

HOPE IN THE MIDST OF JUDGMENT – Part 2

Genesis 3:14-19

INTRODUCTION

Rom 8:28

2 Cor 1:3-7

Psalm 116:15

READ Gen 3:14-19

Proposition:

- I. Sure Judgment
- II. Swift Mercy

So That:

I. Sure Judgment

Recall: 3 Judgments:

1. The Serpent
2. The Woman
3. The Man

1st Judgment ...Serpent Gen 3:14-15

“curse” □ lost in the Fall □ banishment from the place of blessing

Point –v. 14 – curse primarily on snake; v. 15 – primarily on Satan

Satan desired to exalt himself □ God cast him out of heaven

The serpent is brought down from a four legged creature to slither on his belly → as a symbol; as a reminder of sin

Sets the stage for the ongoing contrast between: Good and Evil

2nd Judgment ...Woman Gen 3:16

God's judgment on the **woman** and the **man** is in the domain of their primary responsibility, their highest fulfillment

- womb and work/home and field
- Creation Ordinance

It affects her relationship with her **children and her husband**

Sin attempts to master and control

3rd Judgment ...Man Gen 3:17-19

Full force of the judgment falls on the man

Point – The judgment comes in his area of primary responsibility

- The **field** (workplace)
- Creation Ordinance

Rom 8:20,22 – all of creation is subjected to vanity and is groaning because of the sin of man

- 2nd Law of Thermodynamics
- “**Because you ... Because of you ... Because**” - three times we see that this is because of the sin of man

Illustration – Erwin Lutzer, author of *The Serpent of Paradise*, tells the story of a construction company that invited various contractors to submit bids for a major building complex. The contractor who submitted the lowest bid would get the job. The bids were submitted in secret.

“On the last day that bids could be tendered, a contractor walked into the office of the president of the company with a bid application in his hand. To his surprise, the office was empty; he stood alone, venturing a glance at the huge mahogany desk.

Much to his surprise, he saw the bid of his major competitor lying open on the desk. The only problem was that there was a can of soda sitting directly over the most important figure in the document. If this contractor knew the amount that was written on

that line, he could adjust his own bid to come in just beneath it and the multimillion dollar job would be his.

The contractor nervously paced the floor, knowing full well what was at stake. He contemplated moving the can for just a second, reading the figure, and then putting it down. He touched the can but found himself unable to do it.

He glanced around the room one more time. Now confident that no one was looking, he lifted the can quickly, intending to glance at the number and then put the can back instantly. Much to his chagrin, as he lifted the can from the desk hundreds of bb's spilled onto the desk and rolled onto the floor.

That contractor thought he could control the fallout of his dishonesty but discovered that unforeseen events had been built into the temptation. One single act had repercussions he could not have anticipated. The can of soda was not what it appeared to be."

This is a magnificent picture of the Fall; of what happened with Adam and Eve when they turned and believed the Father of Lies rather than the Father of Light and Truth.

3 Consequences of Sin:

- 1. Painful Labor**
- 2. Distortion in Creation**
- 3. Disintegration and Death**

1st Consequence of Sin ...

A. Painful Labor

Point – Difficult toil, painful labor

Proof –

Gen 3:17 – “Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, “You shall not eat from it”;

Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life.”

“**toil**” (v.17) for the man □ “**pain**” (v.16) for the woman
same Hebrew word □ physical pain ... means anguish, distress

- the “**toil**” (**pain**) you will undergo all the days of your life will be a perpetual reminder of sin
- **painful labor** for both

Gen 5:28-29 – “Lamech lived 182 years, and became the father of a son. ²⁹Now he called his name Noah, saying, ‘This one shall give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has cursed.’”

Painful labor.....

2nd Consequence of Sin ...

B. Distortion in Creation

Point – Perversion and corruption of creation; deformation

God’s creation now deteriorates into disorder and decay.

Proof – **Gen 3:18 – “Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you shall eat the plants of the field;”**

Adam was placed in Eden to “cultivate” (**2:15**) – work, serve - and to “keep” - watch, guard, preserve, protect

- his job just got difficult

Before there was an overabundance and bounty of plenty from the gracious hand of God; now there are “**thorns and thistles**”

Not a new creation of “thorns and thistles,”

- God allowed already created structures to **deform** into disorder and death
- God allowed certain plant structures which previously were beneficial to **deteriorate** into malevolent characteristics

- Smoothly rounded structures deformed into thorns in plants.
- Teeth and nails designed for a vegetarian diet mutated into fangs and claws.
- Bacteria and other microorganisms which were designed originally to serve essential functions in soil maintenance, purification processes, and so forth underwent mutations changes which proved harmful or even lethal to other organisms became parasites and germs.

This distortion and deterioration was extremely rapid at first, probably later tapering off into a more gradual process.

