

## **Commentary Highlights**

### **Genesis 3:1-24**

<b>NAC</b>	New American Commentary
<b>PTW</b>	Preaching the Word
<b>BST</b>	The Bible Speaks Today
<b>GIG</b>	Gleanings in Genesis
<b>CAL</b>	Genesis: Calvin's Commentary
<b>SOG</b>	The Story of God Bible Commentary
<b>BKW</b>	Genesis by Bruce K Waltke
<b>KUR</b>	Genesis by Abraham Kuruvilla
<b>REC</b>	Reformed Expository Commentary

**\*\*The views presented in these commentary excerpts may not reflect the general understanding of these passages as expressed by Faith Bible Church, but are presented to help us better understand the Scriptures and how various scholars have interpreted them\*\***

(GIG) – “The third chapter in Genesis is one of the most important in all the Word of God. What has often been said of Genesis as a whole is peculiarly true of this chapter: it is the “seed-plot of the Bible.” Here are the foundations upon which rest many of the cardinal doctrines of our faith. Here we trace back to their source many of the rivers of divine truth. Here commences the great drama which is being enacted on the stage of human history, and which well-nigh six thousand years has not yet completed. Here we find the Divine explanation of the present fallen and ruined condition of our race. Here we learn of the subtle devices of our enemy, the Devil. Here we behold the utter powerlessness of man to walk in the path of righteousness when divine grace is withheld from him. Here we discover the spiritual effects of sin—man seeking to flee from God. Here we discern the attitude of God toward the guilty sinner. Here we mark the universal tendency of human nature to cover its own moral shame by a device of man’s own handiwork. Here we are taught of the gracious provision which God has made to meet our great need. Here begins that marvelous stream of prophecy which runs all through the Holy Scriptures. Here we learn that man cannot approach God except through a mediator.”

#### **Genesis 3:1**

(NAC) – “Although the origin of the snake is attributed to God, there is no attempt here to explain the origins of evil. The narrative explains only the origin of human sin and guilt. There is no explanation for the serpent’s capacity to talk other than possibly that it was “crafty.” It is assumed that the animal has this ability, and the fact that the woman did not find this alarming only heightens the suspicion that the serpent is representative of something or someone sinisterly powerful...Moreover, the serpent was among the “good” animals God had made, and there was no ostensible reason for the woman to suspect the animal’s deceit other than the content of what the animal spoke.”

(CAL) – In attempting to answer the question why Satan chose to inhabit a serpent, Calvin states, “God had endued this beast with such singular skill, which made him the most quick-thinking animal. But Satan perverted to his own deceitful purposes the gift that had been divinely imparted to the serpent.”

(SOG) – “We should remember that Adam was charged to guard/protect the garden. Right from the start, when the serpent first appeared, Adam should have been right there commanding this creature to get out of the garden. But Adam remains silent and does nothing.”

(SOG) – In the serpent’s questioning, the vocabulary indicates “prohibition and restriction,” while God’s original vocabulary to the first couple indicates “freedom and blessing.” Instead of allowing God to be their law giver, the first couple instead turns to the words of the serpent.

(NAC) – Satan’s first plan of attack came by planting seeds of doubt in the mind of Eve by interrogating her and misrepresenting God. First the serpent relays God’s original statement to the first couple but casts doubt by saying “did He really say?” Secondly, Satan moves away from using the covenant name for God (Yahweh) and instead uses the name for God (Elohim). Lastly, the serpent twists God’s words for his own interest.

(BKW) – In Satan’s temptation, “he subverts obedience and, distorts perspective by emphasizing God’s prohibition, not his provision, reducing God’s command to a question, doubting his sincerity, defaming his motives, and denying the truthfulness of his threat.”

(PTW) – The serpent’s disregard of God’s word is even more poignant when we remember “that God’s word was responsible for everything Eve [had] enjoyed—day and night, the sun and the moon, the dappled blue of the sky, the exotica of the garden, the flowers, the signing rainbows of birds, the adoring creatures, her Adam—all came from God’s good word, which Satan now attacked.”

### **Genesis 3:2-3**

(NAC) – Eve misrepresented God’s command in several different ways. First, she omitted God’s directive that they might eat freely of any tree in the garden, which put the prohibition (not eating of the two trees in the middle) amidst a whole host of liberality. Secondly, she patterns the name of God after how the serpent referred to Him as Elohim and not Yahweh. Lastly, she adds to God’s prohibition by saying not only must they not eat of the fruit, but neither can they touch it lest they die.”

