

Genesis 3:8-15

Today I'd like you to take a few moments to **stop** thinking about the extreme **heat** which we've been experiencing lately, and to think about a different time of year - **Christmas**. If we took away all the Christmas **trees** and **wreaths**, the **lights** and **ornaments**, the **snow**, and even the **cookies** - could we still have **Christmas**? If we had to go without Christmas **vacation** from school, the exchange of **presents** between family and friends, and all the seasonal **television** specials, could we still have Christmas? I'm pretty sure you all know the **answer** to those questions. But what if we took away **Genesis 3**, our **text** for this morning? What if we removed from our minds any knowledge of the **fall** of humanity into **sin**, and of God's **promise** to send a **Savior** for us lost sinners? Could we still have a **meaningful Christmas**? I think you know that answer to those questions too.

A pastor once said, "The first three chapters of the Bible are the **key** to understanding all the **rest** of the Bible. If you don't **know** them, you will be **lost** the rest of the way." And we could even take that statement a step **further**. If we didn't know anything about the text we have before us today, we would never be able to understand **ourselves**, our **behavior**, the **problems** we face in the world around us, or the great **love** which God has shown to us in Jesus. Genesis 3 is that **important**. It shows us **Humanity's Great Tragedy, And God's Salvation Prophecy**.

The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is not a **myth**, but rather, it's a **true historic event** which God has recorded for us in the Bible. It's the record of humanity's tragic **fall** into **sin**. Adam and Eve were God's **special** creation - made in **His image** - **holy** and **pure** - possessing a completely perfect **trust** in God. They **loved** Him, and were happy to **obey** the one **command** which He had given to them: "*You may freely eat from every tree in the garden, but you shall not eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, for on the day that you eat from it, you will certainly die.*"

But then we're told that the **devil** paid a visit to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The devil is an **angel**, who led a **rebellion** against God, and who consequently was cast **out** of heaven to spend an eternity in **hell**. He appeared in the garden as a **snake**, and he said to the woman, "*Has God really said, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?*" It **seems** like an **innocent** enough question, but what the devil was **doing** was tempting Eve

to **question** God's Word. She answered, "*We **may** eat fruit from the trees of the garden, but **not** from the fruit of the tree that is in the **middle** of the garden. God has said, 'You shall **not** eat from it. You shall not **touch** it, or else you will **die**.'*" Then the devil showed his true **colors** by directly **contradicting** what God had said. He said, "*You certainly will **not** die. In fact, God knows that the day you eat from it, your eyes will be **opened**, and you will be **like God**, knowing good **and** evil.*" The devil was tempting Eve to **doubt** God's **goodness**, and to **distrust** Him. He made it sound as if God was holding **back** something which was **good** for them, because at this time they didn't **know** anything about **evil**. Of course, it was a **lie**. Evil **isn't** good. But Eve **swallowed** the lie, and then proceeded to swallow a bite of the **fruit** which God had **forbidden**. She also gave some to her **husband**, who was **with** her, and **he** ate it too. In this way they **both** chose to side with the **devil**, and to disobey **God**. They fell into **sin**.

Their fall was **life-changing** - not only for **themselves**, but for everyone **else** who would come **after** them. Their lives of **harmony** with the LORD came crashing down. They **died** - which was exactly what God had **warned** them would happen. **Immediately** sin brought them **spiritual** and **eternal** death, and in the future, they would have to face **physical** death as well. They **lost** the **purity** and **holiness** which God had given to them. They became **selfish**. They lost **trust** in God, and they tried to **hide** from Him. Their lives were riddled with **guilt** and **fear**. And as our text continues, they both tried to **deny** their sin, and pass the **blame** on to someone else. Adam and Eve had become servants of the **devil**.

But as I said, this wasn't **only** a tragedy for Adam and Eve. The Bible teaches us that "*Just as sin entered the world through **one** man and death through sin, so also death spread to **all people** because **all** sinned.*" **All people** fell in Adam's fall. **Sin**, **death**, and eternal **condemnation** came to **every descendant** of Adam - and that includes **you** and **me**. We have **all** inherited Adam's sin. We were **all** born with a sinful **nature**. And the Apostle Paul would later write, "*Indeed, I know that **good** does **not** live in me, that is, in my **sinful flesh**.*" Our human flesh is **proud** and **selfish**. It thinks it's **entitled** to whatever it **wants** - even if those wants go **against** God's commandments. And all too often, they **do**.

