

GENESIS 3

26 January 2023

New International Version, 2011

Learning objectives

- Identify who and what the 'serpent' was.
- Describe basic steps of recovery from shame.
- Accept the joys and the hardships of life.



Marduk (first human figure on the left) slays Tiamat. From a Babylonian seal

“Even when not related to a god, the serpent represented wisdom (occult), fertility, health, chaos and immortality, and was often worshiped.”

IBP Bible Backgrounds Commentary, 2014



Sumerian god Ningishzida

3:1 Meet the Nakhsh

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.

Serpent: nakhsh, from a root magical 'magical' or another root meaning 'luxuriant, shiny'. In ancient mythology, he is a god or divine being, not a mere reptile.

Crafty: more so than any/all earthly creatures, and able to reason and to speak. Thus, there may have been no natural animal involved.

'In the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh epic we read that it was a serpent that snatched and ate the plant of life which Gilgamesh had been seeking, thereby rejuvenating itself rather than Gilgamesh (Gilgamesh 11.305-307)'. (John Day, 2015)

'The serpent is equated in 1 Enoch 69:6 [third century BCE] with Gader'el, one of the wicked angels who descended from heaven to have sex with women on the earth.' (ibid.)

'Satan (the devil) first equated with the Eden serpent in the apocryphal [first-century BCE] book of Wisdom (Wis 2:24, "but through the Devil's envy death entered the world").' (ibid.)

Rev 12:9, 20:2. Serpent = Devil = Satan = Dragon

9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.

20 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.

Thus, it was Judaism, not Christianity, that first equated the nakhsh with Satan. The New Testament reflects the teaching of pre-Christian Judaism.

3:1b-3 The Nakhsh speaks

He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 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.'"

- To what deity does the serpent allude?
- How does deceit gain our attention?
- What mistakes did the lady make?

4:4-5 The Nakhsh lies

4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Steps to deceit:

1. Question truth. 'Did God say?'
2. Deny truth. 'It won't happen!'
3. Contradict truth. 'God knows!'
4. Replace truth. 'Be like gods!'

3:6-7 The humans fall (for it)

6 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. 7 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.

First stage of shame: cover up.

Human societies tend towards shame or towards guilt.

3:8-9 The humans hide

8 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. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Alternative translation: 'heard thunder of the LORD's storm ('day' of the Lord') blew into the garden.'

Second stage of shame: Flee.

First phase of counsel: Assess.

3:10-11 The humans explain

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

Third stage of shame: Deflect.

Second phase of counsel: Listen.

3:12-13 The humans fall (for it)

12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me —she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Fourth stage of shame: Admit.

Third phase of counsel: Inquire.

3:14 Yahweh sets the Nakhsh's ultimate destiny

14 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.

Above: 'more than' (they only die).

Eat dust: Dwell in the underworld forever. 'Bite the dust!'

3:15 Yahweh sets the Nakhsh's temporal destiny

15 And 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."

Offspring: collective noun singular in form, plural in meaning.

He: better 'they'. Satan's eventual defeat would come through the human beings. (Jesus will end the conflict at his return.)

3:16 Yahweh sets the woman's redemptive discipline

16 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."

1 Timothy 2:15 'She will be saved through child-bearing, if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.'

3:17-18 Yahweh sets the man's redemptive discipline

17 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. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

An organic, whole, plant-based diet, with supplements, free of refined carbohydrates, will defeat most human diseases, extending life by a decade or more.

3:20-21 The new world order

20 Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

Named: Adam assumes headship (responsibility) for his wife.

Eve: *khavah*, from a root meaning 'to bow down' that sounds slightly like a word for 'life' (*khiy*).

Skin: Did Yahweh replace their lost glory with human epidermis?

3:22-24 The new world reality

22 And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." 23 So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.

24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.