

CCLEB SERMON NOTES



SUNDAY MARCH 30, 2025
GENESIS 3:8-19

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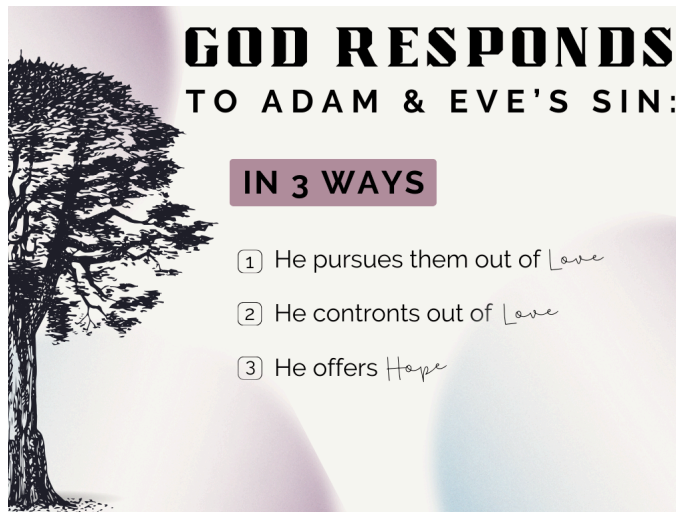
HOW GOD RESPONDS



Our passage and title today is... Gen. 3:8-19

In our passage today we see that God responds to Adam & Eve's sin in three ways. He pursues out of love, he confronts out of love, offers hope out of love.

Gen 3:8-19



I have three plants in my church office. Two of the three are alive. I was given these plants because I was told they thrive on neglect. The unanswered question that I answered for the dead one was "how much neglect can they thrive on?" One of the plants... In Portuguese it's called "lingua da sogra", "mother in law's tongue", that's soo unfair. That plant is alive and well, this one though is the dead one. When this one appeared to be dead because of too much neglect I cut off all the dead, and I tried to bring it back to life by watering it. Too little too late. I cannot give life to something that is dead. As a created being I cannot restore life - only the creator can do that.

Let's look at death in our last verse first. Gen 3:19



Return to the ground, and to dust you will return. These are references to Adam dying, death that God the creator can restore life to, and it's a reference to his body decaying. Death and decay and then dust. And note the sequence - progression - this is a clear de-creation reference.



A “de-creation” event is a reversal of the life giving creation process from God in Gen 2:7. God formed man from the ground and breathed life into him and here we see the reverse, dying - decaying - dust. This de-creation is the result of Adam and Eve succumbing to the deception of the serpent, succumbing to evil, and sinning against God which resulted in death.

In contrast to Adam's dying-decaying-dust sequence - one of the Messianic prophecies of the OT is Ps 16:10. It prophesies that the Messiah will die, yes, but not decay. Not decay meaning, not stay in the grave. READ. And it is the resurrection of Jesus from the grave that fulfills the prophecy of the Messiah's body not decaying. Jesus' resurrection is a re-creation event where God takes what was dead and gives it new life.

Let's go back to Gen 3:8. This re-creation process, new life thru Christ for the now mortal humans separated from God is the reason Yahweh Elohim appears in the Garden in pursuit of Adam & Eve after they



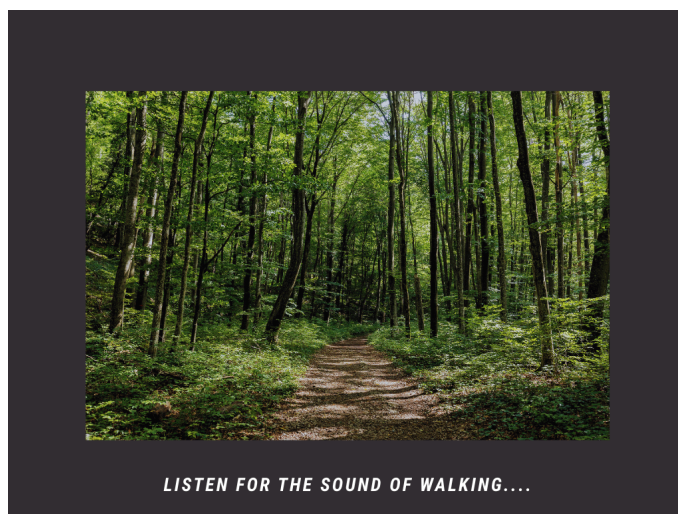
Psuccumbed to the serpent and sinned. V8 says, when the cool evening breezes were blowing...

