

Genesis 3:8-9

- Where are you? -

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Introduction

- ❖ What was the first question God asked man?
 - "WHERE ARE YOU?"
- ❖ This question is still applicable today: "Where are you?"
 - Try to imagine the thought that no one would ever ask: "Where are you?" Nobody would be missing you! No one would be interested in you! That would lead to the relational and spiritual death of man, of you and me.

- ❖ "Where are you?" To study this question, which God asked, from a religious point of view is equally important. If God hadn't asked this question, he wouldn't have taken man seriously as a responsible creature, created in his own image and in his own likeness (Gen 1:26-28; Gen 1:15-17).
- ❖ "Where are you?" God asked, because "they (man and woman) hid from the Lord God" (Gen 3:8). They separated themselves from God.
 - Many people "are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts" (Eph 4:18).
 - "For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles" (Rom 1:21-23).

- ❖ What are their arguments?¹ – A short summary:
 - There is lack of evidence (of the existence of God) and the arguments in favor of the existence of God are not convincing.
 - There are reasons to treat God as unnecessary. Science will explain everything. “Atheists argue that because everything in the universe can be explained in a satisfactory way without using God as part of the explanation, then there is no point in saying that God exists.” This is called scientism. It is the modern-day version of Genesis 3:4-5: “You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Knowing good and evil means everything, and if we will be like God, we don’t need God any longer.
 - Atheists argue that there is the problem of evil. “Most religions say that God is completely good, knows everything, and is all-powerful. But the world is full of wickedness and bad things keep happening.” This is exactly what Genesis 3 and 4 is teaching us. The difference between God and man is the “knowledge of good and evil – everything.” God is completely good. “It is impossible for God to lie” (Heb 6:8). Due to the gain of knowledge of good and evil, lies have become daily practice of mankind.
 - “Atheists argue that since religion is just a psychological fantasy, human beings should abandon it so that they can grow to respond appropriately to deal with the world as it is.” According to atheists “human beings believe in God because they want:
 - A father figure to protect them from this frightening world;
 - Someone who gives their lives meaning and purpose;
 - Something that stops death being the end – eternal life;
 - To believe that they are an important part of the universe and that some component of the universe (God) cares for and respects them.”
 - The list of arguments is long and varied. Many names of philosophers can be related to it.
 - Finally, there is the argument of the plurality of religions. There are so many different religions and so many gods.
- ❖ All these arguments are used by man to hide from God, who is calling “WHERE ARE YOU?”

The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the Genesis. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand-alone”. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

¹ Atheism. (2017, July 28). Retrieved August 07, 2017, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism#Arguments; Religions - Atheism: Reasons people choose atheism. \(2009, October 22\). Retrieved August 07, 2017, from http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/atheism/beliefs/reasons_1.shtml](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atheism#Arguments; Religions - Atheism: Reasons people choose atheism. (2009, October 22). Retrieved August 07, 2017, from http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/atheism/beliefs/reasons_1.shtml)

Context

- ❖ An overview of the Book of Genesis.

<i>THE CREATION</i>	
Genesis 1:1-2:3	"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
<i>THE HISTORY OF HEAVEN AND EARTH</i>	
Genesis 2:4-4:26	"account of the heavens and the earth" (2:4)
Genesis 5:1-6:8	"account of Adam" (5:1)
Genesis 6:9-9:28	"account of Noah" (6:9)
Genesis 10:1-11:9	"account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons" (10:1)
<i>THE HISTORY OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JAKOB</i>	
Genesis 11:10-26	"account of Shem" (11:10)
Genesis 11:27-25:11	"account of Terah" (11:27) > Abram/Abraham
Genesis 25:12-18	"account of Abraham's son Ishmael" (25:12)
Genesis 25:19-35:29	"account of Abraham's son Isaac" (25:19)
Genesis 36:1-37:1	"account of Esau" (36:1)
Genesis 37:2-50:26	"account of Jacob" (37:2)

- ❖ The Book of Genesis consists of three main parts:
 1. Genesis 1:1-2:3: In the beginning;
 2. Genesis 2:4-11:9: The history of heaven and earth;
 3. Genesis 11:10-50:26: The history of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- ❖ The first "chapter" after "In the beginning", is Gn. 2:4-4:26.² It consists of three parts, which can be summarized by two words: "life" and "death"
 - Gn. 2:4-24 = "life." Man and woman have been created in the likeness of God and life together with the LORD God in the garden of Eden.
 - Gn. 2:25-3:24 = "life and death." Although the LORD God had prohibited man (and woman) to eat from the tree of knowledge, they trespassed this command and God said to man: "for dust you are and to dust you will return" (Gn. 3:24).

