

Genesis 3 Advent Questions

Spend a few minutes in silence praying for the Spirit to quiet your heart and prepare its soil for the seeds of God's word to be planted. Let your breath slowly replace your anxious thoughts.

Now read **Gen 3:6-15, 20-21** a few times through in the NIV. Before jumping to interpretations, answers, and "God's word for me right now." Stop and read it again. Pray that God would even show you things you have not noticed or considered previously.

Let's start broadly, surfacing some themes. Ask yourself and others. . .

- How might this passage be related to Advent? What themes do you see that may point this direction? Explain
- Within the promise of death, there is a subtle promise of life. Do you see it? Before jumping to the easy answer, look at the context. What does it tell us about who the "he" is that is destined to crush Satan's head? How do verses 20 and 21 relate to this promise?
- What/where are the glimpses of restoration in the . . .
 - o Relationship with God and his people? Explain.
 - o Relationship between Adam and Eve? Explain.
 - o Relationship with God and all humanity? Explain.
 - o Relationship with God and all creation? Explain.

Now, we know this passage as the *protoevangelium* , where the gospel is powerfully glimpsed in God's promise of the Messiah eventually trouncing over, Satan, death, and all relational enmity. Now, more specifically, let's look again through the lens of *Advent* – expectation, longing, and waiting for the coming rescue.

- Why do you think it took God so long to send his eventual Messiah? Is there anything in this text that gives a hint? What about in Adam's curse (verses 17-19)?
 - o See **2 Peter 3:9**. How does this work as an interpretive key for the passage?
- Why do you think waiting so crucial to God's plan? Why are we still waiting for the second coming of the Messiah? Couldn't he of finished the job in one shot?

Feel free to discuss. These are not meant to be "fill in the blank easy-answer bible trivia questions"! Rather, in the vein of advent longing, waiting in ambiguity and anticipation, feel free to wait, listen well to questions further even.

Finally, take time to connect with one another as you listen and pray your listened-to-longings to our Listening Father. Pray these together, recognizing that He may not just immediately fix it, clarify, or answer, but that the waiting and longing might actually be the point! Still we pray! There is powerful formation in together-travailing prayer!

- What might you be longing/waiting for from God?

- Why might he be making you wait? In other words, what might need to be surfaced, pruned, or formed in you while waiting that an easy answer would otherwise bypass?

Pray with and for one another!

Below is a supplementary and optional excerpt on this passage and its place in a biblical theology of restoration.

Theology of restoration as recovered trust

God cares enough to mend what is broken, but rarely all at once. The Bible repeatedly demonstrates that His relational nature is always restoring trusting relationship with Himself and others slowly and iteratively. For example, after humanity's initial fatal fall in Genesis three, Satan's curse oozes the promise of death and separation from God for the man and the woman. Yet restoration of all life is still subtly tucked within this promise of death. In verse fifteen, God rebukes the serpent, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen 3:15, NIV). Despite the double barrier of enmity, a careful reading reveals a rather profound restorative promise.

Often referred to as the *protoevangelium*, the gospel story is powerfully glimpsed in Satan's (and enmity's) trouncing by the promised Messiah. One of Eve's offspring will eventually crush Satan's head. Enmity, brokenness, and separation will certainly linger, but they cannot ultimately win. God is a God of restoration, and even if it takes generations of suffering and loss, the promised Messiah will set all things into right relationship with God. Though the details remain unexplained at this point in the story, it is important to note that the covenant promise still holds the relationship. As will be further explicated through the New Testament gospel lens, this promise of restoration acts as much more than a vague placeholder. Eventually, the trauma of the cross will heal the trauma of the fall. All broken relationships will eventually heal through the grief-filled suffering of the Father and Son's broken, yet restored and resurrected, relationship.

Though we often describe this brokenness as utter separation, it is vital to note here that after their fall, God does not completely remove himself from his people who have been physically removed from the safety and communion of the garden. Neither does He sever the relationship they have with each other. God, as Loving Truine Community, restores and reinforces loving covenant community. Notice in verse twenty, *after* being cursed to death, the text curiously details that, "Adam named his wife 'Eve,' because she would become the mother of all the living" (Gen 3:20). Rather than enmity spreading between the two ending in death or at least divorce, we find their relationship here remarkably reinforced. As commentator Kenneth Mathews writes, "In the former case he [Adam] is her [Eve] source of life, and by naming her "woman" he acknowledges her companionship, but here he admits his indebtedness to her for life's future."¹ Consider how he now calls her. She is no longer simply "woman," she is now

¹ K. A. Mathews, [Genesis 1-11:26](#), vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 254.

“Life,” or more accurately, “Life-giver.” More than an ironic emphasis following the intrusion of death, here the name “Life-giver” also intimates greater intimacy within the couple.

Naming in scripture almost always denotes knowing, and usually signifies a deeper and more personal knowing between God and His called out people.² Here we have Adam choosing to define his relationship with his wife as survivorship and togetherness even in the shadow of death and separation. Sin fights to separate and trauma tears at togetherness, but Adam here solidifies his relationship to his wife in huddled-connectedness. Though much is lost, and this ultimate “Life” will still take generations to take Messianic root, the promise of restoration is real and miraculously the covenantal intimacy increased directly in the shadow of death and separation. In short, the ultimate promise of God’s restoration is signaled in trusting relationship reestablished post-trauma between Him and his own and within their community as they are named and called as His.

It is not just the marriage relationship that rests on the hope of eventual restoration, but God also literally and metaphorically wraps the two exiles in his promise of spiritual inheritance. The text says, “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them” (Gen 3:21). Note here that it is God who *made* the skins, and God who did the *clothing*. This was not an assignment for Adam and Even to slaughter an animal and clothe themselves in order to prove their loyalty.³ Rather, God performs the sacrifice and clothes them with the skin (body) reiterating that their relationship with God, though altered, has not been completely severed. Their communion has been interrupted, yet God is still intimately, caringly, carefully protecting them from shame and further vulnerability. He *made* creation and he likewise *made* them clothing. Commentators differ as to what extent this act previews Christ’s atonement and the Father’s future kingdom inheritance as sons and daughters (Is 61:10, Gal 3:27, Phil 3:9, Lk 15:22, 22:29, Mt 25:34, Rom 8:17).⁴ However, what is almost always missed in the labyrinth of systematics, is that the relationship between God and his creation is not fully disengaged. He will be the One guiding the restoration path through his loving care in community. The loss is traumatic, the promise of ultimate restoration is real, and the messy in between is still connected in grief-filled trusting community with God. In short, He, *as Loving Truine Community*, still communes with his outcast creation despite trauma and death.

² Gen 17:5, 17:16, 32:22, Num 13:16, Mark 3:13-19. Mt 16:18, John 1:42. Eve’s is an interesting foreshadowing and parallel to Sarah, as she also is renamed as a giver of life and the *mother of all nations*.

³As an interesting note and foreshadowing, both here and in the scriptures, the Hebrew word for “skin” could also be translated as “body.” Here, quite literally, a body symbolizes the beginning of restoration of physical bodies and the body of Christ.

⁴ Derek Kidner, [*Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 1, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967), 77. Kinder argues against an atonement association claiming instead that this is divinely initiated “non-salvific” call for moral, physical, and social action of human beings one for each other. Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, [*Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*](#), vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 20. Jamieson, on the other hand, argues that it is precisely at this moment that animal sacrificial system of atonement is first instituted prefiguring directly the sacrifice and redemption of Christ.