This is traditionally translated as “cool of the day”. The Hebrew is literally in the wind of the day.



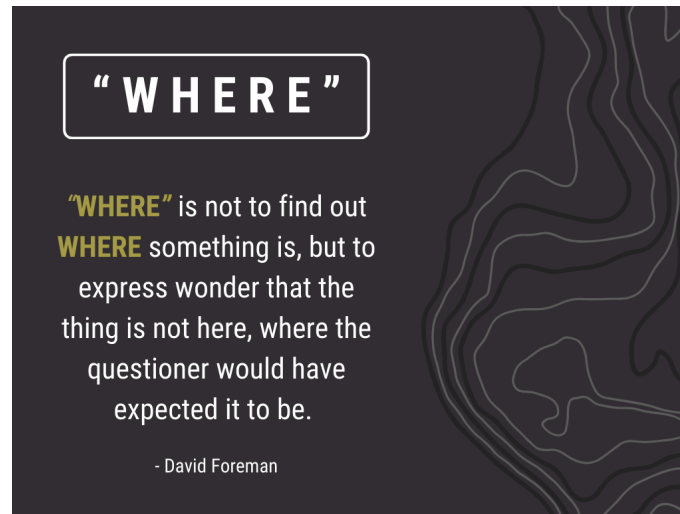
The Hebrew word wind in v8 is the same word “ruah” that we saw in Gen 1:2 (hilite Spirit of God) translated there as the Spirit of God. READ So what began the creation process was the Spirit of God – wind of God - hovering over the watery deep. Take that to wind ruah in Gen 3... there is something more going on in Gen 3:8 besides God showing up when its breezy. I suspect that the intentional use of the same word “wind – ruah” is one more thing that points to a new creation process starting for the man and woman – God bringing order and life to what is dead.

So God comes to the garden and the man and his wife heard him walking around the garden To hear someone walking requires that what is walking has weight or substance that makes noise as it walks. The sound of walking indicates that Yahweh has taken on form and substance here. Some suspect this is pre-incarnate Christ come looking for his bride. .



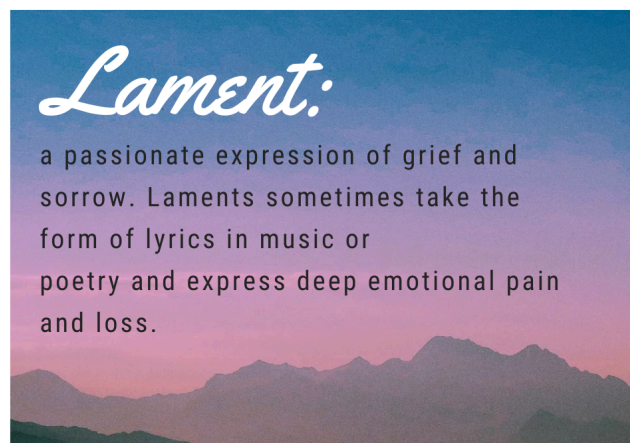
Note here in Gen 3:8 it is Yahweh Elohim who is the pursuer. Many romantic relationship begin with one party pursuing the other, and the pursuit can be obvious or subtle, sometimes obvious to everyone but the person being pursued. In Gen 3 it is clear that the party being pursued, the man and his wife are aware – because they hide. They are not running to Yahweh, not excited to see him, they hear the Yahweh coming and hide. This image of God pursuing and man hiding makes me so sad for them, I think because it's my own story – all our stories.

oIn Gen 3:9 God asks Where? READ. God probably wasn't wondering where Adam was hiding - He always knows. This where question has many layers. This question of where? n Hebrew - ayeh? - is about wonder and lament, sorrowful grief. The commentator David Foreman says, this question "Where" is not to find out where something is, but to express wonder that the thing (Adam) is not here, where the questioner would have expected it to be.



