

The Consequences of Sin (Part 1)

Genesis 3:9-15

⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" ¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

¹⁴ So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all the livestock
and all the wild animals!

You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel." *[to be continued.]*

God Confronts Adam and Eve (3:9-13)

God Asks Them Where They Are (3:9-10)

What does God ask Adam (v. 9)? _____

- When God questions Adam and Eve, it is for *them*, not for himself. God already knows everything, but he is interacting with the humans on their level.
- Adam's response suggests that the intent of God's question isn't so much to find out *where* Adam was hiding, as to allow Adam an opportunity to reflect on his condition and on *why* he was hiding. It is an opportunity for Adam to acknowledge his sin.

What did Adam say was the reason that he hid from God (v. 10b)? _____

Was nakedness the *real* reason they were afraid and were hiding? Consider this: At the end of chapter 2, it didn't bother them to be naked (v. 25)! _____

- To be fully truthful, Adam should have said he was hiding because he was guilty of sin.

When the serpent approached Eve, he used half-truths to deceive her and to cover-up his real intentions. Here, as well as in the answers that follow, Adam and Eve will *both* attempt to do the same thing with God. (They will not succeed.) On a spiritual level, they now belong to the Devil's "family," and they are following the example of their "father," the Devil.

- Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of *his* day, for doing the same thing - following their "father," the devil (John 8:44).
- Through Christ, we have an opportunity to once again become "Children of God" (1 John 3:1-3).

God Confronts Adam with His Sin (3:11-12)

In response to Adam's answer, what was God's first question to Adam (v. 11a)? _____

Look back over chapter 3. Did anyone *tell* them that they were naked? _____

If not, then how did they find out (v. 6-7)? _____

God's second question focuses more directly on the *real* issue. What did he ask (v. 11b)? _____

Does Adam admit that he ate fruit from the tree (v. 12b)? _____

- Though Adam had no choice but to admit that he sinned - something God already knew - he does not simply say, "Yes, I ate some of the fruit." *Neither* of them does this. Instead, both try to shift the blame to someone (or something) else and excuse (or at least reduce the significance of) their own conduct. Sin now affects their actions, and *neither* wants to take full responsibility for his own choices.

How does Adam excuse his actions? Who does Adam blame (v. 12)? (Note that he gives *two* reasons for what he did!) _____

- Ultimately, Adam blames *both* the woman and God (who put her there with him). It is our nature, as *sinners*, to not want to take full responsibility for our conduct.
- Was there truth in what he said? Yes! But it was only a distorted *part* of the truth. He downplayed the importance of the more serious issue.

God Confronts the Woman with Her Sin (3:13)

What does God specifically ask the woman (v. 13a)? _____

Background: In verse 6, we read that she did *two* things. What were those two things? _____

What two things does she mention in her answer to God (13b)? _____

- What she said about the serpent was true, but not quite what God asked about. It may have been a legitimate detail in her explanation, but she omitted the more important matter, about offering the fruit to Adam. If she hadn't offered the fruit, he probably wouldn't have eaten it.

There is a significant difference between the sins of the two.

- Eve was *deceived* into believing the serpent's lie. She was confronted by what she believed were two "truth claims." She chose to believe what the serpent said, and then she willingly chose to disobey God.
- Adam was *not deceived*: When offered the fruit, he knew that he had to choose either his wife or God, and that he could not have both. He chose to side with his wife, and willingly chose to disobey God.

Something to think about: Are there any parallels between the way *you* tend to respond when you are confronted with your sins, and the way *they* responded when they were confronted with their sin?

God's Righteous Judgment against Sin - Part 1 (3:14-15)

Sin always has consequences, including effects on those who did not commit the sin. It's the same today, as back then. In Genesis 3, the sin of the man and the woman effected *all* of creation (Romans 8:22). Nevertheless, there would be some consequences that applied only to those who were directly involved in committing the sin.

Consequences for the Serpent (3:14-15)

Two entities are addressed in this judgment: The physical animal, and the spiritual force that empowered it (compare to Revelation 12:9). Though, to some degree, *both* entities may be implied in both verses, the primary emphasis changes from the physical entity (v. 14) to the spiritual (v. 15).

It is God's desire to bless his creation. But sin is a rejection of all that God is; so there *must* be consequences for it - namely, the *opposite* of blessings. It is only because of God's *undeserved kindness*, and his promise of a future victory in Christ (mentioned here only in general terms), that *anything* good can remain in creation.