Luther – *“The world is deteriorating from day to day.”*

“you shall eat the plants of the field”

This is the second of 7 distinct epochs in God’s plan for food for man: (*see sermon of 12/1/13 for fuller treatment of all seven epochs*)

1) Creation to Fall (Gen 1-2)

**“every plant yielding seed on the surface of the earth” and
“every tree with fruit yielding seed”**

2) Fall to Flood (Gen 3-8)

Gen 3:18 – **“plants of the field”**

- expanded
- still vegetarian - Why?

What was the **vehicle for sin**, becomes the **vessel for judgment**
You used it for sin. I will use it for judgment – perpetual reminder

Painful Labor, Distortion in Creation, ...

3rd Consequence of Sin ...

C. Disintegration and Death

Point – There are far more consequences from the sin of man than agricultural and food related, but God focuses here because this is the area of sin, the breeding ground for sin □ **Death and Disintegration**

Proof – **Gen 3:19** – “**By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.**”

“By the sweat of your face You shall eat bread”

- Even in times of brief rest in between the labor, man’s face drips sweat as he eats the fruit of his labor

Job 7:1-2 – “**Is not man forced to labor on earth, And are not his days like the days of a hired man? ²As a slave who pants for the shade, And as a hired man who eagerly waits for his wages”**

The Battle for Bread – Most of humanity in most of history has spent most of its income and most of its time in pursuit of food just to survive.

“eat.....eat.....eat...” - 3 times in v. 17 and 5 times in vv.17-19

- this is a reminder that God’s judgment matches the sin

Death – “**Till you return to the ground”**

– lifelong consequence, from **womb to the tomb**

Disintegration – “**Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.**”

Illustration – Shakespeare in his play *Hamlet* writes a scene where Hamlet speaks to Horatio in the churchyard after finding the skull of Yorick – the mighty Alexander the Great turned to dust and the dust of the earth is what we use to make a plug for a barrel of beer. Imperious Caesar is dead, turned to clay, and used to patch a wall to keep the winter wind out.

Physical systems wear out and die

- wristwatches, bodies, and stars

Application – There is no such thing as **evolution**. There is **devolution**.

In *The City of God*, Augustine writes in Chapter 22, entitled “The Miseries and Ills to Which the Human Race is Justly Exposed Through the First Sin, and from Which None Can Be Delivered Save by Christ’s Grace”,

“who can describe, who can conceive the number and severity of the punishments which afflict the human race,—pains which are not only the accompaniment of the wickedness of godless men, but are a part of the human condition and the common misery—what fear and what grief are caused by bereavement and mourning, by losses and condemnations, by fraud and falsehood, by false suspicions, and all the crimes and wicked deeds of other men? For at their hands we suffer robbery, captivity, chains, imprisonment, exile, torture, mutilation, loss of sight, the violation of chastity to satisfy the lust of the oppressor, and many other dreadful evils. What numberless casualties threaten our bodies from without,—extremes of heat and cold, storms, floods, inundations, lightning, thunder, hail, earthquakes, houses falling; or from the stumbling, or shying, or vice of horses; from countless poisons in fruits, water, air, animals; from the painful or even deadly bites of wild animals; from the madness which a mad dog communicates ... What disasters are suffered by those who travel by land or sea! What man can go out of his own house without being exposed on all hands to unforeseen accidents? Returning home sound in limb, he slips on his own doorstep, breaks his leg, and never recovers. What can seem safer than a man sitting in his chair? Eli the priest fell from his, and broke his neck ... As to bodily diseases, they are so numerous that they cannot all be contained even in medical books. And in very many, or almost all of them, the cures and remedies are themselves tortures, so that men are delivered from a pain that destroys by a cure that pains.”

Then in Chapter 23 and forward, Augustine gives a beautiful vision of Heaven and the eternal joy of believers!

In our text, the serpent is directly cursed.

- The woman is not directly cursed.
- The man is not directly cursed.
- The mercy and grace of God intervenes.

Gen 3 triggers the whole history of redemption that concerns the rest of the Old and New Testament.

- The account of the Fall records not only God's judgment but also the promised rescue from this punishment of sin.

Sure Judgment ...

II. Swift Mercy

Gen 3:15 – “**And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.**”

This is the:

- first Messianic prophecy
- first picture of the Gospel

Spurgeon – *“This is the first gospel sermon that was ever delivered upon the surface of this earth. It was memorable discourse indeed, with Jehovah himself for the preacher, and the whole human race and the prince of darkness for the audience. It must be worthy of our heartiest attention.”*

Called by theologians the *protoevangelium* – the first Gospel/Good News

- genre is poetry (may be indented in your Bible)
- the judgment of God in poetry - why? Because we need to remember this and we need to rejoice at the hope in the midst of judgment

Luther – *“This text embraces and comprehends, within itself, everything noble and glorious that is to be found anywhere in the Scriptures.”*

Mercy, hope, the Incarnation, grace, election, sanctification, just to name a few, are all found within this verse.

