

PASTOR RAY’S BIBLE SCHOOL 201

THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

Session Seven

“Divine Probation”

I. Review

A. Legends Of The Fall

1. The cataclysmic fall of Adam and his race is the first “great event” of history.
 - a. The entire human race was “in” Adam when he fell
 - b. His “seed” was corrupted and man and his descendents are (spiritually) dead and separated from God
2. Adam becomes the prototypical representative of his race:
 - With conscious awareness of his “nakedness” before God
 - Hiding from God and God’s judgment
 - Attempting to “cover” himself with the works of his own hands
 - Refusing to accept responsibility for his disobedience (the “blame game”)
3. Now we must consider what happens next, ever keeping in mind that Genesis is the “seed plot” of the Bible and what happens there is repeated in the rest of scripture and in human history.

II. The Curse Of Irresponsibility

A. The Secret Of Man

1. Man is unique among all God’s creatures because he has the capacity of moral responsibility for himself.

**“The secret of man is the secret of his responsibility”.
Yaclav Havel in “Letters To Olga”**

2. God created man and gave him responsibility.

**“The quality or state of being responsible; i.e., moral, legal or mental accountability; reliability,
trustworthiness.”
Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition**

3. Among all the animals and creatures God made, **ONLY MAN EXISTS IN CONSCIENCE RESPONSIBILITY.**

4. Man’s responsibility is verified as we consider God’s first response to sinful man is not to immediately pronounce judgment but to ask a series of questions!

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 loin coverings.8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” 10 And he said, “I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.” 11 And He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” 12 And the man said, “The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.” 13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Excerpted from Genesis 3:7-13 NASB

- Where are you? (v.9)
- Who told you that you were naked? (v.11)
- Have you eaten from the forbidden tree? (v.11)
- What have you done? (v.13)

5. Things we must remember:

- God is sovereign. But man is *responsible*.
- Sin doesn’t (immediately) bring judgment, it brings *accountability*
- God’s grace first appears as Divine *probation*
- God’s judgment of man’s sin does not come until after man refuses to take responsibility for his sin!

6. God is not only sovereign, He is omniscient.

God was not asking man to reveal information unknown to God!

a. The picture is of a loving parent who knows his child has sinned, yet withholds immediate punishment in favor of giving the child an opportunity to take responsibility for his sin.

7. Here we have the “first mention” of grace-not as a full pardon, but as **probation**. This is known as “common grace”. This is the grace God extends to all sinners. This is the withholding of righteous judgment in favor of offering opportunity for repentance. Unfortunately, sinners misinterpret common grace with the result of making themselves even more sinful.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully
set in them to do evil
Eccl 8:11 KJV

11 When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong. 12 Although a wicked man commits a hundred crimes and still lives a long time, I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent before God. 13 Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them,
Ecclesiastes 8:11-13 NIV

The greatest deception of human life is the idea that we can sin and get away with it!

8. One of the true checkpoints of right relationship with God is the “fear of the Lord”; those who awaken to their true condition of sinfulness are immediately impacted by the fact that God has patiently withheld justice in favor of probation, allowing opportunity to take responsibility for personal sin.

9. And so we can see that God’s judgment will not fall because of man’s sin, but for his not taking responsibility for his sin.

III. Holding Court: God’s Judgment On 3 Guilty Parties

A. God’s Judgment Of The Serpent

1. God begins a systematic pronouncement of judgment on the 3 players in the Fall, beginning with the Serpent.

"Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly shall you go, And dust shall you eat all the days of your life; 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."
Genesis 3:14-15 NASB

- a. God does not annihilate the Serpent, He curses him to crawl the earth.
- b. Dust is his diet. This an eerie prophetic reference to Satan's relationship to the human race, which is made of "dust", (Genesis 3:19), and that "dust shall be the serpent's meat", (Isaiah 65:25)*

**We would suggest there might be a logical extrapolation of this thought: Man is made of dust, which represents man's "flesh", the part of man that is of the earth. And so we can understand that any part of us that is not committed to God, (i.e., the unrenewed mind, worldly habits, etc.) become the areas that attract the Serpent's interest and give opportunity to his purposes.*

c. Notice how *God appoints the woman as the mortal enemy of the Serpent*, setting enmity (intense hatred) of the female against him. Historically, women have held particular hatred for Satan and all his works. There is a supernatural "hostility" (in the New Living Testament) or "war" (The Message Bible) that exists between woman and Devil.

