

# The Book of Genesis

## Genesis 3:14-19

### “Flimsy Leaves cannot hide the Dysfunctionality that comes through Curse and Judgement”

#### 19<sup>th</sup> Message in The Book of Genesis

Sunday 5 April 2020

Glenvista Baptist Church

**Genesis 3:14-19 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. <sup>15</sup> I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” <sup>16</sup> To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.” <sup>17</sup> And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; <sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

#### Introduction

- a) From peace to rivalry, from joy to gloom, from fearlessness to fear, from unity to enmity, from hope to hopelessness, from calm and order, to chaos and anarchy – that describes the scene in the Garden post the Fall. Sin disrupts all that was good. A bondage of corruption that has left the created world in futility and in the pangs and agony of childbirth, awaiting the redemption of the sons of men, and the liberation that comes by Divine Decree and Sovereign Grace alone.
- b) A fall that has left man utterly incapable of recognizing his own sin and depravity, a fall which has made man God's enemy and God man's enemy – unless arrested and set free from the bonds of sin and shame. Only one thing can rescue us from the shackles of our sin; only one thing can undo the devastating effects of the sin of the First Adam, and that is the Rescuing Love of the Second Adam. It is only the self-giving sacrifice of Christ, that can set a guilt-ridden people free from bondage, the bondage of decay that leads to hell.
- c) That's what **Genesis 3** is about – the painting of a devastating picture, telling us how far we fall short of the glory of God, yet also painting the picture of saving grace that offers

a new and living way by which man can be saved. **Genesis 3** first shows the depth of depravity, and then as we will see today offers the glimmers of hope that comes through a Messiah who will be sent to the world to rescue His people from sin. Yet, now, we see around us a world largely trapped in sin, and we see **Genesis 3** playing off before our eyes– no one taking personal responsibility, but most blaming it on their circumstances, on others, on God or either on the devil.

- d) I don't know how many of you remember the cartoon characters **Calvin and Hobbes**? They were great cartoons in the 1990s (I guess I'm giving my age away). The cartoon is mostly a monologue by Calvin, the little boy, to his Tiger friend Hobbes. And on the screen, I point your attention to one of those that clearly describes the essence of what we are seeing unfolding in **Genesis 3**. It begins with the two walking along and Calvin musing, "Nothing I do is my fault". The next frame shows Hobbes scratching his whiskers as Calvin expresses strong disapproval, "My family is dysfunctional, and my parents won't empower me! Consequently, I'm not self-actualized!" Then we see Calvin, eyes shut, and arms crossed, doing a poor-me: "My behavior is addictive functioning in a disease process of toxic codependency! I need holistic healing and wellness before I'll accept any responsibility for my actions!" Hobbes responds, "One of us needs to stick his head in a bucket of ice water." The strip ends with Calvin walking on saying, "I love the culture of victimhood."
- e) **"Victimhood"** that's what our society is all about. Buck-passing is the therapeutic trademark of the new millennium, and this has its roots in original sin. That's exactly what has happened thus far in the Garden, and now we will see how God pronounces His judgement and curse upon the serpent, the woman and upon Adam, our federal representative. Come with me as we see these curses now pronounced.

## **Point 1 – "A Divine Declaration upon a Despicable Serpent" (Gen 3:14-15)**

**Genesis 3:14 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> "The Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field..."

- a) **V14** Notice once again even as we saw last week, the particular order in which God addresses the characters in this narrative. First the serpent, then Eve, and then finally Adam who is ultimately responsible as our federal head. This again a restating of the order as per God's grand design. Here in **Genesis 3** God pronounces both judgments and curses, and the effects of those punishments are felt upon all mankind and all creation right up until this moment. And a final judgment is yet to come, that glorious day when Christ descends on the cloud of glory and yet to that day the effects of these first curses will last.

