

Eve

The Woman of Unique Distinction

Scripture References - Genesis 2 and 3; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:13

Name Meaning - There are three names applied to Adam's wife.

She is called "Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis 2:23). "Woman" is more of a generic designation than a name, and is associated with Eve's relation to Adam, a relation she was created to fulfill.

Literally "woman" means "man-ess." Then both Eve and her husband are called

"Adam." "Male and female created he them ... and called their name Adam" (Genesis 5:2). This inclusive name implies that the divine ideal for man and wife is not merely that of association but an indissoluble unity. God made them "one flesh" and gave them one name. Eve, the name given her after the transgression and its prophesied results, was the choice of Adam "who called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living" (3:16, 20). This was the name describing her function and destiny in spiritual history of which she was the beginning. Eve means "life" or "life-giving," or "mother of all who have life," and her life is in us all. In Bible days great significance was attached to a change of name. Why then did Adam change his wife's name - which was his own, Adam, to Eve? Donald Davidson says that, "In view of the awful judgment pronounced upon them, the man might have been pardoned if he had reproached her as 'death,' for it was her sin that brought death into our world and all our woe. But Adam gives her a name which is expressive of the prophetic life bound up in her. For through the seed of the woman, sin would one day be vanquished, and death would be swallowed up in victory."

We have given our cameo of Eve the caption "The Woman of Unique Distinction" because she is distinct, in so many ways, from all other women who have ever lived. There are a good many "Firsts" to her credit.

Eve Was the First Woman to Live Upon the Earth

The product of a divine creation, Eve appeared as a complete, perfect woman. She was never a child, or a daughter or a maiden. The first female born into the world was Eve's first daughter (Genesis 5:4). How many daughters were born to Adam and Eve we are not told. If Eve lived as long as her husband - 930 years (Genesis 5:5) - there would likely be many sons and daughters in earth's first family. Eve, then, was not born.

She was created out of Adam. Having existed in God's thought, she appeared upon the earth. Adam was directly created by God out of the dust of the earth, but Eve was fashioned out of a bone taken from Adam's side. George Herbert comments, "The man was dust refined, but the woman was dust double refined." Says Secker, "The rib was taken from under his arm. As the use of the arm is to keep off blows from the body, so the office of the husband is to ward off blows from his wife." There is a spiritual application of the bride God created for Adam. It speaks of the sacred mystery, the bride of the Lamb, who owes her existence to His wounded side (John 19:36), and who, even more than Eve, has a place near to the Bridegroom's heart (Jeremiah 31:3), and who is destined to enjoy His companionship in a sinless paradise (Revelation 2:7; 21:9).
The marriage of the Lamb, like that of Eve's, is made in heaven.

Eve Was the First Woman to Be Called a Wife

Fashioned out of man, she became man's counterpart and companion. God saw that although Adam was in a state of perfect innocency, it was not good for him to be alone. It would be good for him, spiritually, intellectually and socially to have a wife. He needed someone to love and bear his children since the command had gone forth "to multiply and replenish the earth." And so with Adam - The world was sad, the garden was a wild, And man the hermit sighed till woman smiled. God spoke of the woman He was to provide for Adam as his "helpmeet" - a help meet or adapted to him - a term giving woman her true position in the world. It is only where the Bible exists and Christianity is practiced that she attains to such a position as the helper, or equal of man. In lands where darkness reigns, woman is the slave, the chattel of man. Thus Eve was given to Adam and their two hearts beat as one in love for each other and for God. Eve was formed while Adam slept. He knew no pain during the operation for as yet there was no sin in the world. How true it is that God is continually working while men sleep! He often imparts real blessings to His own as they sleep (Psalm 127:2).

When I wake from sleep,
Despair has fled, and hope is near;
The sky seems blue, and visions clear
Have banished all my dread and fear.

Eve Was the Most Beautiful Woman the World Has Known

Century after century women have appeared renowned for their beauty of face and form but Eve excelled them all. Created by a perfect God, Eve reflected the divine perfection. Hers was no artificial beauty. Face, features and form were the loveliest women have ever had. While the Bible has no description of Eve's physical appearance, Adam's first reaction as he saw the lovely figure before him was to give voice to earth's first poem

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This, then, at last is bone of my bones, and flesh of my own flesh:
This shall be called Wo-man For from man was she taken.

While we have Biblical warrant for the beauty of Sarah, the Talmudist says - All women in comparison with Sarah are like monkeys in respect to men. But Sarah can no more be compared to Eve than can monkey be compared with man. John Milton expresses a similar commendation in one of his most daring idioms –

Adam the goodliest man since born His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve.

The blind poet goes on to say of the loveliness Adam saw – So absolute she seems And is herself complete.

