

## Misery Wants Company

### Genesis 3:1-7

God has created a world for human flourishing.

- There is abiding taking place between humanity and God.
- There is abiding taking place between the man and the woman.
- There is abiding taking place in the beauty and abundance of creation.

**2:25**, Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

Naked -> אַרְוֹנִימִים (arumim)

**3:1**, Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made.

Cunning -> אַרְוֵם (arum)

Same root. Same letters. Same sound.

Lost in translation.

The very next verse introduces a serpent who is cunning /naked and has learned to live outside of God's covering.

**3:7**, and they knew they were naked; and made coverings for themselves.

Naked -> עִירְוֹמָם (eyrom / ay-rome)

In Hebrew, cunning is not necessarily negative (the word is morally neutral). The same word is used to describe the righteous and wise.

**Proverbs 22:3** A sensible (arum) person sees danger and takes cover, but the inexperienced keep going and are punished.

**Proverbs 12:16** A fool's displeasure is known at once, but whoever ignores an insult is sensible (arum).

It can also be used to describe those with questionable character.

**Job 5:12-13** He frustrates the schemes of the crafty (arum) so that they achieve no success. **13** He traps the wise in their craftiness so that the plans of the deceptive are quickly brought to an end.

A person described as crafty...

"may be unpleasant and purposely misleading in speech but are not out-and-out liars. They know how to read people and situations and how to turn their readings to advantage." ~ Zevit, Ziony (2013). *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?*. Yale University Press.

Observations concerning the serpent:

**Genesis 3:1** Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made.

**Genesis 3:14** you are cursed more than any livestock and more than any wild animal.

There is intentional contrast in the original language.

"God did not make a 'crafty' creature; he made a wise creature. The serpent's decision to use its prudence for evil intentions, however, resulted in a fall from divine favor to eternal humiliation," ~ Postell, Seth (2011). *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1-3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh*.

Inquiring minds want to know...

When did the serpent rebel and fall? Where is the depiction of Satan's fall?

**Revelation 12:9** So the great dragon was thrown out—the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world.

*Let's take a little journey.*

“rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.” (1:26)

In God's kingdom we often see the last given the role of honor above the ones who came before.

- Cain and Abel
- Jacob and Esau
- Joseph and his older brothers
- David and his older brothers

Is it possible that something is beginning to happen with one of the creatures who is starting to resent being ruled by humanity?

**1 Peter 1:10-12** Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that would come to you, searched and carefully investigated. **11** They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. **12** It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—angels long to catch a glimpse of these things.

This is a snake that can talk.

It has knowledge of God's decisions and purposes.

**vs. 1**, He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can't eat from any tree in the garden’?”

**vs. 4**, “No! You will certainly not die, In fact God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

**3:14**, It is a snake that doesn't crawl?

*More background...*

**Isaiah 6:1-3** In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, and the hem of his robe filled the temple. **2** Seraphim were standing above him; they each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. **3** And one called to another: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Armies; his glory fills the whole earth.

Heavenly creatures are surrounding God's throne.

Isaiah names these creatures as seraphim.

Seraphim is a normal Hebrew word for venomous snake (saraph, שָׂרָפִים)

**Numbers 21:6** Then the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people, and they bit them so that many Israelites died.

*ha-nehashim ha-seraphim* (הַנְּחָשִׁים הַשְּׂרָפִים) "the fiery serpents" or "the burning snakes"

**Deuteronomy 8:15** He led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its poisonous snakes and scorpions, a thirsty land where there was no water. He brought water out of the flint rock for you.

*One more passage:*

First Ezekiel accuses Tyre's king of claiming to be a diety (**28:6-9**).

He then compares this king to an ancient spiritual rebel who inhabited Eden.

**Ezekiel 28:11-17** The word of the Lord came to me: **12** “Son of man, lament for the king of Tyre and say to him, ‘This is what the Lord God says: You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

**13** You were in Eden, the garden of God.

Every kind of precious stone covered you:

carnelian, topaz, and diamond,

beryl, onyx, and jasper,

lapis lazuli, turquoise and emerald.

Your mountings and settings were crafted in gold;

they were prepared on the day you were created.

**14** You were an anointed guardian cherub,

for I had appointed you.

You were on the holy mountain of God;

you walked among the fiery stones.

**15** From the day you were created

you were blameless in your ways

until wickedness was found in you.

**16** Through the abundance of your trade,

you were filled with violence, and you sinned.

So I expelled you in disgrace

from the mountain of God,

and banished you, guardian cherub,

from among the fiery stones.

**17** Your heart became proud because of your beauty;

For the sake of your splendor

you corrupted your wisdom.

So I threw you down to the ground;

Ezekiel gives us the earliest interpretation of the Genesis 3 serpent (snake).

Right here! In real time...a description is given of the fall of Man, Woman, and the Serpent.

The writer of Genesis 3 wants us to make these connections.

- This snake looks at humanity and begins to resent their status (place with God).
- This snake rebels and takes action to seduce the humans into questioning the goodness of God’s provision.  
\*They too will act according to their own self interest.
- This snake is skilled at theological discourse.
- This snake is the first in the Bible to practice theology in a place of critique and analysis rather than being one who listens, trusts, and obeys.
- This snake sows doubt through questioning Yahweh’s safe boundary. God is now a barrier and his prohibition a hurdle to go around.

**\*vs. 2-3**, The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, ‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’”

**vs. 6**, The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

**Question:** When it comes to faith, when it comes to engaging in your relationship with Jesus is your tendency to stay in a place of analysis or do you genuinely listen, trust, and obey?

Are you quick to create boundaries that aren’t necessary?

Are you tempted to leave out necessary information for your own convenience?