2. Don't miss this: AFTER God judges the Serpent, and BEFORE He judges the man and the woman, HE PREACHES THE GOSPEL!

B. The Protoevangel: The First Mention Of The Gospel

1. The Latin term "protoevangelium", (first gospel), of Genesis 3:15 is so called because it is the "first mention" of the Good News of Jesus Christ found in scripture.

2. The enmity (hatred, warfare) prophesied here is not only the woman against the Serpent, but also to her "seed".

a. As mentioned before, the term is interesting because the woman has no "seed"; the male carries the seed, (Greek-"sperma").

3. This incredible prophecy points to the virgin birth, because in the "immaculate conception" of the Son of God in the womb of Mary the "seed" of Joseph was disallowed!

4. The virgin birth is an essential doctrine because of what we've learned about the "seed" principle of Genesis: Living things reproduce generationally because they possess the "seed within itself", and bring forth only "after its kind". Since Adam's seed was corrupted in the Fall, he disqualified himself from the ability to produce a "godly seed". Thus, God's (rhema) word to Mary, was the impartation of the "Seed" Himself, which is Christ!

5. Later, God makes promises to Abraham and his "seed". Only much later, in the New Testament, do we receive the revelation that the "seed" did not refer to Abraham's natural

children, but to Christ and His “seed”, which would include all born again by faith! (See 1 Peter 1:23)

15 Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. 16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed (offspring), and heirs according to promise.
Galatians 3:15-16,26-27,29 NASB

5. This confirms the doctrines of covenant theology, that God deals with only TWO MEN in history...the generation of Adam after the flesh and the generation of Christ (the “last Adam” of 1 Corinthians 15) after the Spirit.

6. God sees Adam and his race as ONE...and sees Christ and His race as ONE. That’s why Jesus told Nicodemus that “you must be born again”! (John 3:3)

7. This amazing proclamation of the Gospel not only prophesies the coming of Christ, but also details:

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, (Christ will defeat you) and you will strike his heel." (even though you will “strike” Him at the Cross)
Genesis 3:15 NIV Parenthesis Added

8. It is highly significant that God does not proceed to judge the man and the woman for their sin until He promises them victory in Christ!

C. God’s Judgment Of The Woman

To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."
Genesis 3:16 NASB

1. God’s judgment upon the woman was “sorrow” and “subjection”

We have here the sentence passed upon the woman for her sin. Two things she is condemned to: a state of sorrow, and a state of subjection, proper punishments of a sin in which she had gratified her pleasure and her pride.
Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible

a. As we consider the incredible sufferings of women throughout history, the fear of God reminds us of the awesome power of God’s word and our need to reverence and obey Him in all things.

b. The mistreatment and abuse of women has been consistently practiced throughout the ages, in all societies and cultures.

c. The word “sorrow” is appropriate.

2. God’s decree was that she would experience pain in childbirth.

a. The ordeal of giving birth was to be a perpetual reminder to woman regarding her “first mother’s” role in the Fall of the human race.

b. From this we might assume that had sin not entered the Creation, childbirth would have been joyful and virtually painless.

c. This judgment was also perhaps intended to remind us that every child ever born was being birthed into a world under God’s judgment, a world in need of redemption.

