

PROMISES KEPT BIBLE OVERVIEW, WEEK TWO (GENESIS 3)

OPENING QUESTION (2 MINS)

What is the most naturally beautiful place you've ever been? What is the moment of your life when you've felt most loved? When was the last time you just couldn't stop laughing?

Before you move onto the video talk, remind your group what they saw last week (use the large icon for Session One at the end of this pdf): God's people are enjoying the blessing of living with God, under his rule, in his very good world.

VIDEO TALK (12 MINS)

APPLY TIME... (12 MINS)

1. What does Genesis 3 [and Genesis 11 if you looked at it] show us sin is?

You could skip this group if you don't think you need to discuss a definition of sin. In the talk, we defined sin as allowing our own desires to govern us, instead of God, deciding that we know better than God what is good for us, and therefore rejecting his rule and his ways. A more concise definition: Sin is not loving God and not treating him as ruler.

2. How did the devil tempt the woman to sin? How do we experience the same tactics when the devil tempts us?

The serpent encouraged the woman to doubt: what God has said (v 1); that what God has said is not true (v 4); and that what God has said/done is not good for her (v 5). To discuss how these 'tactics' look in our own lives, it might be worth picking a particular common sin that tends to be acceptable or excused in middle-class evangelical churches (eg: lying, or gossip, or impatience, or materialism—choose the one or two that you think will be most fruitful for your group).

3. From this session and the previous one, how would you explain to a friend...

(You could do this in pairs, alternating "explainer" and "friend" roles. Encourage people to make sure they are using the truths of Genesis 3.)

- **what our world is like and why?**

Our world is beautiful, made by an amazing God. But it's also flawed, because we have rejected God's rule. Part of his judgment on us is that his world is no longer perfect.

- **what humans are like, and why?**

We are amazing—wonderfully designed, capable of goodness and intelligence—because we are made in the image of God. But we are also deeply flawed—we don't treat others, ourselves, or the world around us as we should, even when we're trying to—because we're all, at heart, rebels against the God who made us.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR OUR HEARTS AND LIVES (5 MINS)

You could talk about these as a group or, probably better break into twos or threes to discuss. You may want to pick one or two that you know are particularly helpful for your group and focus on those.

Like our ancestors, we're all tempted to follow the devil and disobey God. If we don't realise we're being tempted, we're already giving in.

How are *you* regularly tempted to disobey the God who made you, in your attitudes or in your actions? Does the devil suggest you should doubt God's words (v 1); that he doesn't mean what he says (v 5); or that he doesn't know what's best for you (v 5)?

PROMISE KEPT (15 MINS)

The only hope for humanity is God's promise of a serpent-crusher. From Genesis 3 onwards, we are searching for the woman's offspring, the one who can and will defeat the devil and free humanity from his power—from death.

Read Luke 11 v 14-22

1. What is Jesus doing (Luke 11 v 14)?

Driving out a demon from a man.

2. What answer does Jesus give (v 17-19)? Far from working for the devil, what does he say he has come to earth to do (v 20)?

He points out it'd be ridiculous for the devil to undo his own work in the man! Jesus hasn't come to do the devil's work, but to be the way God re-establishes "the kingdom of God" (v 20) in a world under Satan's power, so people can live under his rule and enjoy his blessing.

3. Who is the "strong man" of verse 21? The devil (we are his "possessions", facing death). Who is the "someone stronger" of verse 22? Jesus (he will take the devil's possessions—people—as his "spoils", to live in his kingdom).

4. How is Jesus the fulfilment of the promise of Genesis 3 v 15? He is the one who can crush the devil. He is a human, but more powerful than Satan. Having never rejected God (see Luke 4 v 1-13; Hebrews 4 v 15—where Jesus is called "high priest"), he is uniquely able to defeat the devil.

Note: You could say that Jesus ultimately does this on the cross, by dying in the place of sinners, removing the devil's power over us. But you might leave this until Session Six, and refer back to Genesis 3 v 15 then.

5. Let's go back to our "How would you explain to a friend" question from earlier...How would you explain to a friend how the problems of the world and humanity can be fixed?

No human or society which has rejected God (ie: everyone!) can hope to fix the problem of rejecting God, of being under the devil's power, of facing death. Only the sinless human, Jesus, can do that.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR OUR HEARTS AND LIVES (7 MINS)

In what ways do you find it easiest to forget the beauty of this world, and the beauty of you as an image-bearing human In what ways do you find it easiest to forget the brokenness of this world, and of you?

How would holding the two together:

- help you be neither too much in love with the world, nor too despairing about the world?
- prompt you to praise the serpent-crusher and to look forward to life with him forever?

PRAY (7 MINS)

Confess to God that, like our first ancestors, you're sinners. Acknowledge (out loud or in your hearts) specific ways you've disobeyed him this week.

Thank God that he does not leave us where we deserve, under the power of the devil, but instead came as Jesus to free us.

Ask God to help you notice when you're being tempted, and give you the strength to resist the devil and know the blessing of living God's way.

EXTRA BIBLE TIME (to slot in before 'Apply Time...' section)

We're skipping forward from the fall, through the flood, to chapter 11 of Genesis...

Read Genesis 11 v 1-9

What do people decide to do, and why (Gen 11 v 1-4)?

Build a city. It will have "a tower that reaches to the heavens" (v 4) to show how powerful and independent they are—to "make a name for ourselves" (v 4). They do this to not be "scattered" (v 4).

God had told humanity to "fill the earth" (1 v 28) What do these people think of God's plan (v 4)?

They are ignoring God's plans for his creation.

What ends up happening, and why (v 7-9)?

God confuses their languages (v 7). They stop building, and are scattered (v 8)—exactly what they'd hoped to avoid!

How is this historical episode similar to what happened in Genesis 3?

Humans decide to rule without reference to God, rejecting his plans for creation (notice the people don't mention God at all in v 1-4). But it's futile: God sees, and judges.

What are we seeing about what God is like? And about what humans are like?

God sees, is in control, and judges. And his plans will happen. People are rebels against God. What we saw on a personal level in Gen 3 here happens with a whole society.

