

God's Promise and Curse¹
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
July 12, 2020

Diaspora XVII – The Church Scattered, Seventeenth
Sunday

Text: Genesis 3:9-20

Purpose: To help us realize that there were consequences to Adam and Eve's disobedience. When they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, all the parties became cursed. The serpent would crawl on its belly and eat dirt. The woman would suffer pain in childbirth. Adam and Eve's relationship was altered. Adam would now have to toil for their food. The earth was cursed with weeds. But there was a promised redeemer, who would bruise the head of the serpent. That promised redeemer is Jesus Christ.

With all the news focused on the coronavirus pandemic, several grocery stores have begun opening their doors early so some senior citizens can get in and out without being exposed to so many people.

I came across this story and I wanted to share it with you.

¹ Outline taken from "Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ" by New Tribes Mission – lesson 11.

This man was standing in a long line at 7:45 am at the grocery store that opened at 8:00 for seniors only. A young man came from the parking lot and tried to cut in at the front of the line, but an old lady beat him back into the parking lot with her cane.



The young man returned again and tried to cut in line again, but an old man punched him in the gut, then kicked him to the ground and the young man was rolled away by the senior citizen.

As he approached the line for the 3rd time the young man said, "If you people don't let me unlock the door, none of you will ever get in to shop."²

Never underestimate the power of senior citizens!

Do you remember this phrase used years ago by Flip Wilson? Whenever he did something wrong, he would always say, "The devil made me do it!"

In many ways we always want to find another person to blame for the trouble we are in. Here in the Garden of Eden, it was no different. When God confronted Adam, he pointed his finger at Eve. When God asked her about eating from the forbidden tree, she pointed her



finger at the serpent which enticed her to eat. Neither was willing to take the blame for their sin.

Sometimes we want to blame God for the mess that we find ourselves in. In Genesis, chapter three, we find the answer to the problem for the mess we are in. We have these problems because of our own sin. We need to recognize that we are responsible for our own conduct and realize that it is hopeless to hide from God. This morning, we are going to examine the events that transpired between the "first family," Adam and Eve, and God.

When God met them in the cool of the evening, God came to confront them and pronounce His judgment on their actions. This judgment has far reaching implications that affect us even today. But there is a glimmer of hope in that judgment. There was the promise of a Redeemer. God would provide a person that would redeem the misdeeds of this first Adam.

A. Introduction

Over the past few weeks, we have learned that Adam and Eve were created in the image of God. He warned them of their disobedience. There were going to be consequences for their rebellion. The judgment was death.

B. God Called Adam

In Genesis 3:9 we read, "Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, 'Where are you?'"



² Mikey's Funnies, forwarded by Gretchen Patti, May 28, 2020

Apparently, Adam and Eve had developed a routine with God. It appears that Adam and Eve didn't respond to God as they usually did. Maybe Adam usually came running to see God when He appeared. Maybe they usually met at a certain place every day. I don't know exactly what the routine was, but Adam wasn't anywhere to be found.

Do you think that God was asking this question of "Where are you?" for the purpose of finding out something He didn't already know? I don't think so either.

God already knew the answer to the question. I think the question was for Adam and Eve to consider. "Adam ... Eve ... Where are you?" They had rejected the instructions of God the creator. Now they were on the outside of the will of God for their lives and now they were looking in.

"Where are you?"

We could take this question and spend the entire hour pondering the implications of this phrase. Maybe we could turn the tables on ourselves and ask the question, "Where are we?" Are we in God's will for our life? Are we still in rebellion against God? Are we where we should be? Am I doing things daily that I shouldn't be doing?

We could juxtapose this question and apply it to the church? Are we as God's people doing what God would have us to do? Are we in rebellion against God? Are we where we should be? Are we doing daily the things we should be doing?

These are difficult questions. They are probing questions. But they cut to the heart of the matter. Many ministers and preachers that I hear on the radio and television beat around

the bush. This question is an example of getting to the heart of the matter.

"Where are you?" If there is only one thing that you get from this sermon this morning, it is that question. Let it resonate within you. Answer that question for yourself.

"Where are you?"

Psalm 19:1-3 says, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."*

All through the universe the voice of the Lord is crying out. We need to be willing to listen to that voice and hear the word of the Lord. This is a God that loves us and has revealed the way in which we can know God.

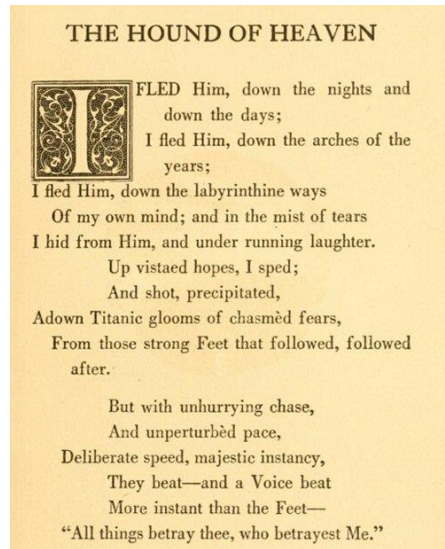
C. Adam and Eve tried to Hide from God

In Adam and Eve's case, they chose to hide from God. They chose the way of ignorance and irrational thinking. They couldn't hide from God – but they thought they could. How many people in this world think they can hide from God? If I pretend that God is not there, then maybe He will go away. Maybe God will forget about me and I can continue to do like I want to when I want to.