This question "Where?" in that light really captures the heartbreaking relational distance between God the Father and his son Adam, the Father passionately expressing his sadness and grief -longing for there to be no relational distance. God feels the separation and he is yelling for Adam in the garden in the orchard - "Adam where are you? Where have you gone?" A grieving father calling out for his lost creation - his lost children. And this cry from God echoes for every human ever born after Adam.

The question "where are you?" is a lament. The Hebrew word used here translated as "Where?" is spelled with exactly the same consonants as the Hebrew title of the book of Lamentations. A lament is a passionate expression of grief and sorrow - laments sometimes take the form of lyrics in music or poetry, and express deep emotional pain and loss. We will see in a few moments God's lament poetry or song begin in v15. This where question - is God's passionate expression of loss of his creation. Let's pause for a moment of silence to respect the magnitude of this loss.



Adam responds in v10 to God's where question - a very honest response, and it tells us a lot. READ. I imagine a sheepish, head hung low, no-eye-contact Adam as he steps out from behind a tree to respond to Yahweh and he says, "I was afraid because I was naked".

A pastor made an unscheduled visit to a person from his church, knocked on their door, no answer. The pastor was certain he heard the person inside, and puzzled, he knocked again.. still no answer. He wrote a greeting note to them with his name on it, and cleverly included Rev 3:20 "behold I stand at the door and knock..." You know, pastors are always trying to be clever like that. And he stuck the note in the door and left.

Sunday morning in the offering box there was a note addressed to the pastor from the person he had tried to visit and it too included a bible verse: Gen 3:10 - "I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid for I was naked".

The man and woman's choice to eat the forbidden fruit brought awareness - knowledge of their nakedness, knowledge of their nakedness.



Nakedness represents their sin, their guilt, their vulnerability to evil, their separation from God, and their need for a covering. And with their knowledge of nakedness, a sequence of bad feelings came - first "shame" about their nakedness, and then when they heard God walking, they felt "fear". Both shame and fear are evidenced by the man and woman's hiding - driven to hide by shame and fear. I don't remember shame and fear being part of what the serpent promised when he convinced the man and woman to disobey.

This part of Adam hiding is very near to me. My middle name is Adam. Adam's action sequence in the garden was to run - hide. My middle name is a reminder to me to not run-hide in relationship to God. Sometimes I hide anyway.

The next question God asks is who told you?. V11. Who told you implies that in Adam's pre-fall - pre-sin state they would never have known they were naked unless someone told them they were naked. So the question who told you is meant to highlight that their knowledge of their nakedness didn't come from an external source. Rather their knowledge of their nakedness could only come if they disobeyed and ate from tree of knowledge of good and evil, which would give them knowledge, and awareness, of their nakedness.

And that is exactly what God's next questions reveals- God ask the logical next question in end of v11b Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat? READ The two questions lead Adam's to confession of wrong. In V12 Adam does confess that he ate the forbidden fruit , but before he confesses he blames his eating of the forbidden fruit on his wife, (which can't bode well for him in marriage) and indirectly blames it on God. READ. Blame shifting. Blame is like holding a very heavy weight above your head - but if you can spread the weight around to others it is not as heavy on you. In that light I understand why blame shifting happens and why I have done it myself, but it doesn't make it right.

Adam needs to feel and own the weight of his choices fully, alone. This is Yahweh after all, who is the light, (John 1:5), the light that shines in the darkness, a light that shines on everything, a light that is never overcome and extinguished – shining on Adam, and Adam blame shifts.

The blame shifting doesn't fool God, but it does shift God's line of questioning away from Adam to the woman. V13. What have you done? So, grieving God turns his light towards the woman, and she replies.

Two things about the woman's response. Her response in v13 ends with the exact same honest phrase Adam used.. and I ate , and, likewise, before the honest admission, there is blame shifting. For her this blame shifting was about the serpent deceiving her. She could have said "I was deceived and I ate, but she said "the serpent deceived me", a subtle difference but significant from an ownership perspective. God's expectation is that humans own their choices. How well do you own your choices?

