they cannot be brought frankly to acknowledge their wrong-doing.*' How different human history might have been through one sincere act of repentance!

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.'

Genesis 3:13

Now it is the woman's turn: **What is this that you have done?** Her reply: **The serpent tricked me, and I ate** is at least a simple statement of truth and is less condemning than the attitude of the man but there was still no sign of a repentant heart for her actions. Paul records how easy it is to be deceived in this way: <<*For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me*>> (Romans 7:11). This reveals both the deadly outcome and the need to be aware of the consequences for not remaining obedient to God.

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,
'Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;

upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel.'

Genesis 3:14-15

Unlike his dialogue with both the man and the woman, God asks the serpent no question. He has no need to for he knows his true intent. Instead, God now passes judgement on the protagonists and addresses the serpent first. Verse 1 declared the serpent 'more crafty'; now God declares it more cursed, Hebrew 'arur. Indicted for its part in tempting the woman, the serpent will be viewed with contempt from now on. This is conveyed both literally and figuratively by the serpent's going on its belly and eating dust: <<May his foes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust>> (Psalm 72:9), <<The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent – its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD>> (Isaiah 65:25), and: <<The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall lay their hands on their mouths; their ears shall be deaf; they shall lick dust like a snake, like the crawling things of the earth; they shall come trembling out of their fortresses; they shall turn in dread to the LORD our God, and they shall stand in fear of you>> (Micah 7:16-17). Having deceived the woman, the serpent will have ongoing hostility with the woman, which will be perpetuated by their respective offspring.

While many modern commentators interpret this part of the curse as merely describing the natural hostility that exists between men and snakes, it has traditionally been understood as pointing forward to the defeat of the serpent by a future descendant of the woman, and this interpretation fits well with the words and the context. This defeat is implied by the serpent's being struck on the head, which is more serious than the offspring of Eve being struck on the heel. For this reason, v.15 has been labelled the 'Protoevangelium,' the first announcement of the Gospel.

This interpretation requires that the serpent be viewed as more than a mere snake, something which the narrative itself implies, given the serpent's ability to speak and the vile things he says. While the present chapter does not explicitly identify the serpent with Satan, such an identification is a legitimate

inference and is clearly what the apostle John has in view in Revelation 12:9 and 20:2. The motif of the offspring of the woman is picked up in Genesis 4:25 with the birth of Seth; subsequently, the rest of Genesis traces a single line of Seth's descendants, observing that it will eventually produce a king through whom all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel. Most interpreters have suggested that by saying he and his, the intended meaning is that one particular offspring is in view. Within the larger biblical framework, this hope comes to fulfilment in Jesus Christ, who is clearly presented in the NT as overcoming Satan, while at the same time being bruised: <<*Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil*>> (Hebrews 2:14), and: <<*Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil*>> (1 John 3:8); something that is also confirmed in Matthew 12:29, Mark 1:24, Luke 10:18, John 12:31 and 16:11, 1 Corinthians 15:24 and Colossians 2:15.

Satan struck the heel of Christ by turning the authorities and many of the people against him. Yet through his triumph on the Cross, Jesus struck the fatal blow on Satan and all who follow him, whether knowingly or simply by rejecting the Gospel message.

¹⁶ To the woman he said,
'I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you.'

Genesis 3:16

This is not so much a means of punishment but a way of reminding all women of the consequences of the original sin of disobedience. God pronounces that she will suffer pain, Hebrew '*itstsabon*, in the bearing of children, for this strikes at the very heart of the woman's distinctiveness, for she is <<*the mother of all who live*>> (v.20).

The analogy of pain in childbirth is one used frequently in Scripture, e.g. <<*trembling took hold of them there, pains as of a woman in labour*>> (Psalm 48:6), <<*Pangs and agony will seize them; they will be in anguish like a woman in labour. They will look aghast at one another; their faces will be aflame*>> (Isaiah 13:8b), <<*anguish has taken hold of us, pain as of a woman in labour*>>

(Jeremiah 6:24b), <<Now why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in you? Has your counsellor perished, that pangs have seized you like a woman in labour?>> (Micah 4:9), yet Paul acknowledges this is not a punishment on women but a gift of grace: <<Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty>> (1 Timothy 2:15).

Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you. These words from the Lord indicate that there will be an ongoing struggle between the woman and the man for leadership in the marriage relationship. The leadership role of the husband and the complementary relationship between husband and wife that were ordained by God before the fall have now been deeply damaged and distorted by sin. This especially takes the form of inordinate desire on the part of the wife, and domineering rule on the part of the husband.

The Hebrew term here translated desire, *teshuqah*, is rarely found in the OT. However, it appears again in 4:7, in a statement that closely parallels this verse; that is, where the Lord says to Cain, just before Cain's murder of his brother, that sin's <<*desire is for you*>>, i.e. to master Cain, and that Cain must <<*master it*>>, which he immediately fails to do, by murdering his brother, as seen in 4:8.

