

# CREATED GAY

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## Review: Queer Eye

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When the original Queer Eye for the Straight Guy first aired on television, there were not many television shows with LGBT characters. A television show where the regular stars were all gay was refreshing.

In Queer Eye, a group of gay men would spend time with a straight man who needed a boost of confidence and a sense of direction so he could improve his life. The show was enjoyable to watch and there were times when the show was moving. Queer Eye release 2.0 is deeply moving, because the stars of Queer Eye focus more on building the self-worth of their clients.

One of the charms of Queer Eye is that the stereotypical traits and skills of gay men were just the thing needed by the straight guy. Watching the program was affirming.

I was very disappointed when production on the first version stopped. Netflix revived the show and now a version of Queer Eye for the Straight Guy is on the air again. While I miss the old cast, the new cast is quite charming too. I think the new version of Queer Eye will be a hit with another television generation.

## The First Closet

by Gary Simpson

**Genesis 3:8-15** (KJV) And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And 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.

This passage encourages us to rethink our original sin

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theology, encourages us to reflect on how we can see glimpses of God's grace in the narrative and encourages us to reject a shame-filled identity

As we reflect on meanings we find in this passage, we need to keep firmly in mind what the serpent and what Adam and Eve represent in this story. Commentator John Gibson believes that the serpent personifies temptation and that Adam and Eve personify sin.<sup>1</sup>

In Baptist circles, I have heard the comment that where there are two Baptists, there are three opinions. A case can be made that where there is one theologian, there are at least three opinions. There are four common understandings of what the fruit of the tree of good and evil are:

- "Sexual awareness."
- Moral understanding of right and wrong.
- Responsibility for actions.
- An understanding of right and wrong that comes from the experience of doing what is wrong.<sup>2</sup>

Some people believe that sex is the original sin, because they associate nakedness in the story with sex.<sup>3</sup> One Bible commentator notes, "Sexual desire does not appear here at all." He continues by observing that the desire for knowledge and ambition, not sex, appear to be the "peculiar and prevalent" motives.<sup>4</sup> Nakedness in the context of this Biblical

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<sup>1</sup> John C.L. Gibson. *The Daily Study Bible: Genesis, Volume 1*. (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1981), 123.

<sup>2</sup> *ESV Study Bible*. (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2011), 54.

<sup>3</sup> Gibson (1981), 126.

<sup>4</sup> James G. Murphy. *Barnes Notes: A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 2005), 116.

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## Book Review: *ESV Study Bible*

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Title: *ESV Study Bible*

Publisher: Crossway (Wheaton, Illinois)

Year: 2008

Because I have so many study Bibles, people have accused me of being in a study Bible of the month club. Study Bibles pack a lot of resources in one book. A shelf full of study Bibles provides a richer theological variety of opinions than having one multi-volume Bible commentary, with one main theological perspective.

The *ESV Study Bible* is over 2,700 pages long. The Bible has introductions to each book of the Bible, commentary notes at the bottom of each page, Biblical maps and diagrams.

LGBTQ Christians are immediately interested in knowing how Bible commentaries and study Bibles discuss the clobber passages, Bible texts that are traditionally used to condemn LGBTQ people. Sadly, the *ESV Study Bible* study notes do not provide affirming comments regarding people who have same-gender sex relationships.

narrative could mean Adam and Eve were experiencing guilt.<sup>5</sup> James Murphy, who wrote the old and respected *Barnes Notes* Genesis commentary, observes that the couple sensing that they were naked resulted from feeling guilt.<sup>6</sup> In my opinion, there is little need for guilt regarding informed, consenting and mutually pleasurable sexual acts that do not violate existing relational contracts.

In the Song of Solomon, there appears to be a celebration of the sexual dynamic of love.<sup>7</sup> Given the celebration in the Song of Solomon, we may want to consider a slightly different original sin theology, a theology that does not taint a gift from God, sex, with the sin that caused the fall of humanity. For a people who self-identify by sexual attraction, for a people who are often defined by sex and for a people who may be condemned by sexual attraction, the need to develop a theology of the original sin that is not linked to sex can be important.

Adam and Eve were told that they could eat from any tree in the garden, except the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil". Should the couple eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would die.<sup>8</sup> In Hebrew there are shadows of meaning to the verb know that might not come across well in English. The word know implies more than just an intellectual understanding. There is a sense in Hebrew that the word know can

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<sup>5</sup> Gibson. (1981), 128-129.

