

## THE FIRST FAMILY'S TROUBLES

Gen. 3; 4:1-15

In the middle of the Garden of Eden were two special trees. One was the Tree of Life and the other was the tree giving knowledge of good and evil. God told Adam he could eat the fruit of any tree but he must not eat the fruit from the tree giving knowledge of good and evil. To do so would be to disobey and bring death.

Now the serpent (Satan) was more crafty than any living creature. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden"?''

The woman replied, 'We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God told us not to eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or touch it, or we will die.'

'You will not die,' the serpent 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.'

The woman saw that the fruit of the tree looked good for eating. She also desired to know about good and evil and gain wisdom so she took some of the forbidden fruit and ate it. She gave some to Adam, who was with her, and he ate it too.

Immediately they realised they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the two of them heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. They hid from God among the trees. God called to Adam, 'Where are you?'

Adam answered, 'I heard you in the garden, and I was so afraid because I was naked, that I hid.' God replied, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?' Adam answered, 'The woman you put here with me gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.'

Then God said to the woman, 'What is this you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.' So God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all other animals. You will crawl on your belly in the dust as long as you live. There will be hostility between you and the woman and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.'

Then God said to the woman, 'I will sharpen the pain of your pregnancy, and in pain you will give birth. You will desire to control your husband, but he will rule over you.'

The God addressed Adam. 'Since you listened to your wife and disobeyed, the ground is cursed. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. It will grow thorns and thistles, though you will eat of its grains. By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you die. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.'

Then the Adam named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live. And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife. God said, 'Humans have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the Tree of Life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!' So God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and He sent Adam out to cultivate the ground. Mighty cherubim angels were posted to stop Adam and Eve returning to the Garden of Eden. And He placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the Tree of Life.

Adam and Eve had a baby boy who they named Cain. Later, Eve gave birth to another son who was named Abel.

When they grew up, Cain cultivated the ground while Abel became a shepherd.

When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord. Abel also brought a gift, the best of the firstborn lambs from his flock.

The Lord accepted the sacrifice Abel gave, but He did not accept the gift Cain gave. This made Cain very angry and dejected.

'Why are you so angry?' the Lord asked Cain. 'You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.'

One day Cain suggested to his brother, 'Let's go out into the fields.'

While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him.

Afterward the Lord asked Cain, 'Where is your brother? Where is Abel?'

'I don't know,' Cain responded. 'Am I my brother's guardian?' 'What have you done?' God replied. 'Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! Now you are cursed and banished. The ground will no longer yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.'

'My punishment is too great to bear!' Cain uttered. 'You have banished me and made me a homeless wanderer. Anyone who finds me will kill me!' 'No,' the Lord replied. 'If anyone murders you their punishment will be seven times greater.'

The Lord put a mark on Cain to warn anyone who might try to kill him. So Cain left the Lord's presence and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

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