

GOD'S JUDGMENT AND MERCY
(SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2014)

Scripture Reading: Genesis 3:20-24; Heb. 10:19-31

Introduction

What are three essential truths that we see in Genesis 1-3?

Creation by a sovereign God.

Man's fall along with God's judgment and curse

God's undeserved mercy to sinners

You have to know these three truths to understand Scripture and your own life.

Those whose hearts have not been changed cannot appreciate these great truths.

How does man in his unbelief understand the world?

Time and chance are the sovereign creators.

Man is basically good but the environment we live in is bad and is the cause of all our problems.

Either we have to look within or look to a centralized government or some other source to bring salvation.

Only the Christian is able to fully appreciate how horrible is man's condition.

Only the Christian can appreciate the terror of God's judgment.

Only the Christian knows that even in the midst of judgment there is hope because of God's saving grace and mercy.

You must acknowledge God's judgment and rejoice in His mercies.

We will look at Genesis 3:20-24 in three parts.

1. ADAM CALLED THE NAME OF HIS WIFE EVE, v. 20

Gen. 3:20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

Gordon Wenham in his commentary on Genesis shows how Genesis 2:5-3:24 can be divided into 7 scenes or parts.

A change in part is noted by a change in who is speaking or acting.

These 7 parts also are connected with each other.

Wenham explains it this way:

Thus scene 1 matches scene 7; scene 2, scene 6; scene 3, scene 5; while scene 4 constitutes the centerpiece of the narrative when the couple eat of the forbidden fruit.¹

Verses 20 and 21 are the final two verses of the 6th part and they parallel the 2nd part, chapter 2:18-25.

In both part 2 and 6, God is the main actor, while Adam has a minor role. The woman and snake are both completely passive.

In part 2, Adam gave a name for the animals that God brought to him to name.

Also in 2:23 Adam declared of the woman God created that she shall be called Woman.

In 2:23 was Adam giving his wife a name?

It is best not to see *woman* as being her name, but rather identifying who she is. God made for Adam a woman.

It is finally now in 3:20 where Adam now gives to his wife an actual name, Eve.

In Hebrew Adam named his wife *ḥawwā*. Somehow over time this became Eve in our English translations.

The name *ḥawwā* is related to the verb *to live*.

Interestingly the name Eve only appears two times in the OT and two times in the NT.

Now look at the last part of verse 20.

because she was the mother of all living.

Doesn't this phrase sound like Eve already had given birth to children?

How should we understand this phrase?

There is no reason to believe Eve at this point had given birth to any children.

Rather the best understanding is to see this phrase is an explanation from the "narrator" for why Adam chose this name.

¹ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, vol. 1 of Word Biblical Commentary. Accordance/Thomas Nelson electronic ed. (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 50.

What was Adam's faith like at this moment?

I don't know that we can answer this question in great detail.

It would seem that in light of God's judgment pronounced on the serpent and upon Eve, that Adam does believe that his wife will have children.

In light of God's fearsome judgments, His promises will be fulfilled.

I believe we are right in understanding that in verse 20 we have a confession of hope and a realization of God's mercy.

You must acknowledge God's judgment and rejoice in His mercies.

Let me comment on a few other points in relationship to verse 20.

In various aspects of pagan thinking there is the idea that the serpent goddess *hавvat* is the mother of life.

The biblical account stands in great contrast.²

In more modern pagan thinking there is the suggestion even by professing Christians that man evolved from primate ancestors around 100,000 years ago and originated with a population not of just 2 but more like 10,000.³

Francis Collins who gained great fame as part of the human genome project has written and spoken that the belief in a literal Adam and Eve doesn't fit the evidence we have from science.

How should we respond to such "scientific" arguments?

Dr. Rob Carter who works with Creation Ministries International helpfully points out that Francis Collins and others who make this claim do so based on accepting evolutionary ideas from the beginning.

It is a sad indictment that most Christians operating in the fields of science, do not begin with God's truth as the final and ultimate standard but man's word as the final standard.

Science certainly has not proven that Adam and Eve could not be the literal beginning of the entire human race.

In fact a proper understanding of the genetic record fits very beautifully to the testimony of God's Word both here in Genesis 3 and later with Genesis 6-9.

² NET Bible, s.v. Genesis 3:20.

³ <http://creation.com/historical-adam-biologos>

What a basic but so vital witness to all of humanity today that Adam and Eve are our original ancestors.

