

We Need a Lamb Genesis 3:1-7

INTRODUCTION

The Borgen Project is a nonprofit organization with a mission to end global poverty and hunger, and to make that a primary objective of U.S. foreign policy. Their website says very succinctly: We fight extreme poverty.

In response to the question, “What is wrong with the world?” they recently created a list of the “10 Biggest Issues.” Here they are:

1. **Poverty.** More than 70 percent of the people in the world own less than \$10,000 — or roughly 3 percent of total wealth in the world.
2. **Religious Conflict & War.** They cite the rise of terrorism and religiously-motivated insurgent groups.
3. **Political Polarization.** Since 2004, the U.S. has reportedly seen a rise in political partisanship.
4. **Government Accountability.** Specifically, in the U.S., reports say only a third of Americans trust the government to “do what is right.”
5. **Education.** 130 million girls across the world lack proper access to schooling.
6. **Food and Water.** 1 in 9 people lack access to clean water across the world and the same ratio are malnourished.
7. **Health in Developing Nations.** Life expectancy in developing nations is on average 14 years behind developed nations’.
8. **Credit Access.** Studies show that access to credit can improve economic prospects.
9. **Discrimination.** Discrimination covers a wide breadth of issues and takes several forms.
10. **Physical fitness.** Obesity has become a global issue.

In contrast, about 100 years before the Borgen Project report, famed Christian apologist G. K. Chesterton was asked to contribute an essay to an English journal on the very same theme: “What Is Wrong with the World?” He sent back to the editors a two-word essay. “What Is Wrong with the World?”

Chesterton's answer: *I am.*

Our text from Genesis agrees. It places the source of all human misery and pain squarely at our feet. Genesis tells us that our greatest problem has to do with our sin, our relentless human determination to be gods unto ourselves. Our problem is not the result of out-of-control forces of nature; our problem is moral. It is a matter of us being out-of-control.

Matthew Henry, author of an extensive commentary on the whole Bible, writes:

This passage (from Genesis 3) is a perfect case study of temptation, for sin cannot be blamed on environment or heredity. (Matthew Henry)

What is wrong with the world? We are.

And there is only one way to fix it.

We need a lamb.

Four days ago we embarked on a 46 day adventure, leading us through the season of Lent up to the celebration of Easter on April 9. Our theme for this journey is John 1:29:

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)

In this series of sermons, my intent is to help you focus your mind on Jesus.

- To see Him as the Lamb of God.
- To recognize the incredible sacrifice He made for us.
- To see ourselves as unworthy of grace like that.

If we are what's wrong with this world, how did we get ourselves into such a mess? The third chapter of Genesis shows us four reasons.

REASON #1: WE QUESTION WHAT GOD SAYS

Look at verse 1:

(Serpent speaking): Did God really say, "You must not eat from any tree in the garden?" (Genesis 3:1)

Just as in the Garden of Eden, this world has competing voices. Some will tell the truth but many will say whatever they need to in order to earn your allegiance.

For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

The challenge is always "what does God say?"

- Not "what do we think He says?"
- Not "what do our friends tell us He says?"
- But "what does He actually say?"
- And then do it!

God has a lot to say. He has published 66 books in a bound collection known as the Bible. God tells us how to live a life that pleases Him. We don't have to guess about it. It is pretty straight forward. We simply need to trust the book.

Bernie May of Wycliffe Bible Translators wrote,

As an airplane pilot, from the first time I sat in the beginner's seat beside my instructor I was taught to "trust" what my instruments told me. "Your instincts will fool you," my instructor rightly told me. "You must learn that even though you may feel you are flying south, if your compass says you are flying east, you'd better believe it."

Often when a plane is surrounded by swirling mist and being buffeted by strong winds, you may feel you are in a dive and be tempted to pull back on the controls. But if your instruments say you are flying level - or even climbing - you'd better believe them. To pull back on the controls might put you into a steep climb, which would cause the plane to stall, drop off in a spin, and leave you out of control."

May continues:

Just as a pilot must learn to trust what his instruments tell him, we must learn to trust what God has said in His Word.

We need a lamb.

REASON #2: WE WANT TO BE IN CONTROL OF OUR LIVES

Look at verse 5:

(Serpent speaking): God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. (Genesis 3:5)

From time to time, many of us have joked that if we could be "God for a day" we would fix things. You might remember the movie "Bruce Almighty." Jim Carrey was a news reporter. Morgan Freeman had the role of God. In the course of the movie, however, God gets tired of hearing how Jim Carrey could do a better job ... so (God) lets him be God for a day. And totally makes a mess of things!

The problem is that most of us most try to be in control without actually having the job. And that makes a bigger mess of things.

- We think we know better.
- We think God's timing is off.
- We think His commands are a bit too restrictive or out of touch.

And so we do what we want to do ... even though we know it different than what God wants to do.

And instead of fixing things, we make things worse.

That's why we need a lamb.

REASON #3: WE PURSUE SHORT TERM PLEASURES

Look at verse 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.
(Genesis 3:6)

The text calls the menu “fruit.” In defense of all apples everywhere and all apple lovers – myself included – the text calls it fruit.

There were several components to this fruit that created that assisted the first couple in their temptation but the positive impact of those desires was all short-term.

- According to the Mayo Clinic, when you eat something, it takes about six to eight hours for food to pass through your stomach and small intestine. Food then enters your large intestine (colon) for further digestion, absorption of water and, finally, elimination of undigested food. It takes about 36 hours for food to move through the entire colon.
- The pleasure of the fruit lasted about 36 hours.
- The problem of the fruit has lasted for 10,000 years.

We might say:

The fruit was only pleasing to the eye until they ate it.

So too with us. Sin might be fun, but the fun is only temporary. The consequences last a whole lot longer.

Because of those consequences, we need a lamb.

#4: WE TRY TO HIDE OUR MISTAKES

Look at verse 7:

... they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. (Genesis 3:7)

At some point in every parent's life, you tell your toddlers in plain and simple language: “Markers are only for coloring on paper. Nothing else.”

- But they have been playing quietly for a while. Too quietly.
- So you walk into the room to check on them.
- What have been doing? Nothing.

That's the seen I picture in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve knew playing with markers was wrong, but they did it anyway. And they got caught.

And instead of confessing their wrongdoing, they tried to hide their mistakes ... with fig leaves.

As one writer expressed it:

The fig leaves-an easy quick fix, a cover-up. They represent man trying to fix his sin on his own terms, the quick and easy way. Grab some leaves. Cover yourself quickly. "Here, Eve, put this on. See I told you we could make this thing work out. God will never know."

We need a lamb.

APPLICATION

From the earliest days of human history, sin has run rampant through our world. It infects everything and everybody. Nothing escapes its destructive power.

Like putting your fingers in the leading dike, just as soon as you think you have the problem stopped, it bursts forth somewhere else. We will never be able to contain it all.

We need a lamb. We need someone who can take care of all the problems with sin that are in us and around us. We need Jesus.

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29)

Amen.