Well, you can't hide from God. He has been described as the "hound of heaven" that ever pursues us. David in the Book of Psalms described God as one that was in the highest heaven and in the deepest pit of hell. God is ever-present, everywhere.

Genesis 3:10 says, "So he (Adam) said, 'I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.'" Adam knew he was caught. But he chose to hide instead of coming forward to God about His sin.



If you have ever worked with children for very long, you can tell when they have done something wrong. If a child decides to do something wrong, they will wait until their parents are gone. Then when the parents return, the children will scamper around cleaning up the mess and then pretend that nothing is wrong. Sometimes the children will go to the other end of the house and pretend that nothing is wrong.

I should know, that is the way it was when I was growing up!

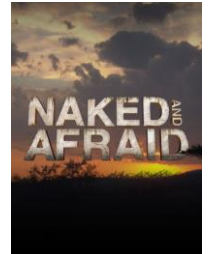
D. God Questioned Adam

But God was wise to what had happened. God said to Adam, "Who told you that you were naked?"

Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

God knew the answer to the question. He was a perfect cross examination lawyer. He knew the answer before the person on the stand could respond. (They tell me that when you are in court, you don't ask the person on the stand a question unless you already know the answer.)

Hebrews 4:13 says, "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."



God knew the answer because He knew His creation. Isaiah 43:7 says, "... for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him."

God knew the answer because He gave life to Adam and Eve. God is the life giver. Acts 17:25 reminds us of that truth. "... he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things ..."

God is the rightful owner of each person.

E. Adam and Eve Tried to pass the blame

Now Adam and Eve began the game of finger pointing. Beginning at verse 12 we read, "Then the man (Adam) said, 'The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.'"



Then the Lord God turned to Eve and said, *“What is this you have done?”* Eve replied, *“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*

This blame game continues even today. Young, old, men, and women will go to great lengths to try to avoid taking responsibility for their own sins. In our society, people often spend large sums of money to buy their way out of punishment for crimes they have actually committed. Unfortunately, clever lawyers, judges who do not hold up justice and a twisted system of laws all contribute to our legal system in which we see less and less just punishment for crime. Often it is the victim who suffers the worst abuse, even at the hands of the courts.



F. God’s curse on the serpent

God turned to the serpent and cursed him for deceiving Eve. *“Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all the beast of the field. On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.”*

If you take this literally, it would appear that snakes could walk upright. Can you imagine a snake with legs? I have seen some pictures of what some people thought they looked like. This was the curse put upon the serpent.



The serpent’s curse is still in affect today.

G. God’s Curse on the woman

In verse 16 we see the Lord God speaking to the woman. *“I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”*

As any woman in this room that has given birth, would tell you, this was one terrible curse. If you are willing to sit and listen, Oh, the stories you will hear about how bad childbirth can be. Today we have wonderful medicine that minimizes some of the pain associated with giving birth. (Such as epidural pain blocks, and c-sections in distressed pregnancies) I heard one woman describe childbirth as like taking your lower lip and pulling it over her head.

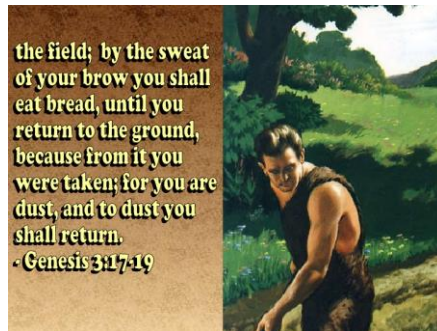


Other people have used the last half of this verse to justify the authority of men over women. I still believe the best marriage relationship is one of equality between a man and a woman – where they jointly decide and mutually agree upon the things of life. I think that is the ideal family situation. In some families, the man rules the home due to his strength. He exerts authority and acts like a dictator in the home. In homes like that, there is often abuse and violence. I don’t think that God intends for families to function in that way.

As we can see, the woman’s curse continues even today.

H. God's Curse on the man and on the Earth

God then turned to Adam and said, *“Because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you saying, ‘You shall not eat of it; Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.’”*



If you think about it, before the earth was cursed, Adam had it made. Everything grew without Adam doing any hard work. Weeds didn't grow; there were no pests. But now that the ground was cursed, weeds hindered the growth of the herbs and plants.

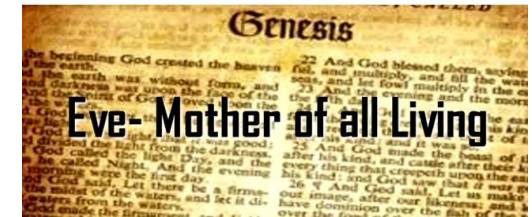
In fact, all of the bad things in the world are a direct result of disobedience to God. We can see that the man's curse continues today.

