



## **PART 3 – The Fall of Man: Our Reason for Christmas**

In Part 2 of Looking Forward to Christmas, we explored Isaiah 9:1-7. This passage describes the Child who was prophesied to be born and establish an eternal kingdom. This Child is the Messiah, Jesus Christ, born to Mary and Joseph in the City of David, otherwise known as Bethlehem. Isaiah tells us His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, Almighty God, and Prince of Peace. With Christmas now come, we typically look at the birth story of Jesus, but for what reason must Jesus be born? Why does the world need a Savior? In Part 3, we will look at the Fall of Man as told in Genesis 3. This is the beginning of human history, and the time where mankind was separated from God. The reason for Christmas is Jesus, but the reason we so desperately need Jesus is our sin.

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### **BELONG**

Start the group with an opportunity for community. We want this to be a place where the body of Christ can **belong** by sharing their lives with one another in genuine fellowship.

- How did you spend Christmas day? With friends and/or family?
  - Did you receive any gifts? Which gift was your favorite?!
  - What to you is your favorite part of Christmas day?
  - What are you particularly thankful for this Christmas?
  - When you think of the Christmas story, do you ever think about the Fall being a necessary part of it?
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## BELIEVE

Move into the relevant Bible passages and read along together. This is where the body of Christ can learn together to **believe** in Jesus more and love Him better.

### Genesis 3:1-19 (NIV)

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

<sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup>but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’” <sup>4</sup>“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. <sup>5</sup>“For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” <sup>6</sup>When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. <sup>7</sup>Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

<sup>8</sup>Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup>But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” <sup>10</sup>He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” <sup>11</sup>And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” <sup>12</sup>The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” <sup>13</sup>Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” <sup>14</sup>So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, ‘Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring<sup>[a]</sup> and hers; he will crush<sup>[b]</sup> your head, and you will strike his heel.” <sup>16</sup>To the woman he said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” <sup>17</sup>To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ ‘Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. <sup>18</sup>It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

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Why do we celebrate Christmas every year? Because Jesus, the Son of God, was born of a virgin and came into the world. So what did Jesus come into the world to accomplish? He came to save the world from its sins.

When did sin enter the world? It entered the world during an event which we call the Fall. The Fall is recorded in Genesis 3. God created the world and said it was good. Man and woman, co-representatives of God within His Creation, live in the Garden of Eden, a paradise created by God for mankind to tend and nourish.

However, in the midst of the Garden stands the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God has given Adam and Eve several positive commands: be fruitful and multiply, be stewards over the Earth, etc. But God has provided them one negative command as well: do not eat from the Tree or you will surely die. The Serpent, who we know to be Satan, enters the story and the rest is history. Literally.

Genesis 3 is the origin story of how everything went wrong in the world. It is a real story; a historical account written by man so that we might understand our present condition. It is not a myth or a metaphor. Everything in your life that is painful, broken, and hopeless can be traced back to this moment in the literal sense. The origin story of hopelessness is our story of hopelessness as well.

By our very nature, we are hope-fueled beings. We push forward in our lives in hope that things will get better. Luckily, the Christmas story is more than a story that provides hope. Hope is the longing for things not yet come; the story of Christmas is that the thing hoped for has already come and His name is Jesus. To truly appreciate His appearance requires us to wrestle with Genesis 3.

### **The Same Sin**

The same sin that brought hopelessness into the world is the same sin that characterizes our lives. Notice how their sin developed:

- **They doubted God's word (3:1)**  
Instead of submitting to God's word, they began to reason with God's word. Notice that the Serpent introduces these doubts, but ultimately Eve is still responsible for her actions. Her temptation was the result of a lack of trust in God.
  - **They doubted God's goodness (3:2-3)**  
Satan had tempted Eve to view God as selfish and overly restrictive, not a loving Father. Eve actually misapplies the command given to Adam and her. God never said not to touch the Tree. Whenever God's commands are added to, it creates confusion and trouble. It is easy to view God as the bad guy when we misunderstand who He is.
  - **They rejected God's position and plan (3:5-6)**  
Adam and Eve, thinking God unfair and selfish, decided to eat so that they could take God's position. Rather than submit to the rules for their own good, they figured they could make their own rules.
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Let's tie it all together. Hopelessness is a byproduct of sin. Adam and Eve were the first sinners. However, we still sin the exact same way! We doubt God's word. We doubt His goodness. We reject his plan and position. Our hopelessness in life is a result of the same sin!

### **The Same Curse**

In the same way as Adam and Eve, we are subject to a curse as punishment for our sin. Both humanity and the world have been affected by it.

- **They were covered in shame (3:7)**  
Once eating the Fruit, Adam and Eve were overcome with intense shame. They realized they were naked for the first time, but it was more than a simple lack of clothing. Not only were they exposed and vulnerable; they were guilty. They knew they had done something wrong and there was no taking it back. Much in the same way we hide our sin from others, Adam and Eve made loin cloths to cover themselves physically.
- **They were separated from God (3:8)**  
Man was created to walk with God, but instead humanity found itself hiding from Him. Luckily for us, God does not shy away from us because of sin. Instead, God actively seeks us just as He did Adam and Eve in the Garden. While the couple wanted to hide, God wanted to find them. God's love is seen in that He seeks out the lost, but unfortunately sin comes with consequences. The greatest trouble we face is that we were made from God to be like God, yet now we are spiritually and physically separated from Him.
- **They had strife with one another (3:10)**  
Adam and Eve have their first fight after eating from the Tree. Adam blamed Eve for their transgression and Eve blamed the Serpent. No one takes accountability and everyone else is at fault. You might imagine that in this moment Adam and Eve are very upset with one another. The two were created to act and live in harmony, but their sin turned them against each other.
- **They would struggle in life (3:16-19)**  
Sin necessitated that the very ground be cursed by God. Women now will be in pain as they bear children. Men will strain to tend the ground which will refuse to grow. In other words, life will be hard. Very hard. Not the life God intended for them, but the one they had none the less chosen because of their sin.

Let's tie it all together. Their curse is our curse! We are covered in shame, separated from God, in the midst of strife with one another, and struggling in life because of our sin and the brokenness of the world in which we live.

Why is life so hard? Why is there so much hopelessness? Because we live in a world broken by sin and under the curse of rebellion.

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## The Same Savior

From the very beginning of humanity's hopelessness, God has promised us hope! From the very beginning, God has promised us a Savior who could deal with our sin, shame, struggles, and separation. God promised someone who could do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

We celebrate Christmas again and again because that first Christmas night all of our hopes were met in the hope of the world – Jesus Christ.

We cannot help but celebrate!

### Luke 2:8-14 (NKJV)

<sup>8</sup> Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup> Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup> For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

## BECOME

Wrap up the discussion by asking some closing questions. We can **become** more like the people God is calling us to be by reflecting on what we've learned and applying it.

- Does the account of the Fall connect with you in any way? Do you truly see yourself as a part of that story?
- What do you think is the primary mistake that Adam and Eve made that allowed the Serpent to deceive them? Can you recall a time where you feel as though you have been deceived in the same way?
- What do you think about God's punishment? Fair or unfair? Do you ever feel as though you are being punished for your sin?
- How does having the context of Genesis 3 change your perspective of the Christmas story in Luke 2?
- How can you incorporate your knowledge of Genesis 3 when describing the Christmas story to someone and more broadly sharing the Gospel?