- b) See now how the Lord God then, firstly addresses the serpent, and notice that no offer of repentance is made towards the serpent; upon the serpent is only pronounced a curse. And the curse being pronounced here has a twofold object, first the reptile or the serpent, as seen in **verse 14**, and then secondly, as seen in **verse 15**, Satan himself who is the one that comes upon the serpent by indwelling the serpent.
- c) **V14** As we consider **verse 14** it's important that you see that even though the curse outwardly would be pronounced on the serpent, that the real thrust of the curse is against that malevolent spirit controlling its body and its speech, **“that old serpent called the devil” (Rev 12:9)**. The ultimate curse however, comes upon the snake for God says to it, **“Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.” (v14)** This pronouncement comes as an everlasting reminder to man of the instrument of his fall, and of the final destruction that will come upon Satan himself. The fact that the snake will eat dust all the days of its life should not be taken in a literal sense, rather the expression is mainly a graphic figure of speech, indicating the humiliating judgment and ultimate fall of the serpent.
- d) **V15** Now in **verse 15** we see that just as God addressed the serpent, His speech now moves beyond the serpent and God addresses Satan directly, for in **verse 15** we read, **“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”** Dear friends what we have here is quite amazing, we have here as it were the first gospel proclamation commonly known as **“the protoevangelium”**, **which is the first declaration of gospel hope proclaiming that the Christ will come to crush the head of Satan.** In the very midst of sin, tangible grace is demonstrated as the first gospel proclamation is made, and as hope arises, of the announcement of the Messiah that would come to save His people from their sin. This **“protoevangelium”** promises the ultimate coming and the victory of a Redeemer, and obviously this promise in **Genesis 3:15** intends far more than a trivial reference to the physical enmity that would exist between men and snakes; but rather looks forward to the time when Satan will be completely crushed beneath the feet of the women's triumphant Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, who will come and undo the effects of the fall of the first Adam. And so, God makes a Divine Declaration upon a Despicable Servant. And the declaration is **deliberately twofold** – first the snake will be humiliated to the ground and exist on its belly as a sign of Christ's victory over it **(v14)** –

and secondly, there will be continuous enmity between its seed and the Seed of the woman (v15).

## Point 2 – “A Painful Punishment imposed upon our First Mother” (Gen 3:16)

**Genesis 3:16 (ESV)** <sup>“16</sup> To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

- a) **V16** We see now the judgement and curse announced upon our First Mother. And just like the judgement upon the snake was twofold, so the judgement upon Eve is twofold as well; one relating to her children and the other to her husband.
- b) **Firstly then**, in spite of Eve’s sin there is no withdrawal of the blessing to be fruitful and multiply. She nonetheless will produce an offspring, yet we are told that she will give birth, but that it will now involve much pain. The text says, **“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing, in pain you shall bring forth children”**. So, the curse upon the woman brings along with it that the blessing of bringing forth children, will now be accompanied with a burden that’ll be bitter and painful. Giving birth will now be a traumatic and harrowing experience for most women. Fascinatingly whenever the Bible wishes to express severe trouble it will often describe it in terms of a woman undergoing the pangs of childbirth (e.g. Isaiah 13:8).
- c) In terms of the curse upon the snake we see God saying, **“I will put enmity...”**, and in terms of the curse upon the woman we see God saying, **“I will surely multiply your pain in childbirth...”**. What we need to see here dear friends, is that this animosity introduced here is not inspired by evil hearts or even by Satan himself. **The animosity introduced here is fueled by God Himself. God is committed to this battle. God inspires this battle.** Man is now at enmity with God. God has now become man’s greatest enemy. Frightful to see the outworking of sin here in the garden. And the first way in which God has committed Himself against Eve in battle, is that Eve will feel the effects of the curse upon her own body, when she brings forth children.
- d) **Secondly then**, Eve will feel the effect of the curse in her relation to her husband Adam. As much as marriage is a blessing the curse affects marriage, in that marriage will suffer disruption. The text tells us, **“Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”** What we have here is that God measures out a punishment upon Eve, that fits the crime. She had in the garden acted independently of the rule of her husband, she listened to the snake and then she took the forbidden fruit and encouraged him to eat.

Her sin was an undermining of the authority structures, God gave, as a creation ordinance, right in the beginning in Genesis, and for this God would punish her and she would feel the effect of the sin, in the strain that would now be brought, as she feels the authority of her husband. The word for desire used here is the very same word used in [Genesis 4:7](#) where we see sin had the desire to master Cain, and we read, “Sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you”. In the very same way, the woman would now desire to control her husband and usurp his authority, but God would put a restriction on that in that the woman would fail because God has ordained for the man to lead. Nevertheless, the woman will persist in this endeavor, and it would bring strife in domestic relationships.