Similarly, the ongoing result of Adam and Eve's original sin of rebellion against God will have disastrous consequences for their relationship:

1. Eve will have the sinful 'desire' to oppose Adam and to assert leadership over him, reversing God's plan for Adam's leadership in marriage.
2. Adam will also abandon his God-given, pre-fall role of leading, guarding, and caring for his wife, replacing this with his own sinful, distorted desire to rule over Eve.

Thus one of the most tragic results of Adam and Eve's rebellion against God is an ongoing, damaging conflict between husband and wife in marriage, driven by the sinful behaviour of both in rebellion against their respective God-given roles and responsibilities in marriage. Refer to the comments made on Ephesians 5:21-32 for the NT pattern for marriage founded on the redemptive work of Christ.

¹⁷ And to the man he said,
'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
"You shall not eat of it",

cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
19 By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread
until you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.'

Genesis 3:17-19

Because you have listened to the voice of your wife. This should not be taken as a command not to seek or heed a wife's advice, for she was given as a partner to the man, but as a command not to accept human counsel that contradicts the will of God and the commandments that he has given for holy living.

God's punishment of the man involves his relationship with the very ground from which he was formed. Because he has eaten that which was prohibited to him, he will have to struggle to eat in the future. Given the abundance of food that God provided in the garden, this judgement reflects God's disfavour. Adam will no longer enjoy the garden's abundance but will have to work the ground from which he was taken. The punishment is not work itself, as confirmed in 2:15, but rather the hardship and frustration, similar to the pain of the woman (v.16), that will accompany the man's labour.

To say that the ground is cursed, and will bring forth thorns and thistles, indicates that the abundant productivity that was seen in Eden will no longer be the case: <<*But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and on the verge of being cursed; its end is to be burned over*>> (Hebrews 6:8). Underlying this judgement is a disruption of the harmonious relationship that originally existed between humans and nature. The wise King Solomon concludes: <<*I, the Teacher, when king over Israel in Jerusalem, applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to human beings to be busy with*>> (Ecclesiastes 1:12-13).

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread. Although it was always intended that man should work to earn his keep, it was initially intended to be a labour of love but will now be an onerous and backbreaking task.

Further, the man's body will return to the ground, i.e. it will physically die and decay, which was not true of the original created order: <<*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned*>> (Romans 5:12). For this reason, the Bible looks forward to a time when nature will be set free from the consequences of human sin; i.e. nature will no longer be the arena of punishment, and it will finally have glorified human beings to manage it and bring out its full potential: <<*For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now*>> (Romans 8:19-22).

²⁰ The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all who live. ²¹ And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.

Genesis 3:20-21

God's words of judgement on the serpent, the woman and the man are immediately followed by two observations that possibly convey a sense of hope. First, the man named his wife Eve, which means 'life-giver.' Second, God clothed the couple. While this final action recognises that the human couple is now ashamed of their nakedness in God's presence, as a gesture it suggests that God still cares for these, his creatures. Because God provides garments to clothe Adam and Eve, thus requiring the death of an animal to cover their nakedness, many see a parallel here related to:

1. The system of animal sacrifices to atone for sin later instituted by God through the leadership of Moses in Israel.
2. The eventual sacrificial death of Christ as atonement for sin.

This action records the first physical death in history and it was undertaken by the hand of the one who created all life in the first place. This could not be more poignant. There are many who speculate that a lamb was involved in this slaughter, which ties it to point 2 above. The words of the apostle spring to mind: <<*You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake*>> (1 Peter 1:18-20).

²² Then the LORD God said, 'See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take

also from the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever' — ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴ He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

Genesis 3:22-24

The couple is sent forth from the garden, although it should be noted that the decision for expulsion refers to him; the man is seen by God as being the chief perpetrator of the sin. God begins a sentence in v.22 and breaks off without finishing it, for the man to live for ever in his sinful condition is an unbearable thought, and God must waste no time in preventing it. This is clearly an act of love on behalf of God the Father, who could not see his children live eternally with a sinful nature without hope of the redemption that would one day come through the giving of his Son.

The tree of life then probably served in some way to confirm a person in his or her moral condition, as alluded to in: <<*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, but violence takes lives away*>> (Proverbs 11:30), <<*Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life*>> (Proverbs 13:12), and: <<*Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God*>> (Revelation 2:7).

According to Genesis 2:15 the man was put in the garden to work it and keep or guard it. Outside the garden the man will have to work the ground, but the task of guarding the garden is given to the cherubim. By allowing themselves to be manipulated by the serpent, the couple failed to fulfil their priestly duty of guarding the garden. Consequently, their priestly status is removed from them as they are put out of the sanctuary. The placing of cherubim at the east of the garden is reflected in the tabernacle and temple, where cherubim were an important component in the structure and furnishings: <<*You shall make two cherubim of gold; you shall make them of hammered work, at the two ends of the mercy-seat. Make one cherub at one end, and one cherub at the other; of one piece with the mercy-seat you shall make the cherubim at its two ends. The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy-seat with their wings. They shall face each other; the faces of the cherubim shall be turned towards the mercy-seat*>> (Exodus 25:18-20).