<sup>6</sup> Murphy. (2005), 115.

<sup>7</sup> Gibson. (1981), 127.

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 2:16-17.

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"All is grace, and  
grace is for all."

James Moffatt

in *Grace in the New Testament*

mean choice and experience.<sup>9</sup> Knowing good and evil is essentially "deciding for oneself what is good and bad".<sup>10</sup> To know good and evil is to be "completely responsible in matters of moral behavior."<sup>11</sup>

There are elements of the Biblical narrative that, while often overlooked, contain interesting insights into God. What often sticks in our minds about this story is the fact that Adam and Eve's mistake brings sin and death into our world. As a result, we can walk away from the story with some doubts about God's love for humanity. But hold on. There is more to the story. From the story, we understand:

- God seeks out those who are overwhelmed by shame<sup>12</sup> and guilt.

God does not wait for Adam and Eve to reach out to God. According to the narrative, God makes the "first move to counter sin."<sup>13</sup>

- God does the unexpected when we make mistakes and are consumed by shame and self-loathing. God acts to restore the relationship.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Good News Study Bible*. (New York: American Bible Society, 1993), 17.

<sup>10</sup> *Good News Study Bible*. (1993), 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Good News Study Bible*. (1993), 17.

<sup>12</sup> Kent Dobson, ed. *Teachings of the Torah: Weaving Jewish History with the Christian Faith*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2014), 9.

<sup>13</sup> Gibson. (1981), 130.

<sup>14</sup> Dobson. (2014), 9.

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•God covers the shame<sup>15</sup>, humiliation and the sin with handmade, Divine clothing. And the naked shame and humiliation disappears.

When God asked where Adam was, God might not have been asking where Adam was physically. There is a possibility that God was asking Adam other questions, including:

- Where does this leave us and our relationship?
- What are you going to do now?<sup>16</sup>  
What is your next step?

- Are you going to continue to hide, in a closet of shame, or are you going to come out and live?<sup>17</sup>

The questions about the relationship with God are important, because sins are largely relational, in that sins damage relationships.

According to the Biblical narrative, the serpent, not humanity was cursed.<sup>18</sup> And remember, the serpent personifies temptation. Temptations, not people who make mistakes, are cursed. As we read beyond what is in the liturgical reading, in verse 17, the ground, not Adam, is cursed, and as a result of the ground being cursed, there are thorns and thistles, raising crops will be sweaty and challenging work and death enters the world.

The story of Adam and Eve can be described as a story of moral awakening<sup>19</sup> or a story of moral coming of age. Adam and Eve, symbolically representing humanity, come to understand that there is

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<sup>15</sup> Dobson. (2014), 9.

<sup>16</sup> Dobson. (2014), 9.

<sup>17</sup> Dobson. (2014), 9.

<sup>18</sup> Dobson. (2014), 10.

<sup>19</sup> Dobson. (2014), 8.

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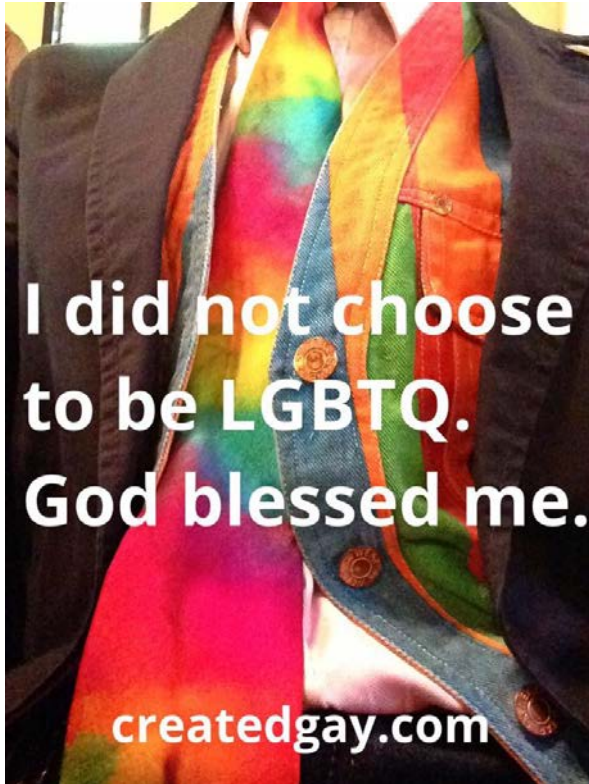
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good and evil and that there are consequences to our actions.<sup>20</sup> From what we gather, Adam and Eve got what they wanted - "an intimate knowledge of both good and evil."<sup>21</sup> This could be filed under, "Be careful what you wish for, because you might get it."