² Many commentators take Gn. 1:1-3:24 apart from Gn. 4:1-26.

- Gn. 4:1-26 = “**death and life.**” The first man didn’t die because of age, sickness or due to a fatal accident, but by the brutal murder of his elder brother. But, there is hope:
 - “Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. **At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD**” (4:26); for:
 - “**Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**” (Rom 10:13).

Form and structure

- ❖ An outline of Genesis 2:25-3:24 (“**life and death**”):

Genesis 2:25	<i>Before the fall of man</i>
Genesis 3:1-7	<i>Fall of man</i>
Genesis 3:8-9	Then the man and his wife hid from the Lord. But the Lord God called to the man, “ Where are you? ”
Genesis 3:10-19	<i>Trial and judgment</i>
Genesis 3:20-24	<i>After the trial and judgment</i>

- ❖ See also the next page for detailed outline based on the emotions of man and woman.

Technical notes, hermeneutics and background

- ❖ What happened to man and woman after they had eaten from the tree of knowledge of good and evil: they become aware and conscious of their nakedness. This leads to the feeling of shame for each other and to fear God and death. Finally, they feel a sense of guilt.
 - One can see the same process happening when a little child does something, which has previously been forbidden by the parents. “Don’t touch the cookies!” You will see the same aspects: growing awareness and consciousness. One of the parents is approaching and the little child will try to hide the remnants of the cookie by putting them into the mouth, or by hiding himself because he fears the consequences. “What have you done?” And a feeling of guilt will grow (or not).

Genesis 3:7	Then the eyes of both of them were opened ,	<i>awareness</i>
Genesis 3:7	and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made	<i>and consciousness</i>

	coverings for themselves.	<i>shame</i>
Genesis 3:8-10	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. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."	<i>fear for God</i>
Genesis 3:11, 12	And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? 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."	<i>feeling of guilt</i>

Awareness³

- ❖ "Awareness is the ability to directly know and perceive, to feel, or to be cognizant of events. More broadly, it is the state of being conscious of something."

Conscience⁴

- ❖ "Conscience is an aptitude, faculty, intuition or judgment that assists in distinguishing right from wrong. Moral judgment may derive from values or norms (principles and rules). In psychological terms, conscience is often described as leading to feelings of remorse when a human commits actions that go against his/her moral values and to feelings of rectitude or integrity when actions conform to such norms."

Shame⁵

- ❖ Shame is a painful, social emotion that can be seen as resulting "...from comparison of the self's action with the self's standards...", but which may equally stem from comparison of the self's state of being with the ideal social context's standard.

³ Awareness. (2017, July 21). Retrieved August 07, 2017, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Awareness>

⁴ Conscience. (2017, August 04). Retrieved August 07, 2017, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conscience>

⁵ Shame. (2017, July 12). Retrieved July 15, 2017, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shame>

- And in the context of Genesis 2-3 stem from comparison of the self's state of being with the ideal standard provided by God: created in his image and in his likeness.

The roots of the word shame are thought to derive from an older word meaning "to cover"; as such, covering oneself, literally or figuratively, is a natural expression of shame. Nineteenth-century scientist Charles Darwin, in his book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, described shame affect as consisting of blushing, confusion of mind, downward cast eyes, slack posture, and lowered head, and he noted observations of shame affect in human populations worldwide. He also noted the sense of warmth or heat occurring in intense shame. Shame can also result in crying.

Fear⁶

- ❖ Fear is a feeling induced by perceived danger or threat which will involve a change in behaviours, such as fleeing, hiding, or freezing from or in anticipation or expectation of a future threat perceived as a risk to body or life.
 - Man is fearing God and death! The Lord God had commanded the man: "You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen 2:16, 17).

Guilt⁷

- ❖ Guilt is a cognitive or an emotional experience (feeling) that occurs when a person believes or realizes—accurately or not—that he or she has compromised his or her own standards of conduct or has violated a universal moral and/or godly standard and bears significant responsibility for that violation.
 - This feeling of guilt must be distinguished from the guilt defined by (godly) law.

