

EXPOSITION OF GENESIS

Message #16

Genesis 3:16-24

The Bible tells the truth about man, that he is a sinful failure who can do nothing in and of himself to make himself right with God. Genesis 3 is an honest, accurate account of the miserable failure of man and of the severe penalties of God.

WHEN A PERSON CHOOSES TO DISOBEY AND SIN AGAINST GOD, HE WILL RECEIVE JUDGMENT FROM GOD.

Obedience to God brings God's blessings and disobedience brings God's cursings. When Adam and the woman chose to disobey God, they incurred various direct punishments, which were very distinct from the shame (Genesis 3:7) they experienced due to their sin and their fear (Genesis 3:8-13).

PUNISHMENT #1 - The judgment against the woman. 3:16

The Hiphil stem of the verb "multiply" indicates that the LORD God will be the cause of this great multiplication of punishment.

Area #1 - The punishment of the LORD God would be experienced in her pain. 3:16a

The Hebrew word "pain" or "sorrow" is a key word of this section, appearing two times in this verse and once in verse 17. The word refers to pain, trouble and hard toilsome labor. Because of her sin, life for the woman will not be a continual picnic. She will know what it is like to experience personal pain, trouble and hard work.

Area #2 - The punishment of the LORD God would be experienced in her childbirth. 3:16b

The Hebrew word "childbirth" or "conception" is not just referring to the act of becoming pregnant. In fact, the etymology of the word seems to suggest the idea of swelling. This thought is clearly seen in the use of this word in connection with Hagar (Genesis 16:4). The conception or childbirth refers to the entire process of pregnancy. The punishment here is that the pregnancy of a woman would not be easy.

Area #3 - The punishment of the LORD God would be evidenced in her delivery. 3:16c

Prior to choosing to sin a woman would have given birth without any pain or hard labor. Even though these punishments may seem harsh, there is tremendous grace in them. God promised in the day they ate, they would die (Genesis 2:17). He could legitimately execute both of them, but He grants them life and will even allow the woman to conceive and bring forth life and produce a seed (Genesis 3:15) who would ultimately undo this curse.

Area #4 - The punishment of the LORD God would be evidenced in her subjection . **3:16d**

The word “desire” is one that refers to longing or desire (Gesenius, p. 876). The word “rule” refers to one who has dominion over someone as ruler or lord (Gesenius, p. 517). These two words are used again in Genesis 4:7 in regard to Cain and Abel.

This penalty suggests that a woman will desire to hold the status of man as the dominating leader, but will not be able to attain it. Man will be the dominating force even though at times a woman will not like it. Prior to her sin, the woman would have naturally enjoyed her role, now it will be a struggle and what once would have been the perfect marriage is now destined, as Derek Kidner suggests, to become at times a ‘jungle’ like warfare (Kidner, p. 71).

We learn from the N.T. that it is only the Spirit-filled, godly woman who meekly, quietly and willingly submits to her husband (Ephesians 5:18-24; Titus 2:3-5; I Peter 3:1-6). It is the rare woman who willingly chooses to obey God in this manner because the great majority desire to dominate and control and that desire is part of the curse . Dr. Allen Ross said, “It may be argued that the male domination in the history of the human race is a perpetual reminder of the fall, just as the serpent’s crawling on the ground” (Ross, p. 147).

PUNISHMENT #2 - The judgment against the man . **3:17-19**

Area #1 - The punishment of the LORD God would affect the ground . **3:17b**

The ground received a curse because of Adam’s sin. Although there are still many evidences that the earth is filled with the goodness of God (Psalm 33:5), there are also many evidences that all of creation is waiting for this curse to be lifted (Romans 8:18-22). When you look at your yard and see barren spots that are not luscious green or places where moles have ruined the landscaping or you see flowers and trees that are not growing properly, you are seeing a visual reminder that we chose to sin against God and are still suffering.

Area #2 - The punishment of the LORD God would affect his happiness . **3:17c**

All of his life the man was destined for trouble, pain and hard labor. Just getting food would no longer be a completely enjoyable experience. It is nearly impossible for us to imagine what life would be like to not have any trouble.

Area #3 - The punishment of the LORD God would affect his prosperity . **3:18**

Man was originally created to work (Genesis 2:15). Work is a blessing, not a curse. But man was also originally created to prosper in his work at all times. **Work is not the punishment; difficulty in the work is the punishment.**

Area #4 - The punishment of the LORD God would affect his effort . **3:19a**

To accomplish things man must sweat, which means there must be intense effort. Until the curse, life and work were always enjoyable.

Area #5 - The punishment of the LORD God would affect his existence . **3:19b**

Just as the LORD God had promised, Adam would eventually die (Genesis 2:17). He was sentence to a life of hard work, problems, sweat and then death. The reason every one of us will die, unless Christ returns, is because we have all sinned in Adam and like Adam (Romans 5:12).

After the penalties were handed out, two unusual reactions occur:

(Reaction #1) - Adam names the woman. **3:20**

He named his wife “Eve”, which name means to breathe, to live. She would be the mother of all human life.

(Reaction #2) - The LORD God clothes Adam and Eve. **3:21**

Adam would have never thought of killing an animal for clothing because death was a penalty for sin (Gen.2:17). In order for Adam and Eve to maintain any relationship with the LORD God after they had sinned, the shedding of blood was required and the LORD God had to cloth Adam and Eve in something acceptable to Him.

Arthur Pink wrote: “How beautiful and perfect is this type! It was the LORD God who furnished the skins, made them into coats and clothed our first parents. They did nothing. God did it all. They were entirely passive. ...And so it is with every sinner. “For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). Well may we sing, “I will rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10).

PUNISHMENT #3 - The judgment against both. **3:22-24**

People who sin may have a relationship with God but they may not live in the Paradise of God. Living in God’s Paradise requires a holiness that no living sinful person has.

This expulsion from the garden is both disciplinary and gracious. It is disciplinary in that God will not allow one to partake of the tree of life until sin is completely ridded, which could never be in the life of Adam. It is gracious in that had Adam partook, he would have lived forever in a state that contained sin. For even though he was clothed with the skin of an animal, his sin could not be taken away until Christ died for the remission of sin (Romans 3:21-28).

There was nothing Adam could do to restore himself to his original state once he chose to sin against God and there is nothing we can do either, except to go straight to God and tell Him the truth - do not try and hide or cover sin and we may experience God’s amazing Grace.