

## How Could You Wreck It All?

### Upsetting the Equilibrium

How could you wreck it all? If you could meet Adam and Eve today, wouldn't you just want to grab them by the shoulders and scream at them, "How could you wreck it all? How could you wreck the perfect world that all of us want to enjoy every single day? I so wish that I could've been in your boat! You had it all! You had this beautiful paradise and more fruit to eat than you could ever imagine. You were already like God, made in his image, with the perfect holiness and righteousness with which he originally created humanity. Your thoughts, will, and actions were perfectly aligned with your Creator. You had the perfect marriage, the ideal standard to which all marriages compare. You perfectly demonstrated the gender roles of head and helper, where man and woman worked in perfect harmony and no one thought that they were inferior or superior. You were never going to die! You had the perfect world: filled with no murder, no hatred, no fights, no conflict, no worry, no pain, no hunger, no thirst, no pollution, no weeds, no toil. Now because you fell into sin and brought death into our world, you've wrecked it all! Not just for you, but for all of us! Now our world is filled with murder, hatred, fights, conflict, worry, pain, hunger, thirst, pollution, weeds, and toil. How could you do such a thing?"

### Analyzing the Consequences

Where did it all go wrong for Adam and Eve? They forgot that they already had it all. They thought they needed more. The devil is far too crafty and cunning, far too subtle and slimy that he not going to come up to you and say, "Here, let me show you how you can wreck it all." First, he asks, "Are you sure you got your facts straight?" ***"Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"*** He wants to create doubt. He alludes back to the command where God gave Adam and Eve every tree in the garden except one. It was meant to be this opportunity for Adam and Eve to trust God, obey him, and serve him. The tree was their church where they could worship God by aligning their actions with their Creator who had so bountifully blessed them. The devil doesn't want to contradict that (at least not yet); he just wants to double check, "Are you so sure that God has your best interests in mind? If you ask me, he would let you do whatever you want, if he were really looking out for you. It sounds like that command is pretty restrictive. In fact, why would he say you'll die if you eat the fruit of that tree? That's pretty harsh, isn't it?" Next, he turns the doubt into an attack, "God is depriving you of something." ***"You will not certainly die. For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*** He pretends he is on Eve's team. He cuts to the chase, "Is God lying to you or not? If he were telling the truth, why is he holding things back from you? Why doesn't he want you to be more enlightened? More like him? More knowledgeable? If God is holding you back, why do you want to follow a God like that! In fact, you can get more if only you assert yourself. So just do it. Eat the fruit. You won't regret it." What's the result? More enlightenment, more God-likeness, more knowledge? No! All those crafty and cunning, subtle and slimy promises turn out to be a big zero. The decisive action that wrecked it all took place, and there's no going back. The first result is shame. These two perfect people, who used to bask in the joy of being in their Creator's presence, now are so ashamed they have to play a game of hide and seek. ***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.* Once the Lord finds them, the shame game turns into the blame game. *“Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.” Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”* It’s not my fault; it’s her fault – really, it’s your fault, God, because you put her here with me! No, it’s not my fault; it’s his fault – nothing would have happened without this crafty and cunning, subtle and slimy serpent!

When you look at it like that, then the real question is, “How could you wreck it all?” I mean you. You fall for it too. Sure, you are not so foolish to fall for the devil when he says, “Here, let me show you how you can wreck it all.” Yet you’re willing to entertain his crafty and cunning, subtle and slimy ways. “Are you sure you got your facts straight? Did God really say that he created the world when scientific modeling can explain how our complex world came into existence with no need for a Creator? Did God really say that his Word is true when it seems like such a primitive document? Did God really say that God created woman with the role of helper when men abuse women? Did God really say that serving him is a wonderful privilege when you get made fun for being a Christian? God is depriving you of something! God is depriving you of American freedom! He is depriving you of intellectual knowledge! He is depriving you of relational happiness! He is depriving you of emotional fulfillment! If God is holding you back, why do you want to follow a God like that! In fact, you can get more if only you assert yourself. So just do it. Become your own god! You won’t regret it.” What’s the result? More enlightenment, more God-likeness, more knowledge? No! All those crafty and cunning, subtle and slimy promises turn out to be a big zero. You convince yourself you need more – more freedom, more knowledge, more happiness, more fulfillment – and it turns into this never ending trap where more is never enough. More leads to more disappointment that you can never deliver on all the pressure you place on yourself, because you are creating your self-worth. The first result is shame. We, who were created to bask in the joy of being in our Creator’s presence, are now so ashamed we have to play a game of hide and seek. Do I really want to be exposed for much I’ve failed to live up to my own standards? Do I really want to be exposed for how many times I claimed God was withholding something good from me? Then the shame game turns into the blame game. Why isn’t my life the way I want it to be? It’s not my fault; it’s my friends’ fault who don’t spend enough time with me! It’s not my fault; it’s my spouse’s fault for not doing enough around the house! It’s not my fault; it’s my kids’ fault for not listening! It’s not my fault; it’s his fault – nothing would have happened without this crafty and cunning, subtle and slimy serpent!

