

Lesson 19

The Consequences Of The Fall

Genesis 3:16-24

I. INTRODUCTION

A. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were held accountable before God and were liable for God's punishment. At that moment, they died spiritually and began to die physically. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).

B. Sin brought pain, toil, subjection and death into the human race. These things are the results or consequences of rebellion to God.

II. THE CONSEQUENCES TO WOMAN 3:16

A. **"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children."** The first consequence is that of pain, For the Hebrew word means "toil, heart-break, sorrow and pain."

1. This certainly refers to the pains of pregnancy and childbirth. The woman will be able to propagate the race, as God had just promised; but her life will be one in which this very function of reproduction will remind her of her fall and disobedience.

2. Perhaps the words "thy sorrow" refers to all the sorrows that characterize a woman's life, especially in relation to her children. This then would refer to the heartbreak associated with having children. A mother's sense of success or failure in life is related to her children. A mother's heart is wrapped up with the life and career of her children. She lives in and by her children. The meaning of her life is revealed in them, and if they succeed, she has succeeded, but if they fail, she has failed (cf. 1Tim 2:12).

B. **"And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."** This is the consequence of subjection.

1. That the woman shall desire her husband does not seem to be part of the punishment, for Eve always had a physical attraction to Adam. The word "desire" may have reference to the hunger for approval; that is, a woman finds her fullest sense of satisfaction in gaining her husband's approval. She longs to be important to him.

2. The words "he shall rule over thee" are part of the punishment to Eve. Before the Fall, Eve was under the headship of Adam but was not ruled by him. However, when she sinned, she abandoned her subordinate role and sought to assume a position of leadership. Thus she raised herself above the man, emancipating herself from him, and in addition she led him into sin. She was originally made to be subordinate and she delighted in the experience of following Adam. But as a result of the Fall, there is a struggle and tension inside the woman, in which she is torn between the natural God-given desire to yield to her husband, and at the same time the awakened desire to exert her will against his, a perverse urge to rivalry or domination. POINT: Because of sin, man is given the right to rule over the woman to maintain God's order. She had sought to rule him in giving to him the forbidden fruit, but now he will rule over her. NOTE. Sinful man has abused the right to rule and has domineered over women. In many parts of the world the role of woman has been reduced to that of virtual slavery. Only the Gospel has brought a genuine and blessed balance to the

position of womankind in this fallen world. NOTE. A woman can never find happiness in marriage until she learns to submit to her husband in everything. She will be a failure until she understands that it is her privilege, under God, to find fulfillment in submission to her own husband (cf. Eph. 6:22, 24).

III. THE CONSEQUENCES TO MAN 3:17-20

A. **“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife.”** God records for us something that is interesting about man’s first sin. It was not merely that Adam ate the fruit in disobedience to God. He listened to his wife when he should not have done it. In hearkening to the voice of his wife Adam had forfeited his position as the crown of creation and the head of the wife, and had placed himself into the subordinate position, which belonged to the woman. Adam is charged with guilt because the voice of his wife was different than the voice of God. Adam let his wife influence his decision, giving up his headship and leadership. NOTE. One of the major causes producing chaos in marriage today is a man who refuses to lead, a man who turns over to his wife the ultimate responsibility of the family, how the children turn out, what their problems are, etc.

B. **“And hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it.”** Adam also deliberately disobeyed God, seeking to place himself above God. He who rebels against God has no right to live and must be punished.

C. **“Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat at it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.”** The consequence of the fall for man was sorrow, for the ground was cursed so that thorns and thistles were to cover the ground. There was undoubtedly lowering of fertility and nature was put out of balance. Nature is out of balance because man is out of balance. NOTE. A cursed physical world needs to be redeemed and the Bible says that this will take place at the Second Advent of Christ (Rom. 8:19-22).

D. **“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.”** Another consequence is “toil” or “labor.” Man will have to toil to keep himself alive. NOTE. Work is not the curse given to man; man was created to work and it is a blessing. It is toil that is the curse. It is the sweat, anxiety and pressure of trying to get more and more out of reluctant nature.

E. **“For out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”** God told Adam that he was going to die physically. In spite of all his sorrow, toil and labor, he was going to die. NOTE. It is this sense of death, lurking at the boundaries of life, that gives us a feeling of futility about life. Death is the thief of life and those who have no answer for death will end in despair and nihilism.

IV. THE PROMISE OF SALVATION (3:23):

A. **“And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she the mother of all living.”** Originally Eve’s name was “Woman” for she came out man. Her name is changed to “Life” for she is to be the mother of all living. In 3:19, physical death is emphasized, but in 3:20 there is the promise that the human race will not become extinct, for God has promised to give living ones from Eve. Adam believed God’s promise on the physical level (cf. Gen. 1:28). Death is cheated of its prey, for God intervened.

B. Perhaps there is something more than just a race of men that will come from Eve. Because of the reference to death in 3:19, Adam probably understood that he was to become the father of a doomed race because of sin. Eve believed God’s promise before Adam (cf. 1:28; 3:15). She believed and passed from death to life, thus Adam calls her “Life”. However both Adam and Eve believed God’s promise, and faith is what brings a man to God because he believes God’s word. Eve would have Messiah come through her line and all who would believe in Christ would be her spiritual seed (Gen. 3:15). All those associated with Christ become part of this redeemed humanity. She becomes the mother of all the saved. NOTE. If we could see the roster of the redeemed it would be interesting to note that it is not in alphabetical order. Adam is not first. Eve is.

V. THE PROVISION OF SALVATION (3:21): **“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”** The Lord provides a covering (“garments” not “coats”, which is too specific), it is of animal skins, and this involves sacrifice. In embryonic form, God is illustrating that sacrifice is necessary to man because of sin. The brevity of the record precludes our knowing how much God revealed at this time to Adam and Eve about sacrifice but it does appear that they knew that they were to approach Him on the basis of sacrifice which involved death.

VI. THE PROVISION FOR ETERNAL LIFE 3:22-24

A. **“Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.”** Man had fallen. If he who is doomed now to guilt, shame, limitation and loss, should eat of the tree of life he would live forever in a state of sinfulness. Man would live forever in a state of sin, which would be a curse, not a blessing. God, therefore, drove him away from the garden so that He might redeem men from sin.

B. **“So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way.”** Cherubim may be angels or angelic animals related to the holiness of God. Some think that they guarded the Garden of Eden until the Flood, but Scripture is silent on this matter.

VII. CONCLUSION

A. Pain, subjection, toil and death were all forms of punishment but they were also designed to be gracious helps to mankind. God uses these things to keep men from illusions about themselves such as that they are the captains of their own fate and the master of their own souls; that they are capable of handling all the problems of life. This simply is not true. Death, pain, toll and subjection are limits that we cannot escape. They are there to cancel out our egocentric dreams and reduce us to seeing ourselves as we really are. We are limited, dependent men. We cannot go it alone and we desperately need God.

B. The casting of men from Eden was a punishment and a blessing, for had man eaten of the tree of life, he would have lived forever in state of sin and misery, never to be redeemed.