Verse 8

- ❖ The LORD God = "יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים": Yahweh is the proper name of the God of Israel. His name is related to the covenant.
 - Many recent scholars explain the name as *the one bringing into being, life-giver; giver of existence, creator; he who brings to pass, performer of his promises; or he who causes to fall, rain or lightning;*
 - But most take it as *the one who is: the absolute and unchangeable one; the existing, ever-living, as self-consistent and unchangeable; or the one ever coming into*

⁶ Fear. (2017, August 02). Retrieved August 07, 2017, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fear>

⁷ Guilt (emotion). (2017, July 13). Retrieved July 15, 2017, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guilt_\(emotion\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guilt_(emotion))

manifestation as the God of redemption, he will be it, all that his servants look for, he will approve himself (give evidence of being, assert his being).⁸

Exposition

Background (Genesis 2:25-3:7)

- ❖ Genesis 2:25 is often separated from chapter 3. But Genesis 2:25-3:7 must be taken as a whole, because of thematic coherence.
 - Genesis 2:25: “The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”
 - Genesis 3:7: “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked;”
- ❖ In between, the writer describes the fall of man.

<i>Initial situation (verse 25)</i>	The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.
<i>Introduction of the serpent (verse 1)</i>	Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.
<i>The serpent: (verse 1)</i>	He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”
<i>The woman: (verse 2, 3)</i>	The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 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.’ ”
<i>The serpent: (verse 4, 5)</i>	“You will not surely die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
<i>The woman (and husband): (verse 6)</i>	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.
<i>Resulting situation</i>	Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made

⁸ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, pp. 217-218).

(verse 7)	coverings for themselves
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- Some comments:
 - Opening of the eyes means growing awareness;
 - They desire “knowledge of good and evil” = “wisdom”
 - They are both responsible.
 - The result is shame (and fear, and guilt)
- Man didn’t receive instantaneously knowledge of good and evil, but the psychological effect of crossing the forbidden line. The effects of crossing the line made him aware of shame and guilt and the desire (Gen 3:6; Rom 7:7, 8)

Verse 8

- ❖ Man is hiding for the presence of God. His behaviour betrays what has just happened before. The words “hid” and in verse 10 “afraid” and “naked” expose the disrupted relation with God.
 - “The tragedy of sin can already be seen in the emotional as well as physical separation between God and His creation.”⁹
 - It is an illusion to think, that man can hide from God:
 - “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?
 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
 if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
 if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.
 If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me.’
 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you” (Ps 139:7-12).
 - Compare Genesis 3:5 with Genesis 3:7, 8:

Genesis 3:5	Genesis 3: 7, 8
“For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”	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. 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

⁹ Utley, R. J. (2001, Vol. 1A, p. 60).

	garden.
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- Indeed, their eyes were opened.
 - But instead of mastering the knowledge of good and evil, they realized that they were naked.
 - But instead of becoming like God, they made coverings for themselves and they hid from the Lord God.
- ❖ **“The Lord God as he was walking.”** This underscores the character of the “Garden of Eden” as a sanctuary, a place where God and man (and woman) met each other and stayed together, a place where they could live in the presence of God. Although this is a description of God walking, it must not be understood as a physical walking. Man and woman became aware of the presence of God. They heard his sound, but they didn’t see him.
- **“Walked with God”** is a favourite expression in Genesis, depicting the righteous conduct of Israel’s heroes, including Enoch (Gen 5:22), Noah (Gen 6:9), and Abraham (Gen 17:1). Yet now **the man and the woman are hiding from God** in fear. It was part of the sad deception that the man and woman who wanted so much to be ‘like God,’ rather than obtaining the stature of deity, are afraid even to commune with him. The language of the verse, ‘the man and his wife,’ imitates the description of the couple when in their innocence they had lived without shame (Gen 2:25). **Now they have lost their innocence, their childlike trust in the goodness of God.**¹⁰
 - “The eyes of the Lord are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good” (Prov 15:3);
 - “Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the LORD. “Do not I fill heaven and earth?” declares the LORD” (Jer 23:24).
- ❖ **“in the cool of the day.”** This might be the breeze of the late afternoon. John Calvin opts for the early morning.¹¹ The time is not specified, but the end of the day, before sunset is more probable because the narrator allows only for some time to make coverings: “So they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves” (Gen 3:7). The impression he gives is that when they are ready, they hear the sound of God.
- Paul wrote to the Ephesians: **“Do not let the sun go down** while you are still angry” (Eph 4:26).