In v14 Yahweh Elohim – the LORD God – shifts his attention away from the woman and turns to the serpent. Imagine that stern look! Note here that Yahweh doesn't ask the serpent questions like he did the man and woman.

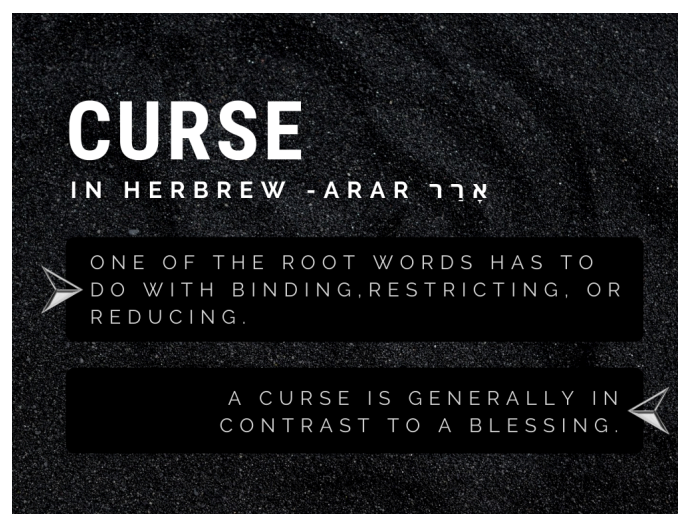
God doesn't need to ask the serpent questions. The questions God asked the man and woman were restorative questions – questions asked seeking to restore the lost relationship.

This is a striking contrast between how God addressed the man and woman and how God addresses the serpent. There is no restorative interest or action or desire here between the God and the serpent. None. The serpent – the Satan, the devil, already had rejected God and rejected God's words and thus is the enemy of God, the enemy of God's creation including humans. God knows what the serpent's intent was – evil – to divide to destroy, to de-create their relationship with each other and relationship with God – dragging back into chaos what God had created, ordered, blessed and called good.

And because of that, God turns to the serpent and launches straight into pronouncing a curse v14.

Let's first define what a curse is in general, then define the power dynamic between the party pronouncing the curse and the party receiving the curse.

A curse in Hebrew is "arar" and has to do with binding or restricting, reducing. A curse is generally in contrast to a blessing. A blessing is where God gives his life producing ability that results in flourishing, abundance, multiplying – it's God's favor. A curse is the opposite then of flourishing or abundance. Thus a curse removes or reduces all or part of God's blessing. For example if we skip ahead to v17b -19a ("Since you listened...will you have food to eat.") we see that God curses the ground



And the result of the curse on the ground is that where the blessed ground produced in abundance and flourished, now, post sin, post curse produces food in scarcity and only with hard work – a restriction, reduction. And what the land does produce in abundance are thorns and thistles an OT symbol of judgement.

So when God curses the serpent in 3:14 God removes the blessing that he had put on it as an animal of the field – the curse is a restriction, a binding, a reduction. The serpent's curse can be interpreted that God changes the serpent physically and lowers it physically to crawl on its belly to eat dust. Both crawl on your belly and eat dust are meant to humiliate after defeat. It also seems that the serpent had a higher status among animals, and God lowered that. What status the serpent had among animals, we simply don't know.