We will look at the last three → **Grace, Election, Sanctification**

A. Grace

Point – unmerited favor of God

Proof – God’s promise in **v. 15** comes before His judgment has been passed on either the man or the woman.

- Eve has not yet been condemned to painful labor in childbirth.
- Adam has not yet been condemned to painful labor in the field.
- The ground has not even been condemned to “**thorns and thistles.**”

Mercy rejoices against judgment. Before God had told Adam “**you are dust and to dust you shall return,**” He was pleased to say that the seed of the woman will crush the enemy’s head.

Illustration – Jonathan Edwards – *“The mercy of God is as sufficient for the pardon of the greatest sins as for the least; and that is because His mercy is infinite. That which is infinite is as much above what is great as it is above what is small... So the mercy of God being infinite, it must be as sufficient for the pardon of all sin, as for one”*

Application – Beloved, may we always rejoice in the swift mercy of God which comes to us with words of comfort even in the early watches of the night of sin.

B. Election

Point – unconditional election

Proof – “**I will ...**” □ **The Beginning of the Good News!!!**

God takes the initiative.

- man does not save himself
- the starting point of salvation is God!

Gen 17:1-8, 15-16, 19-20 - “I will...”

Back in **Gen 3:15**, we see this Messianic prophecy about the seed of the woman - not the full revelation but the beginning kernel of that doctrine is here

Sin of Man must be dealt with by a **man**

- an animal can't take care of sin
- an angel can't take care of sin

Heb 9:22 – “without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”

Why was Jesus born a baby? Why didn't He just come on a Thursday, die on a Friday, raise on a Sunday and be done with it?
□ Death, blood AND ... Justice □ **1 John 2:2 – “He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world”**

1 Cor 15:21-22 – “For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”

A **man** had to satisfy.

A **man** had to pay the price.

“seed” – zara – Hebrew word also translated as descendants

4:25 – “offspring” – birth of Seth

9:9 – covenant with Noah and his “**descendants**”

12:7 – Land Promise to Abram and his “**descendants**”

13:15, 16 (3 times) – “**descendants**” as dust of the earth (in number)

15:5 – “**descendants**” as the stars (in number)

15:13-18 – Prophecy to Abraham

13 – your “**descendants**” will be enslaved

17 – God cuts the covenant

18 – Promise of land to your “**descendants**”

in **15:13** “**know for certain**” – in Hebrew, an infinitive absolute

17:7-19 – 7 times we see the word “**descendants**” - that is the continuation of the promise of hope and of mercy and good news that God gave at the beginning in the Garden of Eden to Adam and Eve, specifically Eve.

C. Sanctification

Point – enmity – sanctification

Enlistment – Soldiers of God

Proof – “... **enmity between you and the woman**” –

John Calvin - “*A dog barks when his master is attacked. I would be a coward if I did not speak out when the truth of God is attacked.*”

Crushing blow vs. crippling blow

Fatal vs. wounding

Judgment for the serpent.

Judgment and grace for the woman and the man.

Man sins. God punishes. God also protects and provides.

Point □ Victory for the woman’s seed

Rom 16:20 – “**the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.**” – Paul’s closing words of encouragement to the Christians in Rome

Application - This is the first work of grace. There was peace between us and Satan once → whenever he tempted we yielded; whatever he taught we believed; we were his willing slaves. Now there is enmity.

CONCLUSION

Progressive Revelation □ sheds the greater light

This first gospel sermon was sufficient for Adam and Eve.

This one lone star shined in Abel's sky. He looked up to it and he believed. By its light, he brought of the firstlings of his flock and laid them on the altar. He proved in his own person how the seed of the serpent hates the seed of the woman for his brother Cain killed Abel for his testimony.

This torch which flamed within the gates of Eden just before man was driven out lit up the world to all believers until the Lord was pleased to give more light when he spoke to His servant Noah.

Illustration – Hidden fires of infinite love and grace are sublimely concealed with the spark of this one verse.

The believers who lived before the flood rejoiced in the mysterious language of our text, and resting on it, they died in faith. It is wonderfully full of meaning. It contains all the gospel.

Illustration – In the same way an Oak lies within an acorn, all the great truths which make up the gospel of Christ reside in this verse.

Satan thought this world would be the arena of his victory over God and good. Instead, it is the grand arena of divine wisdom, love, grace, and power. Even heaven itself is not as rich with mercy as is the earth. For it is here the Savior poured out His blood, which cannot be said even of the courts of paradise above.