The Venus of Milo, in marble, or the Venus of Titian in oil, only convey a faint idea of what Eve must have looked like as she came from the creative hand of God. No wonder she has been described as Heaven's best, last gift.

To quote from Milton's *Eve again* –
O fairest of creation, last and best
Of all God's works, creature in whom excelled
Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,
Holy, Divine, Good, Amiable or Sweet.
Yet again Eve's original beauty is expressed in these lines -
That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
Mean, or in her contained or in her looks;
Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eye,
In every gesture dignity and love.

Eve Was the First and Only Woman Born Without Sin

Being the first woman Eve had no inherited sin. Coming from the hand of God, Eve had an advantage no other woman has ever had - she was pure and holy, with the divine image unimpaired. Created sinless, she yet became the world's first sinner, and introduced sin to her offspring, and thus, all since her were "born in sin and shapen in iniquity." The best and holiest born into the race have natures that are prone to evil (Romans 7:21). Fashioned with "innocence and sinless perfection and endowed to all fullness with gifts of body and mind, and rich in external blessing without spot or alloy she yet transgressed in the sin with which she caused Adam to sin." Fresh from the hand of God with unmatched grace and beauty of body and mind, sin and ruin followed, and paradise was surrendered for a world of thorns, thistles and tears.

Eve Was the First on Earth to Be Assailed by Satan

Before her creation, Satan, who like Eve had been created a holy being, led a rebellion against the Creator and was cast from his high estate. Now he begins his rebellion on earth and beings with one who is fascinated by his approach. Thus we have the Fall and the source of original sin. There was no great daring to sin for the first time on Eve's part. As sin was unknown to both Adam and Eve when created by God, Eve saw no wrong in the masterpiece of satanic subtle suggestion. Satan did not tell her to sin, but insinuated in the cleverest way that there was nothing to worry about in eating forbidden fruit. As George Matheson puts it, "The temptation was not in itself the wish to transgress, but the will to possess; the transgression is merely a means.... If the tempter had said, 'Steal,' he would not have been listened to for a moment. But he did not say, 'Steal!'; he says, 'Speculate!' ... Temptation since the days of Eden has never ceased to clothe itself in a seemly garment." Satan succeeded in painting the downward way as leading to an upward path issuing in God-likeness or a fall upwards, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Eve succumbed to the wiles of Satan and the steps leading to her surrender are illuminating - she saw, she coveted, she took, etc. "The tree was good for food" - bodily appetite was tempted. It was "a delight to the eyes" - her sensuous nature was tempted. Then, "the tree was to be desired to make one wise" - the most powerful temptation of all, namely, "the spiritual temptation to transcend the normal experience of men and to taste of the wisdom that belongs only to God

What about her husband? Well, Adam made no effort to restrain Eve from eating of the fruit although the divine prohibition was addressed to him as well as to Eve. If he was not the first to pluck the fruit, he must have been standing under the tree, and when he saw that it was safe to eat, then he took his share of the forbidden fruit. When God faced Adam with that first act of sin, he not only blamed Eve, but God Himself - "The woman *Thou gavest me*" - *as if to say, "If You knew that Eve would have tempted me, why did You create her for me?"* H. V. Morton says that "the words of the first Adam are like the words of a rather sneaky little boy caught out by the headmaster and blames another - *She gave me of the tree and I did eat.*" But thereafter, in Scripture, Adam, the federal head of the human race, is made responsible for adamic sin. ("In Adam we die"; "By one man's sin"; Romans 5:12; Job 31:33.) What followed the disobedience of the world's first sinners is only too well known - pain in childbearing, the introduction of sin and servitude into the world, the earth cursed, expulsion from paradise, and the introduction of disease and death.

Eve Was the World's First Dressmaker

If Adam was earth's first gardener, Eve was the first to fashion garments out of leaves. "They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons" (Genesis 3:7). Andrew Johnson, who became president of the U.S.A. after the murder of Abraham Lincoln, once was a tailor in Greenville, Tennessee, where he had a shop. In a speech made at Gallatin in 1874 he said –

Adam, our great father and head, the lord of the world, was a tailor by trade. Adam and Eve "sewed fig leaves together, and made them aprons." That is the first we ever heard of tailors, and I do not see that - without intending to be personal – anyone need be ashamed to be called a tailor, nor any young lady need be ashamed to be a seamstress, for her mother Eve, it seems, handled a needle with some skill.