Satan and his followers now roam the earth seeking to deceive us. We live in a world that is still suffering from that curse. We are in a constant struggle with sickness, pain, weakness, pain in childbearing, hard work, difficult weather conditions, animal and insect pests, weeds, sorrow, grief, and death. None of these were in the world before Adam and Eve sinned.

Because of their disobedience, death entered into their life and ours.

I. Adam and Eve are the Parents of all People

Genesis 3:20 says, *“And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.”*



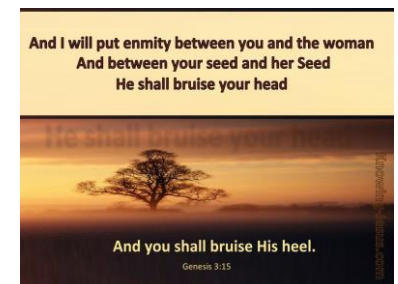
There were no other people like Adam and Eve on earth. They were the first couple. From them, came all of the people groups of the earth. Eve was the first woman and mother of every human being. Adam is the father of us all.

Acts 17:26 says, *“God hath made of one blood all nations of men.”* Even though there are many different races in the world, we are all decedents of the same parents.

In the midst of God's curse upon the serpent, Eve, Adam, and creation, there is hope for humanity in the midst of God's judgment.

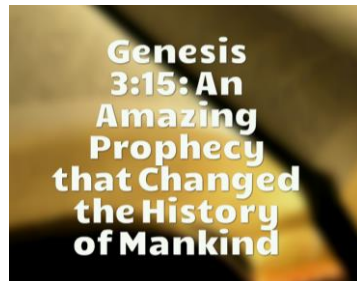
J. The Promised Seed of the Woman

That hope is found in a promise. If we back up to verse 15, we read, *“And I will put enmity between you (serpent) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”*



This is another of the verses in the Bible that we could spend an entire hour discussing. We see that this was a word from God directed toward the serpent. Let me identify briefly some points in this verse you may have missed in reading it quickly.

- 1) There would be enmity or hatred between Satan and the offspring of the woman. This hatred would continue for all of eternity. Satan is one that never tires of attempting to defeat God. He may make many inroads in hurting God's people, but he will never defeat God.
- 2) Notice that this special individual was of the seed of woman only, not man. This is even more interesting in light of other verses in scripture that tells us that this individual would be born to a virgin. We know from the description and miraculous conception of Jesus that Mary was his earthly mother, but that the Father of Jesus was God himself.
- 3) This special individual that would exact punishment upon the serpent would bruise the head of the serpent. This kind of punishment would be fatal. When Jesus died on the cross, Satan was certain that he had won against God. But when three days passed, Jesus rose from the grave and proved that death had no hold over Jesus. The final enemy, death was defeated. One day, Satan's final judgment and sentence will



be delivered. Satan has been found guilty, one day, he will be bound in the Lake of Fire, a place prepared especially for Satan, his followers, and those that have rejected Jesus Christ.

- 4) Also notice that the serpent would only bruise the heel of this special individual. If you have seen the movie, "The Passion of the Christ," you see evil lurking in the background. It is evil's desire to destroy Jesus, but he only bruised Him.



Jesus took our punishment to the cross. It is our sin that caused Him to be nailed there for us. We deserve eternal separation, but God has prepared a way of escape. That way is Jesus Christ. Psalm 145:8 says that "*The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy.*" God has been patient with us. He tells us over and over again about His love for us. We need to respond to this great demonstration of mercy and love.

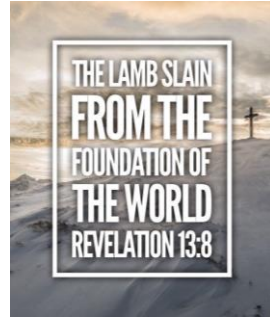
As for me, I have found that the longer I serve Him, the sweeter He grows.

K. Conclusion

In the end, we see that the Devil didn't "make them do it." Adam and Eve knew what God had said. They disobeyed him anyway. God had demonstrated great love for Adam and Eve by creating a wonderful world in which to live. He

communicated face to face with them in the garden. But their rebellion illustrated clearly the break between man and God. This broken relationship could only be restored by God himself.

God knew that when He created mankind, that it would be necessary for His only Son to go to earth to redeem the world. From the foundation of the world, Christ was the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world. What great amazing love God has for us. The consequences of sin are awful. We live with consequences of sin daily. Let us turn our sin over to Christ and serve Him.



Today, God is calling us back to Himself. His first question God asked Adam and Eve after their disobedience there in the Garden of Eden is still the question we must answer. *"Where are you?"*

In all of eternity, where is your heart? Where is your sin? Are you still carrying the penalty of your sin, or have you laid it upon Jesus?



"Where are you?"

LET US PRAY