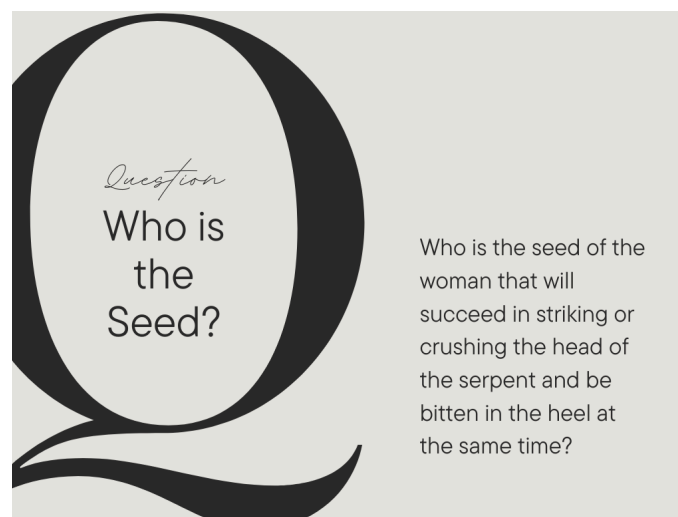
Now a comment on the power dynamics involving a blessing or a curse. God the creator is the one who gave the blessing of life that could flourish, and God the creator is the one who can curse the creation. Why? He is the creator. The man, the woman, the serpent, the ground are creation.

In v15 God pronounces ultimate judgement on the Serpent. This verse is both judgement and prophecy. Some refer to this verse as the first mention of the gospel.

The “hostility” or “enmity” between the serpent and the woman seems to have dual meaning – first meaning is simply an aversion of people to snakes. I for one do not like snakes – I have had way more snake encounters than the average American because of living in Brazil...some terrifying. I get a little anxious even talking about snakes.

The second meaning though is in the context of the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. In this context we are not talking about seed as biological “little snakes” crawling all over the place. We are talking about the seed of the serpent, seed that grows into darkness, disorder, destruction, chaos. Evil begets evil and it is spiritual, and so this is war between the serpent and the seed of the woman. The goal of Satan is for all mankind to succumb to the serpent, the kingdom of darkness.

We are told in the end of v15 that “He (the offspring of the woman) will strike your (the serpent) head, and you (the serpent) will strike his heel (the offspring of the woman). And the hostility between the seed or offspring of the serpent and the offspring of the woman (biological) is the story of the rest of the OT. Do the humans succumb to or crush the serpent?



From v15 we are left with the open question, Who is the seed of the woman that will succeed in striking or crushing the head of the serpent and be bitten in the heel at the same time?

Throughout the OT there were a few promising candidates who looked like they could crush the head of the serpent. They started out promising, but then eventually succumbed to the serpent. Abraham, the patriarch of the faith, had some flashes of good, his obedience looked pretty awesome on Mount Moriah, willing to even sacrifice his son. But he likewise did evil, following in the footsteps of Adam – hanging his wife out to dry – twice. That is clearly succumbing to the serpent. Abraham was not the serpent head crusher.

David the greatest warrior king ever, who even crushed the head of one of the seed of the serpent, Goliath, literally crushed his head with a rock from his sling, eventually succumbed to the serpent with Bathsheba, and the murder of Uriah. Solomon the wisest king ever, not even in his wisdom could resist the serpent, and succumbed to the serpent. Neither of them were the seed of woman that would crush the head of the serpent.

If the patriarch of the faith, or the greatest warrior king ever, or the wisest king ever, could not resist the serpent, who could?

Back to the Yahweh confronting the serpent, the woman and the man in the garden. In v16 God said to the woman,

1st let point out that there is no curse from God mentioned for the woman or the man. The serpent is cursed, the ground is cursed, but God never uses the word “cursed” about the man or about woman. The traditional interpretation is that the curse is implied – however it is a place for pause.

Let me give you a principal here to apply. Sin always results in loss of blessing. How much blessing loss, that’s up to God. That’s what we see with the man and woman.

There are clearly consequences of the man and the woman’s sin, consequences beyond the death God said would happen in Gen 2:17, when God said, if you eat its fruit you are sure to die.

Yes v16 is about pain of childbirth. Was there no pain in childbirth prior to her sin? From a literal interpretation, it seems like there was something there prior to sin, because the language in Hebrew indicates what was there would be greatly multiplied.

The same word in Hebrew for “pain” regarding the childbirth is the same word used for “struggle” in 3:17 pertaining to Adam working the ground. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it. So because of the man and woman’s sin, both the fruit of her body (children) and fruit man was producing from the ground – (food) would only come with much more struggle and pain.