What would happen to the animal itself (v. 14)? _____

There are specific consequences for the animal that brought the temptation. It would "crawl" and "eat dust" (symbolically, not its actual diet). This would be a picture of physical humiliation, or being made "lower" than the other animals. This is especially significant, when we consider what it was originally like: Before this, the creature was more "crafty" than the other animals (perhaps implying more capabilities than the others); from now on, it would be more humbled ("cursed") than all the rest.

- This is strictly a *physical* judgment. Snakes do not consciously think about being "cursed"!
- Scripture does not tell us what the serpent looked like before the judgment. We are told just what we *need* to know about the event, not what merely satisfies idle curiosity.
- God, consistent with his nature, has designed the snake in its present form to be fully adapted to its role in the environment.

The second part of this judgment goes beyond the *physical* entities of snakes and people. The focus changes to *spiritual* entities. What is the attitude described in the first part of v. 15? _____

- This verse tells us that there would be a hostility between the various individuals and groups mentioned in the passage - and that this hostility would be placed there by God.
- The hostility that often exists between people and snakes (especially poisonous snakes), is a reminder or picture of the hostility that has always exists, in one form or another, on a spiritual level.

This would be an *immediate* attitude between which two individuals (v. 15a)? _____

This would be an *ongoing* attitude between which two groups (v. 15b)? _____

What would be the final outcome of this hostility (v. 15c)?

- For the serpent (not a reference to his offspring) - _____
- For the offspring (a specific one: "he") - _____

How should we understand this passage? Is it a prophecy about an ongoing conflict between humans and snakes? Of course not! There is a much deeper significance to this judgment - a significance that goes far beyond mere snakes and humans. The focus has shifted from the *physical* entities to the *spiritual* entities they represent - and to the ongoing battle between them.

This is not the only time that something like this occurs in the first three chapters of Genesis. *Many* of the things mentioned have a significance that goes beyond (yet includes) the immediate physical entities. Here are some examples:

- Light and darkness (Genesis 1:4) teaches us about various concepts, such as the incompatibility of truth and error, and of good and evil (John 3:19; 2 Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:8).
- Jesus Christ is the "last Adam," who accomplishes for his spiritual offspring something that the "first Adam" failed to do for his physical offspring (1 Corinthians 15:45).
- The relationship between Adam and Eve *defines* the nature of marriage (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:7-8) and even has implications regarding the issue of divorce. Yet it also teaches us about the relationship between Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:30-32).

Here, in Genesis 3:15, the word "offspring" - also translated as "seed" - is an example of this. When we attempt to understand the nature of this offspring (or seed), we discover that the word can refer to a single collective *group* or to a single *individual*. Which one is it here? As we read the verse, it seems that *both* are included: The middle of the verse seems to focus on collective groups, but the word "he" at the end of the verse seems to focus on an individual. Though there are two radically different types of offspring (the Serpent's and Eve's), within Eve's offspring, we see reference to both the individual and the collective group.

The full significance of this "offspring" concept is not stated in this verse. Instead, it was progressively revealed, down through the centuries, as more of God's truth was given to us in Scripture. This would include direct statements about the issue, as well as accounts of events that illustrated the conflict.

This same historical account (from Genesis 2:4 to 4:26) records an event that occurred only a few decades later, which illustrated this conflict: the occasion in which ungodly Cain killed righteous Abel. Many other Scripture passages would follow, which focused on this same issue, for hostility between the wicked and the righteous is an *ongoing* reality. Many centuries later, the apostle John could refer back to this original concept of two types of "seed," and would use Cain's example to illustrate what he was saying (1 John 3:7-15), for the wicked "seed" is *constantly* trying to destroy the righteous. In the end, however, the righteous will prevail. Even now, through the power of God, the Devil (the "Serpent") is being crushed (Romans 16:20), at least symbolically, in the lives of God's righteous "seed."

Ultimately, this hostile conflict reaches its climax in the struggle between Satan (the "ancient serpent" - Revelation 12:9) and Christ ("born of a woman" - Galatians 4:4). This final conflict may be seen, at least in part, in the third section of Genesis 3:15. Jesus Christ accomplishes the final "death blow" that seals the serpent's fate forever. Yet in the process, he also has to suffer, in his death on the cross. Yet since his death on the cross was only temporary (because of the resurrection), he becomes the final victor.

This whole passage is one about judgment. Yet in the midst of this judgment - a *necessary* judgment against sin - there are prophetic implications of hope. The hostility exists because a righteous "seed" *does* exist - a "seed" whose ways are utterly incompatible with the ways of the serpent's "seed." It exists because *God* makes it possible. In the end, the righteous "seed" will have the victory over the serpent and its "seed" - and this is the reason that all hope is not lost.