(PTW) – “Eve, in a breath, at once diminished, added to, and softened God’s word. Her revisionist approach to the holy word of God put her in harm’s way. And it likewise does so today.”

(PTW) – “Growing doubt about God’s word naturally spawns biblical revisionism, both conscious and unconscious. We tend to minimize Scripture’s great promises by our less than enthusiastic rehearsal of their benefits. We discount God’s largesse to us. Our colorless renditions of God’s glorious promises blanches their polychrome wonders into a dull monochrome.”

### **Genesis 3:4-5**

(NAC) – In response to Eve, the serpent counters with three false claims, if they eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil then: they will not die, your eyes will be open, and you will know good and evil. The serpent’s claims picture god as selfish and holding back a good from the first couple.

(PTW) – There are some who believe that Adam was not with Eve when she was first approached by the tempting serpent, but as we look at how the serpent addressed Eve you will see that he used the plural “you,” which suggests Adam’s presence during the temptation. R. Kent Hughes comments on this by saying, “Adam sinned willfully, eyes wide-open, without hesitation. His sin was freighted with sinful self-interest. He had watched Eve take the fruit, and nothing happened to her. He sinned willfully, assuming there would be no consequences. Everything was upside-down. Eve followed the snake, Adam followed Eve, and no one followed God.”

(CAL) – “When [the serpent] said, “God knows,” he censured God as being moved by jealousy and as having given the command concerning the tree for the purpose of keeping man in an inferior rank.”

### **Genesis 3:6-7**

(NAC) – The text seems to indicate that immediately the woman took the fruit and began eating after hearing the serpent’s words. “The term “good” is reminiscent of the created order God declares as “good.” But the verbal echo of God’s earlier evaluation suggests that she has usurped God’s role in determining what is “good.””

(CAL) – “She could previously look at the tree with such sincerity that no desire to eat of it affected her mind, for the faith she had in the word of God was the best guardian of her heart and of all her senses. But now, after her heart had declined from faith and from obedience to the word, she corrupted both herself and all her senses, and depravity was diffused through all parts of her soul as well as her body.”

(CAL) – “So the beginning of the ruin by which the human race was overthrown was a defection from the command of God. But observe that men revolted from God when, having forsaken his word, they lend their ears to the falsehoods of Satan. From this we infer that God is to be seen and adored in his word, and therefore that all reverence for him is shaken off when his word is despised.”

(BKW) – In seeing that the fruit was good to make one wise, Adam and Eve were not out for more information but were tempted by the power that comes from knowledge...Their nakedness brings “the sense of being defenseless, weak, or humiliated.”

(SOG) – By eating of the forbidden fruit, the first couple “assert their own moral independence from God. In essence, through their act, they say to God, “we will not allow you to define what is right and what is wrong, but we will make our own ethical judgments...[Eve] followed her own senses rather than God’s instruction.”

(PTW) – When the scripture states that Eve saw that the fruit was “desired to make one wise” it is referring to a wisdom that finds its genesis in the heart and will of man, instead of the spoken word of God.

### **Genesis 3:8-13**

(NAC) – God is pictured anthropomorphically, as walking in the Garden. The term walking is used later in the narrative of Genesis and in the Torah to refer to a closeness and right related relationship to the presence of God.

(SOG) – In describing God anthropomorphically, “the author uses gripping storytelling in order to communicate important theological truths. These theological truths are not that God is limited in understanding or has legs; this figurative language is used to teach us that humans have placed a huge barrier between themselves and God by their rebellion against him.”

(PTW) – In reference to Adam and Eve hearing the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden, R. Kent Hughes says, “It was the sacred sound that they had heard before and that had so filled them with joy but now brought dread.”

(NAC) – God rhetorically asks Adam, “where are you,” as a means of prompting Adam to consider His guilt. Adam’s fear was not simply because he was naked, but his nakedness was a great shame and disgrace. By his covering up “Adam admits his sense of shame, which has been motivated by his guilt.” Looking at God’s two further rhetorical questions in verse 11 points to the fact that Adam’s shame is derived not simply on his physical naked condition but on his defiance of God’s command.