But I wonder if in v16 the increase in pain may have another meaning having to do with a different pain mothers feel. Mothers have a bond with the child of their womb, that fathers do not have. It is different. The mother’s strong emotional bond with the child of their womb is the foundation of the Hebrew word compassion, that Yahweh gives as part of his own self-definition in Ex 34:6

And because of that unique – strong emotional bond, when a mother watches the a child of her womb succumb to the serpent and stray, like Cain in chapter 4, it is a pain that a mother feels intensely. Yes dads feel something too, but not like mom’s. Eve’s sin resulted in this maternal pain for every mom after her. Only God’s grace and love comforts that.

The next line of v16 says.. I think just reading it is adequate – so let’s move on. Let me give you two thoughts on this verse. 1st - God created a beautiful design for men and woman. The beautiful design is described in **Gen 1:26-28** both created equally in God’s image, both to rule and reign together over creation. We see more of God’s beautiful design in **Gen 2:18** God created the woman as Adam’s helper suitable for him - ezer knegdo – which really his indispensable companion. And the last description we have of the man and woman’s relationship before the fall is the last words of **Gen 2:24** “...two are united into one”.

But because of Adam and Eve's sin, that beautiful model is now affected by sin. Sinful desire will be as we see in v16 for her to control him and he to rule over her. The language in v16 describes a power struggle.



The word rule in v16 was translated into the Greek Septuagint in the third century BC by Hebrew scholars. And the Greek word they chose was kyrieuo which means to exercise dominion or lord over, often implying control or dominance. The Hebrew scholars could have chosen the Greek word hegoumenos which means to rule by leading, guiding, go before others in a servant leadership way. But they didn't. They chose the word kyrieuo which means exercise dominion over, lord over, control. The language in Gen 3:16, describes a power struggle influenced by sin.

And so what was God's brilliant design, resulting in oneness, because of sin's influence becomes her desire to control and his rule by domination or control.

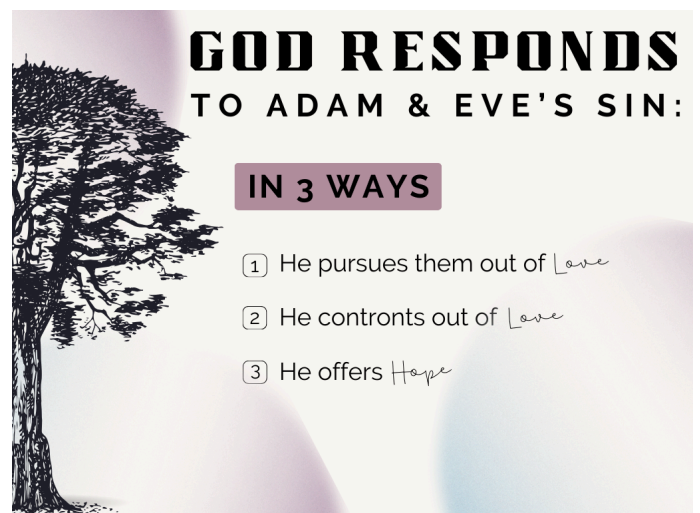
Jesus gives us a solution to this power struggle. Jesus said in Mark 10:4. 5When the disciples were coveting the power they envisioned would be theirs in the new kingdom, Jesus turned their power fantasies upside down with this definition of rule in Luke 22:24-27. READ. So man is to lead, yes, and lead by serving his wife and giving his life for her.

Paul, knowing that sin causes this power struggle identified in Gen 3:16, said to the husbands and wife Eph 5:25. Christ is the servant leader, the head of man who is the head of his wife, who washed his disciples feet then died for his bride.

So with husbands not dominating, not lording over, but rather being servant leaders and laying down their lives for their wives, Paul says to the wife Eph 5:22 submit to your husband – don't try to control him. And further Paul begins the whole passage telling them to submit to each other. Eph 5:21 This marriage approach addresses the sin influenced power struggle of control and dominance that started in the garden that will continue till we all return to dust or called home.

Closing thoughts:

God responds in three ways: He pursues out of love, he confronts out love, offers hope out of love.