- e) Practically as a result of the fall, it means that, marriage alone, will give no woman all she wants. Mothering will be fraught with pain from birth onward; nothing will completely satisfy her. This, dear friends, must be seen as a grace because this will drive the willing soul to seek God. Nothing would satisfy Eve but God, and in spite of the curse the first gospel is seen here in Eden, as God demonstrates grace to a fallen mankind.

### [Point 3 – “An Incriminating Indictment upon Adam, our Federal Representative” \(Gen 3:17-19\)](#)

[Genesis 3:17 \(ESV\)](#) <sup>“17</sup> And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife...”

- a) [V17](#) We see now that the fall of Adam also brings about a two-fold curse upon the man. Adam's fundamental sin was not that he ate of the forbidden fruit, but that he listened to the voice of his wife and heeded her call; **Adam's fundamental error was that he obeyed his wife rather than obeying God.** And again, we see that Adam's punishment fits his crime.
- b) **Firstly**, then we see that Adam ate the forbidden fruit. As a result of this God says, “...in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life...”. Adam's punishment would be a continual reminder of his sin. Interestingly the word for toil in Hebrew is the same word used of the woman's pain in childbirth ([3:16](#)). In order to provide for himself the sustenance needed to live, there will be blood, sweat and tears. As for the ground, the land also is affected; instead of producing only what is pleasant for site and good for food ([2:9](#)), it will now even bear forth “thorns and thistles” ([v18](#)). The land which was once well watered and fertile is now a land cursed and deprived of the blessings of the Lord.
- c) **Secondly**, then, we see that the very ground with which Adam now has to toil, will become the soil that will overcome Adam. “Dust you are and to dust you will return” ([v19](#));

man will die, and his body will return to the very ground from which it was made. This of course affects all in Adam's line; we all will die, and all will return to dust. Yet in spite of this curse their still remains an element of grace that accompanies this curse. Even though the ground will be toiled in burdensome fashion, man will still be able to obtain his bread from the soil and it will still sustain human life. God does not rob man of the necessities of life, but the effect of the curse is felt in their obtaining such necessities, and man will earn them by the sweat of his brow.

#### **Point 4 – “A Fourfold Effect of the Curse upon the First Adam, reversed in Fourfold Manner through Christ the Second Adam” (Gen 3:17-19)**

**Genesis 3:17-19 (ESV)** <sup>17</sup> And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; <sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. <sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

- a) **V17-19** We come now to the heart of this matter; a glimmer of hope. The Hope of Redemption; the Hope of Rescue; the Hope of Release from the Bondage of Sin and Shame.
- b) Henry Morris very helpfully states: “And so God placed the curse on man and on his whole environment, thus forcing him to recognize the seriousness of his sin, as well as his helplessness to save himself and his dominion from eventual destruction. The necessity of laboring merely to keep alive would go far toward inhibiting still further rebellion and would force him to recognize that Satan’s tempting promises had been nothing but lies. Such a condition would encourage him to a state of repentance toward God, and a desire for God to provide deliverance from the evil state upon which he had fallen.”<sup>1</sup>
- c) As a result of man's fallen condition, the law of decay and death had now entered and the universal experience thereof is that all things, whether living or nonliving would eventually wear out, rundown, grow old, decay, and pass into the dust. That means that all systems if left to themselves will eventually become degraded and disordered. This strange law of decay and disorder is therefore universally applicable and in it lies the secret of what is wrong with the world: **Man is a sinner and he has brought a curse upon the whole earth.**
- d) **Man’s condition was fourfold.** The effect of Adam’s sin was tangibly seen in four particular ways directly after his disobedience in the Garden. He would now directly be affected by –

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<sup>1</sup> Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record, A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings*, Baker Books (1976) page 126

1. **Sorrow** – this would come his way as a result of continuous disappointment and futility. Nothing is like it was in the beginning, and no longer do things function as per its grand God-given design.
2. **Pain and Suffering** - this is signified by the “**thorns**” that now exists upon the earth, and these will continuously be a hindrance to man in his struggle to provide for his family.
3. **Sweat and Tears** – this is seen by a strong crying out and an intense struggle for survival in a now hostile environment. Where peace and harmony reigned prior to the Fall, hostility now rules the day past the Fall.
4. **Physical Death** – death would eventually triumph over all man’s feeble attempts. Death now has become an enemy, and the very composition from which man was made will slowly disintegrate and return to the very soil from which it was made.