Clothing is a reminder of sin, for in their innocence our first parents had no sense of shame because they had no sense of sin. "They were both naked ... and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:25). Says Matthew Henry, "They need have no shame in their faces, though they had no clothes to their backs." But after they sinned their eyes were opened, and they *knew that they were naked*. *Although shame may have a fairer and a gentler face than sin, it is still its twin sister*. Shame can be an expression of regret for sin, or the protest of conscience against it. When Ezra blushed and was ashamed to look up, the pardoning mercy of God came out to meet him (Ezra 9:6). Conscious of their nakedness, why did Adam and Eve seek a covering? Not only because they knew they were without clothing but also because they were exposed to the gaze of Him against whom they had sinned. However the fig leaves they made into a garment were not sufficient to hide them from God's piercing eyes, so they hid among the trees. Even there they were under His gaze and discovered, and they tried to cover themselves with vain excuses (Genesis 3:7, 8, 11, 13). Those who try to cover their sin never prosper (Proverbs 28:13, see Job 31:33). God rejected the covering the first sinners on the earth made because it represented their own effort. So God provided them with "coats of skins" (3:21), and placed them on the guilty ones. The wonderful invention of fastening animal pelts together was ascribed by the ancient Hebrews to God. Skins speak of sacrifice. Animals have to be slain ere man can be covered with clothes or shoes. Surely the divine provision of those sacrificial skins foreshadowed Calvary, where Jesus through the sacrifice of Himself provided a spotless robe of righteousness for all who repent and believe. Naked, come to Thee for dress.

Eve Was the First Mother to Have a Son Who Was a Murderer

What a trail of sorrow and anguish followed her transgression! When Cain, her first born, came into her life and home how Eve must have loved him. She named him Cain, meaning "to get" or "to possess" or, "acquisition." He became a tiller of the ground. Her second son was Abel, a name implying, "that which ascends" or "a vapor" - something doomed to fade. The latter was a spiritual man and sacrificed the firstlings of his flocks unto the Lord. The former son brought of the fruit of the ground, that is, that which he had produced, and presented it to the Lord who rejected it and accepted Abel's offering because of its sacrificial content. Cain lost his temper over this act of divine acceptance and rejection, and slew his brother Abel. Thus Eve's favorite first born was branded with shame, and spiritual Abel became a martyr. Behind Cain's slaughter of his brother was the serpent who had made their mother the world's first sinner. Jesus said that he was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). After the crime and banishment of her first son, and the burial of her second one, God gave her another whom she called Seth. "For God," she said, "hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, for Cain slew him." In naming her third son thus she voiced her faith in God's love, mercy and provision. It was through Seth that the spiritual lineage was maintained and it was after his birth that Eve's name disappears from the pages of the Old Testament, although it is mentioned twice in the New Testament. While Eve doubtless shared the length of Adam's life - 930 years - and bore an indefinite number of sons and daughters, we have no record of her maternity apart from the three named sons.

Eve Was the First to Receive the Divine Prophecy of the Cross

Eve was the first sinner and saw the fruit of her sin as she stood at the world's first grave and buried her dead. After confessing her sin she heard the Lord say to that old serpent, the devil, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). With this first promise of the Redeemer there began the scarlet highway ending at the cross where Christ, born of a woman, provided a glorious victory over sin and Satan. Through a woman, God's fair universe was blighted and became "a world of sinners lost, and ruined by the fall." Now, through a woman, a perfect salvation has been provided for a sinning race. Through Eve's sin, death entered the world, but at the cross both sin and death were conquered, for by "dying, death He slew." When Jesus cried, "It is finished,"

He meant that the serpent's head, representing power and authority, had been bruised. He laid hold of all satanic principalities and powers that Eve's transgression brought into the world, and put them under His feet.
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!

As we leave our reflection upon the world's first woman, first wife, first sinner, and first mourner, there are one or two lessons to be gleaned from her record. For instance, "many daughters of Eve have discovered that the serpent is never more dangerous than when he professes to be the earnest well wisher interested in nothing but her advancement and welfare." What a subtle, cruel deceiver Satan is. How ignorant so many are of his devices! Further, temptation is a universal experience, and each of us should learn from the first person on earth to be tempted, its manner of approach and successive steps, and safeguard ourselves from a fall through the appropriation of Christ's own victory over the enemy. There is no sin in being tempted. We only sin when we yield to temptation. Refusing to yield to the enticement of sin, our Garden of Eden remains inviolate. At the heart of Eve's pathetic story, however, is the moral lesson that a woman has the power for bane or blessing over a man's life. If she falls, man falls with her. How expressive are the verses John White Chadwick quotes in his chapter on Eve in *Women of the Bible* –

Ah, wasteful woman, that she may On her sweet self set her own price.
Knowing we cannot choose but pay, How has she cheapened Paradise;
How given for naught her priceless gift, How spoil'd the bread and spill'd the wine
Which, spent with due respective thrift, Had made men brutes and men divine.
O Queen, awake to thy renown, Require what 'tis our wealth to give,
And comprehend and wear the crown Of thy despised prerogative.