This is an important witness in terms of genetics.

This is a main witness in dealing with sinful, racist attitudes.

This is an essential witness in considering the humanity of Jesus Christ some 4,000 years after this chapter.

2. GOD CLOTHED ADAM AND EVE, v. 21

Gen. 3:21 Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

Considering again the 7 parts of Genesis 2:5 through the end of chapter 3, we consider that the last verse of part 2, Genesis 2:25, connects very well with the last verse of part 6, Genesis 3:21.

Remember Genesis 2:25?

Gen. 2:25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

What other verse in Genesis 3 connects with verse 21?

Gen. 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

What is significant about Adam and Eve being clothed by God?

Is this an aspect of judgment or mercy?

It is interesting to see commentators differ in answering this question.

John Calvin wrote that God's act of clothing them was a reminder of their sin. They had to be covered.⁴

Clothing is an important witness to man's rebellion.

Not surprisingly in our age of apostasy we have increasingly in our age the celebration of nudity and barely-there clothing. 75% off for many is no longer just a sale but a style.

⁴ John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*, s.v. Genesis 3:21.

Can we not also see an element of God's mercy in that it is God who clothed Adam and Eve and that He clothed them with animal skins?

Listen to an extended quotation from the *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*.

Woven throughout Scripture, the exchange and provision of garments portray God's redemptive initiative. In the first act of mercy extended to fallen humanity, the Lord covers Adam and Eve with clothes, replacing the inadequate fig-leaf covering their own hands have made with garments of skin (Gen. 3:21). From this time, proper garments are required when coming into the presence of the holy God (Exod. 19:10, 14; Ezek. 44:17; Matt. 22:11–12; Rev. 3:18; 7:9, 14). Israel's high priest is clothed with sacred garments of glory and splendour (Exod. 28:2), which, through their rich symbolism, foreshadow a re-created humanity (Ps. 132:16; Rev. 21:10–20). These vestments secure entrance into the innermost chamber of the sanctuary and bring the nation representatively into the presence of God. Upon the breastpiece the high priest bears the names of the tribes of Israel inscribed on precious stones (Exod. 28:29) and upon his turban he bears their guilt (Exod. 28:38). Prophets describe Jerusalem's redemption and restoration using images of clothing. In a heavenly scene, angelic attendants strip the high priest Joshua of his filthy raiment indicative of the sin of the nation (Zech. 3:1–9), and exchange his defiled garments for pure ones: 'See, I have taken away your sin and I will put rich garments on you' (Zech. 3:4, NIV). Jerusalem's garments have become soiled by her own self-righteousness (Is. 64:6) and only the Lord can provide clean ones for her to wear. After the judgment of exile, her sin will be removed from her and she will be clothed with garments of splendour (Is. 52:1), adorned with returning exiles as bridal ornaments (Is. 49:18). She will be garbed in bridal attire, and so be restored to her status of God's bride (Is. 62:1–12). The Messiah will effect this. He will bestow a crown of beauty upon her head, which was once covered with ashes of mourning, and clothe her with 'a garment of praise instead of despair' (Is. 61:3; cf. Luke 4:18–19). Zion will exult: '... he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness' (Is. 61:10).

Redemption symbolized by the exchange of garments culminates in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Believers are charged to disrobe themselves of the old self in order to put on as a garment (*endysasthai*), the new self created in righteousness (Eph. 4:22–24). This new self is not merely an external covering of Christian virtues (Col. 3:12), but a putting on of Christ himself (Gal. 3:27). Believers are exhorted, 'clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ' (Rom. 13:14). Having dressed themselves with Jesus Christ, they are transformed into his likeness, conformed to his ethical image,

and become partakers of his nature (Col. 3:10). Those clothed with Christ will have entrance into the presence of God and fellowship with the worshipping community (Rev. 3:5). The crowning act of redemption will come when the bride of Christ is graciously granted fine, white linen to wear; that is, when she is clothed in the eschatological dress which ‘stands for the righteous acts of the saints’ (Rev. 19:8). At the end of the age, the community of the redeemed will be clothed with an imperishable, immortal, heavenly dwelling (1 Cor. 15:53; 2 Cor. 5:3). They will no longer be identified by perishable tassels, but by the imperishable righteousness of the Lamb.⁵

Verse 21 then does not provide the full picture of redemption. But beautifully we have the sunrise of what God alone can provide for rebellious sinners.