(NAC) – Adam’s response to God is to blame the woman and to blame God, from whom the woman was given to him in the first place. “The woman is depicted as God’s gift in 2:22, where Adam initially responds with enthusiastic glee. Now, like the serpent, he charges that God’s good gift was malicious, for she has led to his downfall. She is a mistake.” In a similar fashion, after turning to the woman, Eve refuses to accept responsibility for her sin and instead points the finger toward the serpent.

(BKW) – “The couple shows their allegiance to Satan by distorting the truth and accusing one another and ultimately God. They are preoccupied with “I.””

### **Genesis 3:14-15**

(NAC) – God’s initial curse is directed toward the serpent in three aspects: consignment to crawling on its belly, eating dust for the rest of its life, and ultimate destruction by the seed of the woman. It is important to note that the curse is not for snakes, but for the one who took the form of a snake in the garden, Satan. Therefore, when God places the curse on the serpent to crawl on its belly, it is ultimately a curse that Satan will live a life of humiliation. The snake is one of the unclean animals in the Mosaic Law which is to be avoided and cast out from the life of the Israelite. Eating dust is often seen as a sign of humiliation in Scripture and is a reminder of Satan’s eventual death just as Adam was taken from dust (non-life) and given life, so too the adversary’s only destiny is death (dust). In the last curse, the serpent is assured of his destruction. “The serpent was instrumental in the undoing of the woman, and in turn the woman will ultimately bring down the serpent through her offspring.”

(CAL) – “God did not question the serpent as he had the man and the woman, because in the animal itself there was no sense of sin and because he would hold out no hope of pardon to the devil. The Lord dealt with the serpent before he imposed punishment on the man.”

(PTW) – In questioning the curse placed on the snake to crawl on its belly, who already crawls on its belly, “Derek Kinder argues, “that the crawling is henceforth symbolic—just as in 9:13 a new significance, not a new existence will be decreed for the rainbow.” Thus through God’s curse, a new significance was given to the serpent’s distinctive posture...The snake had exalted itself above man. Therefore it would go upon its belly.”

(BKW) – It is important to note that Satan’s seed is not demons or some sort of progeny, but willful humans who choose to follow the rule of the world over the freedom given by God. “Humanity is now divided into two communities: the elect, who love God, and the reprobate, who love self. Each of the characters of Genesis will be either of the seed of the woman that reproduces her spiritual propensity, or of the seed of the Serpent that reproduces his unbelief.”

(SOG) – “If the crushing is done by the foot of the seed of the woman, we are likely to understand that the injury to the heel comes in the act of crushing the serpent’s head.”

(NAC) – The word for “bruise” and “crush” are translations from the same Hebrew word. It is the location of the offense determines its outcome (one location is the heel, while the other is the head). Here in verse 15, we get a glimpse at the continual battle waged between man and Satan. There will one day be a seed of the woman who ultimately overcomes and defeats the serpent. The rest of the biblical narrative seeks to find out who this serpent crushing seed will be. In Christian history this is called the *protoevangelium*. This ancient serpent of old will one day be finally crushed by Christ, as foretold in the revelation given to the disciple John on the island Patmos.

### **Genesis 3:16**

(NAC) – The woman’s curse comes in two forms: painful childbearing and in her relationship with her husband. Childbirth, while painful due to the curse, also is a sign of hope that the divine commission given to the first couple (fill the earth) can still be accomplished. In the second act of this curse, “the desire of the woman is her attempt to control her husband, but she will fail because God has ordained that the man exercise his leadership function.” To “rule over” here is not referring to a form of male tyranny, but to exercise divinely appointed leadership.

(BKW) – In her relationship with her husband now, “control has replaced freedom; coercion has replaced persuasion; division has replaced multiplication.”

(SOG) – Tremper Longman agrees with the translation of this verse found in the NRSV “I will greatly increase you pangs in childbirth.” “In other words, even if Adam and Eve did not sin, there would have been pain in childbearing, but sin intensified that pain.”

(PTW) – Regarding the curse on woman’s childbirth, R. Kent Hughes says, “the intrinsically joyous area of her life was invaded by pain.” In other words, the joy of childbirth would now be clouded by pain and suffering due to the woman’s sin.