Adam and Eve's response to sinning is fairly natural. The standard is high, so we fear God.<sup>22</sup> Fortunately, God's gracious forgiveness means that we have no reason to fear God.

Sexual and gender minority people who are morally coming of age may come to believe that their sexual orientation, their gender expression or their gender identity is wrong, is a sin, hear the voice of God, "Where are you?" And upon hearing the explanation, "I was scared, because I was naked, so I hid in the closet," God responds, "[Who told thee that thou wast naked?](#)" and God provides a handmade garment, a Divine garment that covers the shame, the humiliation and the embarrassment. There is no room for a shame-filled identity or humiliation in the pockets of the garment God gives to LGBTQ people.

Straight people coming of age may also think that sex is dirty and awful. And they hide from God. When they hear the voice of God in the garden, they hide. When God finds them, they explain that they were afraid that their desires for companionship left them naked, exposed. God replies, "[Who told thee that thou wast naked?](#)" and God makes clothes that erase shame.

As we close, I am going to remind you that God did not say Adam and Eve were naked. A shame identity does not come from God. Anais Nin is cited as saying, "Shame is the lie someone told you

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<sup>20</sup> Dobson. (2014), 8.

<sup>21</sup> *Life Application Study Bible*. (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Pub., 2004),10.

<sup>22</sup> *Life Application Study Bible*. (2004),11.

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People used to jokingly say that people misunderstood the Bible and it was supposed to be "God hates bags." Many people of faith believe God is love and a few people prefer the idea of saying "God loves bags".

about yourself."<sup>23</sup> Tired of shame? Stop believing the lies that you are a terrible person, that decisions you have made prove that you are defective. And wear the clothes God gives you, the clothes that make you look fabulous!

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## Holy Spirit Tornado

by Gary Simpson

**Acts 2:1-8 and 12-17** (KJV) And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

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<sup>23</sup> Anais Nin. "Shame is the Lie Someone told You About Yourself." *Your Joyologist*. n.d., 25 May 2018. <<http://yourjoyologist.com/shame-is-the-lie-someone-told-you-about-yourself---anais-nin/>>.

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12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

To understand the background, we need to see the story in context of the Easter. Jesus was crucified, executed by the Romans. He rose from the dead, stayed and ministered to the disciples for a period of time and was caught up into the heavenly. They were dealing with the trauma of Jesus' execution. And on top of that their loved teacher and spiritual director left them and they are all alone. Given what happened to Jesus, the disciples had reason to feel scared. About 50 days passed since Jesus' execution and Pentecost and that is not much time to process all of the events to recover from their trauma and their loss.

The disciples are together and there is a loud noise and wind. Clarence Jordan, in his refreshingly unique paraphrase, describes the sound as a rumble like a tornado.<sup>24</sup> I don't know about you, but I have never found a tornado comforting. So much for the promised Comforter. While a move of the Spirit can be both frighteningly unexpected and frightening, the results are impressive. In the face of recent tragedy, the Spirit of God is poured out on the faithful, is poured out a community that is still bruised and aching from Jesus' crucifixion. And the results of the move of the Spirit are impressive. In the verses that follow in Acts, we learn that Peter gives a sermon. But this is not an ordinary sermon. As a result of Peter's sermon, three thousand people are converted.<sup>25</sup> A move of the Spirit that is frightening to some Christians is the many LGBTQ Christians who are out as queer and Christian. Queer people of faith of all genders, of all sexual orientations and of all colors are living proof of the universality of God's love. Our Biblical perspectives are enriching traditional Biblical and theological understandings. Your rainbow presence of love and faith is a modern tornado of the Spirit.

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<sup>24</sup> Clarence Jordan. *The Cotton Patch Version of Luke and Acts: Jesus' Doings and Happenings*. (New York: Association Press, 1969), 93.

<sup>25</sup> Merrill F. Unger. *Unger's Bible Handbook: An Essential Guide to Understanding the Bible*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967), 570.

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