### **Disclosing the Clue to Resolution**

If we get frustrated at what happened with the fall into sin, then just imagine how God felt. There he sits as he watches what happens, thinking, “Why do think you need more? I’ve already given you it all!” Then his perfect world that he created out of love for humanity descends into wreckage, and he needs to track down his wayward children Adam and Eve. How would you react? If you were the all-powerful God, wouldn’t you just take a mulligan? Do it all over? Wipe the slate clean and start from scratch again? When you look at it like that, then the real question is, “How could you *not* wreck it all? I mean you, God. How could you not just give up on the world? How could you not let the world descend into wreckage and wash your hands of it all? How could not judge this sinful world in a grand display of wrath that would

wipe Adam and Eve off the face of the planet and start over? You didn't, even though you had every right to." The true shocker is that God sought to save this world and *not* wreck it all!

### **Experiencing the Gospel**

Buried within the blame game between Adam and Eve and the consequences of the fall into sin is a glimmer of hope for our wrecked world. ***"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."*** There was already enmity, but it was misplaced. Adam and Eve rose up in hostility against God and become friends with the devil. What is often called the first gospel promise will reverse that. Adam and Eve – along with all their descendants – will rise up in hostility against the devil. One descendant par excellence would set things right again. Yes, it would hurt him; this serpent would bite at his heel. Yet he would emerge the victor; the serpent's head would be crushed. When you look at it like that, then the real question is, "How could you wreck it all? I mean you, Jesus, the seed of the woman. How could you wreck all the damage of the crafty and cunning, subtle and slimy serpent?" It starts in a dry, desolate desert filled with slithering snakes. One temptation, "Are you so sure that God has your best interests in mind? Then why has he given you such a burdensome life roasting out here in the wilderness? Turn these stones into bread!" And the seed of the woman stomps on the serpent's head. Another temptation, "Did God really say he will send his angels to protect you? Then why not test it out? Just jump off the temple!" And the seed of the woman stomps on the serpent's head. A final temptation, "God is holding you back. Imagine what all you could gain if you would just follow me – all the wealth, riches, and kingdoms of the world! Take things into your own hands. So just worship me!" And the seed of the woman stomps on the serpent's head. That's just a preview of what was to come. Head from the first book of the Bible to the last, where this ancient serpent, who leads the whole world astray, is hurled down from heaven and finally locked up into his pen until he is thrown in a fiery pit of judgment (Rev. 12:9; 20:2,10). Once and for all, Eve's descendent undoes all the wreckage caused by the fall into sin!

### **Anticipating the Consequences**

Page through the rest of your Bible, and the book of Revelation is not the only place that alludes to Genesis 3. In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul says, ***"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet"*** (16:20). Wait a minute! I thought the Seed of the woman would crush Satan under *his* feet, not *my* feet! You are part of the seed of the woman too – you are counted as her believing descendants. The great seed of the woman par excellence, Jesus, has credited his victory to you. You have Jesus' perfection and righteousness. You have the image of God being renewed and restored in you through the power of the Spirit. Your will and your attitudes are being more and more aligned with your Creator. You enjoy more blessings from God than you could ever imagine. Your real home is the heavenly Eden, where there will be no murder, no hatred, no fights, no conflict, no worry, no pain, no hunger, no thirst, no pollution, no weeds, and no toil. You can wreck it all because you have it all! When you look at it like that, then the real question is, "How could you wreck it all? I mean you. How can you wreck all of the devil's damage?" Christians are honest with the effects of sin in our world, but we are not defeated by them. We conquer temptations through the power of Christ our perfect substitute! Look that ancient serpent in the eye and rub it in, "My champion has rubbed your head in the dust of defeat. With him at my side, I will wreck all your work!" Amen.