We've **all** tried to **cover up** bad things which we've done. We've **all** felt **guilty**, and we've all been **afraid** of God's punishment - and **rightly so** because our sins have placed us under the **wrath** of God. Our God has every

right to be **angry** with us - to have nothing **to do** with us - and to let us **suffer** through lives of **misery** and **shame**. The events of Genesis 3 mark the saddest day in all of human history - the day of our tragic **fall** into **sin**.

But our **good** and **gracious** God came to the **rescue**. At the very time when His children had shown themselves to be **disobedient** and **unfaithful**, He showed **Himself** to be a **loving** and **merciful** Father, by providing Adam and Eve with the very **first** Gospel promise - the promise of a coming **Savior** who would **rescue** all people from the **curse** of sin. God said to the devil, *“I will put **hostility** between you and the woman, and between **your seed** and **her seed**. **He** will crush your **head**, and **you** will crush his **heel**.”* Satan **thought** he had humanity on his side **forever**. But **God** announced that **He** wouldn't **allow** that to happen. He would create **hostility** between the devil and humanity. And **ultimately** the hostilities would **end** with a battle between the **devil** and one particular **seed** of the woman - one **man**. In that battle, the devil would **wound** the man. He would crush His **heel**. But in the process, the **man** would crush the serpent's **head**, thus **destroying** the **power** of Satan, and breaking his **hold** over all people.

This was God's **first promise** to send a Savior, and that promise was **fulfilled** thousands of years later, in **Jesus**. John clearly tells us the **purpose** of Jesus' birth in his first letter. *“This is **why** the Son of God appeared: to **destroy** the works of the Devil.”* Jesus came to **crush** the **head** of Satan and to **destroy** all of his power. Jesus came to **save** all people from their sins, and to make **peace** for us with God; and He **did** it by **overcoming** the devil's temptations, by **living** with complete **trust** in God and **obedience** to His will, and by offering His life as a perfect **sacrifice** for sin by dying on the cross. Satan no longer has any **claim** on us, because our sins have all been **forgiven** through **Jesus**. All those selfish, sinful choices and actions that you and I have ever made, were placed on **Him**, and He suffered the **punishment** we deserved, and removed the **guilt** of our sins forever. Because of **Jesus** we have received **life** and **fellowship** with God, and the right to be called His **children**.

And that takes us back to thoughts of **Christmas** once again. The **birth of Jesus** reveals God's **faithfulness** to that loving **promise** which He made in the Garden of Eden. In spite of the fact that we had **disobeyed** Him, and **spoiled** His perfect world, God **loved** us, and promised to send His **Son** to **save** us. That love of God never **wavered** throughout history. He continued to remain **faithful**, and He always **will**. The love which God has

for us sinners will **always** be there, and it **lifts up** our hearts with joy. Even though the devil will continue to do his **dirty** work - **twisting** God's Word, and **tempting** us to sin - we will always have God's love for us in **Jesus**. Our God will never **leave** us or **forsake** us, and resting in His faithful love, we can **defy** the devil's attempts to **deceive** us. Our sinful nature will never completely **go away**, and we will continue to **lament** all those things we **do**, which we didn't really **want** to do - the cruel **words** we've spoken - the rude **behavior** we've shown toward others. But in the end we can **rejoice**, because through **Jesus** we have **God's love**, and God is faithful to **forgive** our sins, and to **purify** us from all unrighteousness.

Genesis 3 reveals **Humanity's Great Tragedy** - it explains all the sin and sorrow which is found in our **world** today, and in our **lives**. But Genesis 3 also reveals **God's Salvation Prophecy** - His **promise** to send His **Son** into the world to set us **free** from sin, and to take us **home** to heaven. That promise was **fulfilled** in Jesus. He is our **Savior**, our **deliverer**, our **hope**, and our **life**. **Humanity's Great Tragedy, And God's Salvation Prophecy** - It's all found right here, in Genesis 3. Amen.