You must acknowledge God’s judgment and rejoice in His mercies.

3. GOD EXPELS ADAM FROM THE GARDEN, VV. 22-24

Gen. 3:22 Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever”— **23** therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. **24** So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Here you see in this final scene that it is God alone who speaks and acts. Adam and Eve are completely passive in this final section.

The first section in Genesis 2:5-17 described how God created the garden and placed two special trees in the garden – the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Here in this final section we have reference again to knowledge, the tree of life, and man’s expulsion from this beautiful garden.

Look again at the language of verse 22.

“Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil.”

⁵ *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, s.v. “CLOTHES,” n.p.

Though there is not agreement among commentators, the language of Us seems again to be a foreshadowing of the great truth further revealed in Scripture – the Triune nature of God.⁶ And this is similar to what we have already seen from Genesis 1:26.

Verse 22 emphasizes a great change has taken place through Adam and Eve's sin.

They have a knowledge of good and evil.

E. J. Young notes that although they like God have this knowledge of good and evil, they lean toward the evil and hate the good.⁷

Eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not only a violation of God's clear command but it did bring about a change in man's entire being.

The reference to the tree of life is also very significant.

How could eating from this tree give life, life that would enable one to live forever?

Was this something you only needed to do one time? Did the tree give life through repeated eating similar to food?

We are not given answer to all these questions. It would seem that just eating one time would be sufficient, but we have to be careful in how far we press the passage.

What we can state clearly is that death is the result of sin as part of God's judgment.

And so because of Adam's sin, he would be cut off from any access to the tree of life. Adam and Eve would both die and return to the dust from which they were taken.

Observe again the structure of verse 22 and the dash at the end of the verse.

Why is there a dash in some Bible translations?

It is an indication that the previous sentence is not really finished.

Gordon Wenham notes that this structure used for God's speech is very unusual. He writes:

Here the omission of the conclusion conveys the speed of God's actions. He had hardly finished speaking before they were sent out of the garden.⁸

As we look at verse 23, I should point out that the two key verbs in verse 22 are repeated in verse 23.

⁶ Edward J. Young, 153.

⁷ Ibid., 153.

⁸ Wenham, 85.

In verse 22, the verbs put out and take are the same verbs in Hebrew translated in verse 23 as sent and taken.

To prevent Adam from putting out his hand, he is sent out. No longer will he take from the tree of life. Rather he will have to work the ground from which he was taken.

Clearly there is great thought and beauty in the writing of this account.

Finally we consider verse 24.

Verse 24 strengthens the language of the judgment given to Adam and Eve.

They are not merely sent out but driven or cast out.

To make sure that Adam, Eve, nor any of his children would ever be able to return, God established a security force like no other.

Cherubim were placed at the eastern entrance of the garden.

The text does not explicitly say, but it seems that these angelic beings held the flaming sword which could turn in any direction.

The cherubim are not described here but we read of these angelic guardians in Exodus and Kings.

Two images of cherubim were placed on the ark of the covenant.

Turn to Exodus 25:17-22.

Turn also to 1 Kings 6:23-28. Note also verses 29, 32, and 35.

The cherubim emphasize the holiness and power of God. He cannot be approached in anyway by sinners apart from blood that is offered to cleanse sins.

We should also observe that Adam and Eve are kicked out of the garden such that they must move to the east.

What is significant about this direction?

At least three more times in Genesis, those living in rebellion are said to move toward the east – Cain, those who built the tower of Babel, and Lot.

It is also then significant that one entered the temple and tabernacle from the east.

The true horror of Adam and Eve's sin and rebellion is being cut off from the blessing of God's presence.

CONCLUSION:

You must acknowledge God's judgment and rejoice in His mercies.

Horror of God's judgments:

- Human suffering

Famine

War

Unjust governments

Children

Our own personal suffering the result of sin and also just living in a world under judgment.

- Greatest judgment is to be under God's present wrath and to experience eternal wrath for sin.

Heb. 10:30 For we know Him who said, "*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,*" says the Lord. And again, "*The LORD will judge His people.*" **31** It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Ex. 26:31 "You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim.

Heb. 10:19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, **21** and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Prayer

Hymn: 449

Benediction – 1 Peter 5:8-11

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while,

perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion
forever and ever. Amen.