

TUTORIAL
1.17

God provided clothing for Adam and Eve

See Tutorial 1.6 notes for overall instructions.

The portions of Scripture referred to in this tutorial are: **Genesis 3:21-24, 4:1-2, Psalm 100:3, Acts 17:25.**

Last time

We listened to the part of God's Narrative that describes the immediate aftermath of Adam and Eve choosing to listen to the Enemy's deception. Their shame, fear and excuses as God came and asked them questions. Then the Curse and the Promise...the small light of hope in the gathering dark...One who would come and break the Enemy's temporary hold.

God provides Adam & Eve clothing of His choosing

We'll remember how after having lost their purity and innocence, and becoming ashamed at their nakedness, they stitched some clothes from leaves. God's Story draws attention to this matter again by recording (Genesis 3:21) that God covered them with animal skins He had made for them.

Once again, we see how the seemingly simple Narrative is embedded with the things God wants to draw our attention to about Himself, and how everything else – including us – stands in relation to Him. The point here is one that will be hammered home over and over in the continuing Narrative as God stresses the fact that any efforts humans make on their own – based on our assessment of a situation, our ingenuity, energy, resources, devotion...whatever – never come close to His standards...never can, never will. It doesn't even make it onto the radar in terms of satisfying Him.

It's significant that it was the skins of animals that God says He used. This is the first record of animal death in the Narrative. Innocent animals, with no moral responsibility of their own, paid with their lives to hide the naked shame of God's image-bearers, now corrupted. Adam had been given the awesome responsibility of caretaking God's creation including its other lesser

inhabitants. He'd named them one by one. They were under his oversight and care.

Now, one - perhaps a number - had to die because of the humans' choices. Innocent blood has been shed for them, for sin. We'll see this pattern emerge continually throughout God's narrative.

And one final observation about this incident...this is another poignant example of a part of who God is that we've noted, a golden seam we want to mine from His Narrative. This thing, that in our limited linguistic choice, we call "grace". Rather than walking away in disgust from these whining, ungrateful, pathetic semblances of himself, he reaches out and replaces their pitiful attempts to cover their shame, with something that He says is right. That's a picture of His grace worth pondering and asking Him to make very real to us.

Shut out of the garden

Now (end of Chapter 3) another fascinating glimpse of the three-in-One God interacting...as before, their topic is the humans. The beings made in their, in God's, image, have become their own moral arbiters...have set a course of deciding for themselves what is good and bad – what they want to do.

The problem now becomes the possibility of them living on eternally in this state. (Remember that Adam and Eve *symbolically represent* the human race. But also, as the progenitors of the human race, in very real, tangible ways, their choices will play out for, will directly impact, all their descendants.) They've chosen the way of death, of separation. God will not allow them to eat of the Tree Of Life and live forever in a half-life existence, a mockery of the life He'd wanted them to enjoy with Him forever. Everything has changed. A different plan is now in place, and He acts in accordance with that.

So God sends them (the Narrative gives the feel of them being forcefully ejected) from the garden. In fact, the way back in is entirely blocked by powerful angel servants of God.

There will be no return to the perfect environment He'd prepared for them – a home for them to live in, a base from which to carry out their work, and a context in which He could interact with them and they could learn from Him. Now life will be tougher, harsher...any joy will be hard won. And the interaction with God will be in light of those realities, not the previous pure, innocent, harmonious and very direct relationship.

With death in their bodies and evil in their hearts, God cannot allow them back to the garden, to the tree of Life. Nor to the easy access they've had to Him there. Another footing will have to be established...and, as we've already seen, it will have to be of his design, his doing, from his grace, if there's any hope at all.

Cain and Abel born outside the garden

The Narrative continues now with their lives outside the garden. Eve becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son, Cain, then another, Abel. Although sin and death are an ever-present feature of this new existence, God allows them the opportunity to bring more life into it.

He's the life-giver. Life, even our lives under the curse, is a gift from God. Many other parts of the Narrative will reinforce this.

The words of one of God's songwriters (Psalm 100:3) for example tell us to "Acknowledge that the LORD is God! He made us, and we are his." And centuries later one of his chosen mouthpieces, Paul, would state that "He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need." (Acts 17:25) It's a hugely significant point, because our lives, every life, comes from God. So, as the songwriter said, we are His. He rightfully owns us, lock, stock and barrel. The response though of humans to his authentic claim on their lives will consistently be part – often a very sad part – of what He chooses to make a part of His Story.

Something important to note is that these new human offspring have come into the world outside the garden and all it represents. They never experienced the life God intended them to have – in the place He'd prepared for their parents and for them.

Their interaction with God (and they did interact, as we'll see) was never inside – with its pure, innocent, easy, direct access to the Creator-Father. They were *born* with death stamped all over them. And evil, sin, was their constant companion...part of who they were. Part of them, in fact...card-carrying members of those who always tend to want to write their own stories, who tend to reject God as the true Story Writer and Teller.

As we've already noted, this group has a self-appointed leader, eagerly pointing the way toward rebellion. Tirelessly enticing, deceiving, entangling. Making people think they're free to tell their stories, determine their destinies. When in fact they're being led constantly deeper into bondage. God's Enemy. This was Cain and Abel's situation. And that of course, is the situation, the condition and the ontological reality for every human born since.



DISCUSSION POINTS

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1. What assumptions would you say many people in our society make about God and His attitude toward sin? In light of what we're seeing in the Genesis account of how God views "good and bad", give some examples of things you've heard people say that show they live with some very wrong assumptions.
2. Would you agree that in our society, most people feel that no one can fault us if we try our best, "give it our best shot". How does that assumption compare with what we are hearing in God's Word – that he rejects peoples' attempts – even their best attempts - to make themselves acceptable to Him and only accepts what He provides? Does that sound "fair" according to our cultural norms? If not, how are we to think about this correctly?
3. Briefly consider some of the implications of the fact that God is the giver of life. Does that truth contrast at all with some of the values we see lived out in our society?



ACTIVITIES

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1. Ask a minimum of 3 people (with at least one non-believer respondent) then record/summarize their answers to these questions;
 1. How would you describe evil?
 2. Where does it come from?
 3. Do you believe that God is the giver of life?
 4. What does that imply, if anything, for the way you make decisions, small or large? (Whether "yes" or "no" to #3)