The pains of child-bearing, which are great to a proverb, a scripture proverb, are the effect of sin; every pang and every groan of the travailing woman speak aloud the fatal consequences of sin: this comes of eating forbidden fruit. Observe, the sorrows are here said to be multiplied, greatly multiplied...The sorrows of child-bearing are multiplied; for they include, not only the travailing throes, but the indispositions before (it is sorrow from the conception), and the nursing toils and vexations after; and after all, if the children prove wicked and foolish, they are, more than ever, the heaviness of her that bore them. Thus are the sorrows multiplied; as one grief is over, another succeeds in this world.

Excerpts from Matthew Henry's Commentary on Genesis 3:16

3. God also declares to the woman that even though marriage would put her in subjection to her husband, and that childbirth and mothering would be painful, she would desire it none the same!

a. Almost without exception, women are “driven” by the need to marry and have children.

b. Again, this inherent desire in women seems to be God’s way of reminding woman of her culpability in the condition of the human race.

D. God’s Judgment Of The Man

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. 18 "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you shall eat the plants of the field; 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."

Genesis 3:17-19 NASB

1. The culpability of man begins with his failure to exercise proper headship.

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife...”

- a. God is not disqualifying all men in all ages ought not to listen to the voice (counsel and advice) of their wives!
- b. The offence lay in setting the voice of the woman in first place, above the voice of God.

2. The man’s headship lay in the authority he had received from God and in the seniority of his creation. (1 Timothy 2:13)

- a. Man’s headship over creation was affirmed in his “naming” of the animals; Definition is always a function of authority!

And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof

Genesis 2:19 KJV

- b. This headship (authority) was also confirmed when he gave the woman her name.

And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

Genesis 2:22-23 KJV

3. The man’s guilt exceeded the woman’s guilt:

13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

1 Timothy 2:13-15 NKJV

- a. There is mystery here, to be sure. But it seems clear that the culpability of the woman was that she was genuinely deceived (seduced) by the Serpent. On the other hand, the passage clearly implies that man was not deceived; he did what he did with his eyes wide open. He really knew that what he was doing was wrong and did it anyway. This could be because the man had received the commandment, not the woman, and was therefore directly responsible to see that it was kept.

- b. Another interpretation is more romantic; some scholars believe that man was so in love with the woman that he consciously chose to join her in the transgression rather than lose her to the Divine judgment of God. This is an attractive deduction because it prefigures the love

of Christ for His bride, Who freely chose to identify with us in our sin rather than lose us to eternal separation from God. The difference, of course, is that Christ remained sinless in His identification with our sin, acting on our behalf as the sacrifice necessary to redeem us back to God.

4. The judgment of God upon Adam echoes throughout history as men experience the bitter fruit of Adam's sowing:

"...cursed is the ground for thy sake"

Genesis 3:17 KJV

- Since everything, (including man's flesh), comes out of the "ground", or the earth, this judgment was pervasive
- The sin of Adam not only contaminated himself personally, but extended to that over which he had been given dominion!
- Centuries later, the Apostle Paul would indirectly refer to this event in his epistle to the Romans:

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

Romans 8:18-24

NKJV

- The "natural" condition of the land changes from fruitfulness to weeds

"Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you shall eat the plants of the field..."

- Man, in his original condition, had work to do. But the "job" prior to the Fall seems to be much easier than the condition described here after man sinned-Here we have a picture of how the human race, (outside of Christ), relates to work and provision of his needs-We might say God sentenced man to a lifetime of "hard labor"!

"By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread..."

- This condition was life-long; man sweating and laboring to cultivate cursed ground until he would return to it in death

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."

Genesis 3:17-19

5. Adam sowed the wind by sinning, but now reaps the whirlwind in God's judgment of it. We will not take more time to consider the awful implications of God's judgment...But instead remember how God's grace appears in the midst of it:

- In the ***Probation***-the fact that God did not destroy them
- In the ***Protoevangelium***-the incredible promise of a redeeming Savior
- And in the amazing grace of God's ***Provision*** of a covering for their sin, the atoning work of an innocent sacrifice, the first mention of salvation by blood!