God pursues out of love. We do have another biblical picture that replaces the sad picture of God's pursuit of Adam and Eve and their hiding. In the story of the prodigal son, the Father sees the repentant son coming home and the Father runs to him, and the repentant son receives the father warm embrace Luke 15:20-21. READ. The sad picture from Gen 3 of God pursuing and the and them hiding is replaced by the picture of Luke 15. What is consistent in both pictures is the pursuit of the Father - the Love of the Father never changes. And what controls the outcome is repentance. Right now are you running from or embracing the Father? Knowing that the Father always and offers love, meaning we don't ever have to hide - that is living in grace.

2. Confrontations should always be in love, for the best interest of the other person, with the goal of restoration where restoration is healthy.

3. Jesus, Yahweh, as the head crusher offers us hope. Jesus ministry began after he resisted the temptation in the wilderness by Satan.. the serpent. And throughout those tantalizing temptations, all of them forbidden fruit, Jesus does not succumb to temptation of the serpent. Everyone else before him did, Adam and Eve did, Abraham, King David, King Solomon, everyone else succumbed. Jesus went to the cross in obedience, the sinless lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus' death though, was the serpent biting his heal. Satan lied to and deceived religious leaders until Satan had Jesus on the cross dead. Yes, Jesus went willing. But because Jesus was sinless, because Jesus had NOT succumbed to the serpent at any point in his life, when Jesus died as a sacrifice for sin, being the sinless lamb of God himself, his dead body did not decay, he resurrected crushing the head of the serpent

Because Jesus is the head crusher of the serpent, then we as Jesus seed have Jesus' victory over the serpent. Rom 16:20 hilite crush. Jesus offers us hope in relationship with the Father, Jesus offers hope in our relationships here on earth, in our marriages, and in deliverance from sin.

If you don't know the love of the Father and are hiding in shame and fear.. God's lament of Where are you? Is for you.

SUPPLEMENTAL

NOTES:

1. Third day. The resurrection happened on the 3rd day - the same day in the creation account - on the third day, that seed bearing life burst from the ground. (Gen 1:11) Jesus was seed bearing life bursting from the ground. And those that are the seed of Christ, his spiritual offspring, are also then re-creations. Those who were spiritually dead, in Christ, are now alive. 2 Cor 5:17 With sins paid for by Christ, the ruah, the Spirit of God has come into them giving them new life in Christ!!

2. God spoke 7 times in chapter three. Seven is the number of completion and divine order. And really interesting is that Jesus on the cross - spoke seven times, sometimes called seven prayers from the cross, right before he died. And Jesus death completed the salvation that allows mankind to be new creations - reconciled to God. Reconciliation that was needed after the sin of Adam and Eve.

3. "Walk about". And v8 describes Gods walk in the garden as as a "walk about". Another passages that refers to God walking about in relationship with his people is **Deut 23:12-14** that speaks of where the Israelites were to use the bathroom. Because God walks about in the camp, the Israelites were instructed to use the bathroom outside the camp, to maintain the camp as holy and clean.

4. Hiding from God. I must point out that although the man and his wife hiding from God is sad, it is humorous that they are trying to hide from the LORD God - and they are hiding behind trees.

5. A song. "Adam Where are You?" - by Don Fransisco - passionate old country gospel song about God calling out for Adam. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Llab0E7X-CI>

6. God speaks seven times in Gen 3: We have already seen the number seven in the seven days of creation, now we have Yahweh in Gen 3 speaking seven times, and the rest of the bible is full of sets of seven. So in Gen 3 we have seven opening statements by God to the now mortal humans; seven closing statements by 100% human Jesus who must die as a mortal, in a human body. This brings closure to the old life of sin death and decay and ushers in the new eternal life. Jesus seven prayers are a lead up to Jesus death that brings new life - new creation. You can't make this up. See attached article comparing the themes of both Gods seven statements in Gen three to Jesus seven statements from the cross - available here and in sermon notes.

7. Article on Curses: <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/hebrew-corner-8-curse-and-bless-by-john-h-walton>

8. God's curse on the serpent. In Isa 65:25 when peace and harmony are restored to creation, the serpent remains under the curse.