(SOG) – In relationship to the curse put on the woman, the word for “desire” is only found two other places in the OT. Once it is used romantically (which we can assume does not function in this context) and once it is used in Genesis 4 where sin is characterized to desire Cain. In this sense desire refers to the ability to control or consume someone else. Therefore, the woman, after the Fall, would desire to control her husband.

### **Genesis 3:17-19**

(NAC) – Adam’s curse comes with two side: toil/hardship in working the land and ultimate death. Whereas before sin, the land was given to Adam as a continual blessing that would yield more than he needed for food and for pleasure, now the ground will feel the effects of sin as Adam’s labor over the land becomes toilsome and it begins to produce inedible thorns and thistles. In the second aspect of Adam’s curse, he would now return to the same dust that he was created from. “God did not execute the penalty by taking Adam’s life but by banning him from the rejuvenating power of the tree of life.”

(BKW) – “The man’s natural relationship to the ground—to rule over it—is reversed; instead of submitting to him, it resists and eventually swallows him”... death “renders all activity vain but delivers mortals from eternal consignment to the curse and opens the way to eternal salvation that outlasts the grave.”

(PTW) – Similar to the woman’s curse, “the very ground that had been such a source of joy when Adam cared for the garden now became the source of his ongoing pain. The earth

became an enemy. Note that work itself was not cursed. Work, in fact, had been a gift from God. God's curse was upon the ground...The gift of work is good, but is covered with thorns."

(CAL) – "Truly God pronounced, as from his judgement seat, that man's life would from now on be miserable, because Adam had proved himself unworthy of that tranquil, happy, and joyful state for which he had been created...The accursed life of man could be nothing but the beginning of death...Moreover, death is here put as the final issue because in Adam himself nothing but death, would be found; yet, in this way he was urged to seek a remedy in Christ."

### **Genesis 3:20-21**

(NAC) – Adam, in an act of obedience and faith, names his wife Eve, trusting in the word of God that from these two all of the earth will be blessed. In an act of grace to the newly cursed man and woman, God provides for the couple a more suitable covering made with skins. For skins to be provided a death must first occur. Thusly, through death, Adam and Eve were covered by the grace of God. This is not only a foreshadow of Christ's work but also shares the same verbiage seen in the tabernacle.

(SOG) – "That death entered the human experience did not mean the end of humanity. Adam and Eve would die, but they would have children. The children would die, but they would have children, and so on and so on. Boda points out that it is here, and not in the traditional understanding of the death of the animals for clothes, that we see the hope of redemption. It is, after all, human seed that will bring about the defeat of sin."

(PTW) – "Adam's declaration (i.e. naming the woman Eve) was an overwhelming shout of hope. The name Eve celebrates the survival of the human race and victory over death. The reformer Phillip Melanchthon called Eve "the seal of grace.""

(CAL) – Calvin takes another approach when thinking through the animal skins provided by man. Where many today see them as a sign of grace (through the substitutionary death of another, Adam's shame was covered), Calvin believes that by the first couple wore dead animal skins over their body as a continual reminder of their sin and eventual death.

### **Genesis 3:22-24**

(NAC) – Because "eating of the tree of life would grant him (Adam & Eve) perpetual life," God banished the first couple out of the garden. "Adam and Eve's exile is decisive and definitive." They are banished eastward and the entrance to life and the garden was blocked by God's cherubim equipped with flaming swords. Going eastward, after this point in the OT will refer to going away from the plan and ways of God, while returning westward will be a sign of returning to God.

(BKW) – "Death is both a judgment and a release."

(CAL) – The punishment and banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden was “necessary for his iron pride to be beaten down, that he might at length descend into himself and become more and more displeased with himself.”



## Bibliography

Atkinson, David J. *The Message of Genesis 1-11*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990.

Calvin, John. *Genesis*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001.

Hughes, R. Kent. *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004.

Kuruvilla, Abraham. *Genesis*. A Theological Commentary for Preachers. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2014.

Longman III, Tremper. *Genesis*. The Story of God Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.

Mathews, K.A. *Genesis 1-11:26*. Vol. 1A. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996.

Phillips, Richard D.. *Genesis: Vol 1: Genesis 1-19*. Reformed Expository Commentary. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2023.

Pink, Arthur Walkington. *Gleanings in Genesis*. Gearhart, OR: Watchmaker Publishing, 2011.

Waltke, Bruce K.. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids, IL: Zondervan Academic, 2001.