¹⁰ Mathews, K. A. (1996, Vol. 1A, pp. 239–240).

¹¹ Calvin, J., & King, J. (2010, Vol. 1, p. 160).

Verse 9

- ❖ Some commentators notice that: “God’s first word to fallen man has all the marks of grace.”¹² But, what is more important, at the same time God will confront fallen man and woman with his judgement (Gen 12:9-19).
 - God is calling man personally. He didn’t say: “Where are *you*?” *plural* but ***singular***. Man is held responsible for both of them!
 - There is “true moral guilt, whether we acknowledge it or not, of our estranged relationship with God. We are no longer in fellowship with our Creator in the unspoiled beauty of the Garden. We have abandoned responsible sonship by failing to choose the way of obedience. Now the sound of the Lord God walking in the Garden in the cool of the day is no longer received with joy that the Lord is seeking our fellowship, but as threat.”¹³
- ❖ From Adam’s reply to God in the next verse, it appears that he does not take **Where are you?** as a question about his location **but rather as a request to explain why he is hiding.**¹⁴

Application

Man is hiding for God

- ❖ Man is hiding from God due to his growing awareness and consciousness. Instead of the unashamed knowledge of good and evil, there is exposed nakedness, shame, fear and an emerging feeling of moral (true) guilt.
 - Man is fearing God and death!
- ❖ Instead of fellowship and communion with God, there is a disrupted relationship and man and woman are hiding among the trees, which were good to see and bearing fruit.
- ❖ Man is still hiding for God by taking refuge to other religions, images, philosophical thoughts, scientism. See the introduction.

Unashamed

- ❖ Where man and woman were ashamed, many people in this world feel unashamed when they expose their nakedness (pornography), their richness while there are so many poor, their hunger for power.

¹² Kidner, D. (1967, Vol. 1, p. 74).

¹³ Atkinson, D. (1990, p. 89).

¹⁴ Reyburn, W. D., & Fry, E. M. (1998, p. 87).

Man is responsible for his acts

- ❖ “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him **to whom we must give account**” (Heb 4:12-13).
 - “Acknowledgment of our true moral guilt before God, and acceptance of our personal responsibilities, is part of the journey towards the ‘godly sorrow’ which leads to forgiveness, restoration and growth.”¹⁵
- ❖ Atkinson quotes Thielicke, “who puts it so well:
But that’s the way it is; that’s the way it really is—in your life and in mine. The fact is that all of us have sectors in the territory of our life which we are quite content to leave to God. But each of us also has a point which we will by no means let God approach. This point may be my ambition whereby I am determined to beat my way to success in my career at any price. It may be my sexuality to which I am determined to give rein no matter what happens and no matter what it costs. It may be a bottomless hatred toward one of my fellow men which I literally nurse and which gives me a kind of sensual pleasure which then comes between me and God and robs me of my peace. God can have everything, *but not this one thing!*”¹⁶
And we will try to hide it from the presence of God. And there is his voice: “Where are you?”

The call: “Where are you?”

- ❖ “How good (in every sense of that word) that we are able to read Genesis 3 through the eyes of the New Testament. For there, as shown most clearly by St Paul, we learn that although being ‘in Adam’, the representative head of humanity under the power of sin, keeps us in the thralldom of death, much more does being ‘in Christ’, the representative Head of a new humanity born from the gift of grace, give us the freedom once more to *live*.”¹⁷
- ❖ God is calling man to faith and repentance, and to a new obedience to Christ:
 - “Through him and for his name’s sake, we received grace and apostleship **to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith**. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 1:5-7).
- ❖ The communion with God will be restored:
 - “God, who has called you into fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful” (1 Cor 1:9).
 - “For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life” (1 Tess 4:7).

¹⁵ Atkinson, D. (1990, p. 89).

¹⁶ Atkinson, D. (1990, p. 83-84).

¹⁷ Atkinson, D. (1990, p. 91).

- ❖ Try to imagine the possibility that no one is calling you, searching for you, holding you responsible for your acts. That would lead to the relational and spiritual death of man.

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