e) But beloved friends, yet in this is contained the Good News of the Gospel, for Christ the Son of Man, the Second Adam has been made a curse for us - **Galatians 3:13** - “**13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”**”. See then how each of the aspects which came along as a result of Adam’s transgression, is sufficiently dealt with via the sufferings of the Second Adam, Christ Jesus, who came to rescue His people from their sin -

1. **Sorrow** – Christ became “**a man of sorrows**”. According to Isaiah, “**3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows...**” (Isaiah 53:3). There was none other who had been acquainted with sorrow as has been the Second Adam.
2. **Pain and Suffering** – Christ the Second Adam was not only acquainted with sorrow, but He equally knew physical pain like none other had ever experienced. He knew physical pain beyond limits, and this was inflicted upon Him because of the First Adam transgressing the stipulations of the covenant made in the Garden. **Isaiah 53:5** - “**5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.**” And as the ultimate sign of such pain and suffering He wore a crown of thorns to deal with the effect of the thorns which entered upon Adam’s sin.
3. **Sweat and Tears** – He suffered intensely the night of His betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane, to such an extent that the agony of that moment as He felt upon His body the utter desertion of the Father which was awaiting Him at the cross, became so intense that Jesus experienced the greatest trauma, “**44 And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.**” (Luke 22:44). And in

Hebrews 5:7 we read, “7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.”

4. **Physical Death** – finally He gave up His life voluntarily on the Cross of Calvary. It was not taken from Him; He laid it down of His own accord, and God brought His own Son to, “<sup>15</sup> lay in the dust of death.” (Psalms 22:15)
- f) The Second Adam totally by means of selfless sacrifice, voluntarily laid down His life for the reversal of the entire effect of the curse, which the disobedience of the First Adam brought on all of mankind and on all of creation.

## **Conclusion:**

- a) The conclusion of the matter is that He bore all of the curse Himself for us. This means that once again the dwelling of God shall someday be with men and “there shall be no more **death**, neither **sorrow**, nor **crying**, neither shall there be any more **pain**: for the former things are passed away” (Rev 21:4) Here, the effect of the reversal of the curse, coming with Adam, is clearly seen. **In this we see that Redemption is as much about God’s rule as it is about man’s need.** Because God is a just God, punishment of sin is required by the very nature of God. God is Almighty but there is one thing that even God cannot do, and that is that God cannot deny himself (2 Tim 2:13). For you see if God were to leave sin unpunished God would in essence be denying Himself. And since it is impossible for God to deny Himself, it follows that it is impossible for God to leave sin unpunished. God is righteous by nature and His righteous nature requires that sin be punished justly, as it deserves. That punishment, God in righteous anger, measured out upon His Son, for the sin of all who would repent and believe in Him.
- b) And so, in light of the devastating curse which came along with Adam’s sin, we need to state emphatically and unequivocally, that the soft, sentimental idea of religion that is so prevalent today is by no means taught in the Bible. For the Word of God teaches that evil is real, and it teaches that redemption from that evil involves utter enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. And the Bible teaches that this enmity continues throughout all of history, but that it ultimately reaches its climax at the cross of Calvary. There at the cross, Jesus Christ the suffering Messiah, the seed of the Woman, the Second Adam, came and crushed the serpent’s head, but in doing so He Himself suffered immensely - His heel was bruised at Calvary’s cross. However herein is contained the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; that in the very sufferings and



the death of Christ, the Second Adam, we see the satisfaction of the justice of God which at the same time formed the climax of the bitter enmity that takes us right back to **Genesis 3:15**.

- c) Yet beloved in all of this we see there was grace, for God's curse upon Satan meant His own Son would one day become a curse for us. Satan himself would strike the heel of our Lord but ultimately that very wound received to his heal, would mean that the Son of God would strike a final deathblow to Satan. This grace is rooted in the very victory of Christ. We learn from the judgment of the first man and the woman that nothing would satisfy them but God, and in this the gracious words of our Lord is once again revealed to you and to me, **“<sup>28</sup> Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”** (Matthew 11:28).
- d) Friend, are you able to see **“the first gospel”** as revealed here in **Genesis 3**? For if you are able to see it then you will also understand our Lord's Words: **“<sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”** (John 3:14-16)
- e) This beloved is true grace! Do you know it?

Amen

Soli Deo Gloria

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