

END-TIMES ISSUES

#20 God's offer of GRACE (often called a covenant).

A N D B E Y O N D I

1

ENJOY ALL THIS!!!

DO NOT FALL OFF THE CLIFF.

ONLY A MEAN, SELFISH, UNLOVING PERSON WOULD PUT UP THAT FENCE!

LET'S DO SOME "TIME TRAVELING," BACK A FEW THOUSAND YEARS!

2

MEANWHILE, AT THE GARDEN IN EDEN...

ENJOY ALL THIS!!!

AVOID THIS ONE TREE.

3

✓ The **TREE** was *good*.

And God looked upon **all that He had made**, and indeed, **it was very good**.
Gen 1:31a (BSB)

✓ Their response *wasn't* good.

She was *deceived* – tricked into sinning. (She also disregarded the warnings she had been given – Genesis 3:2-3.)

He made a deliberate *choice* to sin – choosing loyalty to wife over loyalty to God.

And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.
1 Timothy 2:14 (NIV)

4

TRAVELING BACK TO TODAY...

Last time: We looked at the "Creation Mandate"
(Many people describe this as a "covenant.")

↳ This is God's instructions for how people are to live (Genesis 1-2).

Today: We look at God's response to humanity's "fall" into sin.
(Many people describe this as a "covenant.")

↳ This is the judgment that *had* to occur... but it came with a promise of hope – an expression of *grace* (Genesis 3).

✓ Our focus will be on *issues* that govern our lives today (rather than a detailed analysis of the entire event).

5

All aspects of the "Creation Mandate" were affected.

✓ People are *still* "in God's image"; but this "image" is marred.

- Sin and death now affect all aspects of human existence. All that we are and do is but a poor reflection of that original "image."
- Because of this, our offspring are more accurately described as being made in *our* image, rather than in *God's* image.

Originally a reflection of what **God** was like...
Now a reflection of what *sinful Adam* is like...

On the day that God created man, he made him **in the likeness of God**; he created them male and female. When they were created, he blessed them and called them mankind.

Adam ... fathered a son **in his likeness, according to his image**, and named him Seth.
Genesis 5:1b-3 (CSB)

6

Some of the other results caused by sin:

- ✓ **Human relationships are now affected by sin.**
 - This includes the relationships between male and female, husband and wife, parents and children... *all* of human society is fractured.
- ✓ **The end result is pain, sorrow, eventual death, judgment.**
 - This is the ultimate *contradiction* to being created in God's image. People were created in God's image, but have chosen to live in "*anti-God's*" image. The *only* possible result is to be *separated* from all of the blessings that come from God – including life itself. *This is called "death."*
 - Separation from God began immediately. Separation from all of God's other blessings culminates with separation from life itself. Then, all that remains is the *deserved* wrath of God.

... the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
Revelation 19:15b (BSB)

7

- ✓ **Creation itself is affected by sin.**
 - All creation* is scarred and cannot function quite the way it was intended. Scarcity of food and resources becomes a problem. There is now competition and death.
- ✓ **Humans can no longer rule over creation as God originally intended.**
 - Working with creation becomes more difficult. Work itself becomes a burdensome *toil*. And when we die, we leave all our efforts behind.
 - Our natural tendency is to not use creation in a way that honors God and benefits the rest of humanity.
- ✓ **We no longer desire to love the true God. (We prefer fakes.)**
 - We no longer joyfully dedicate part of our week to focusing on the *true* God.
 - We may dedicate time to doing *religious activities*; but it is directed toward a god of our own making (or a *distortion* of the true God).

8

"Light" in a "dark" situation.

- ✓ **We have put ourselves in a bad situation.**
 - We can see the effects of the curse illustrated throughout the Bible... and in the world around us... and in our very own lives.
 - By our actions, we may be able to lessen its effects... or make it worse. But we *cannot* cause it to go away... and in the end, we die.
 - God created life to have *meaning*. We have turned things upside-down.

"Meaningless! Meaningless!"
says the Teacher.

What do people gain from all their labors
at which they toil under the sun?
I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all
of them are **meaningless, a chasing after the wind.**

Ecclesiastes 1:2a, 3, 14 (NIV)

9

- ✓ **But God has other plans – plans to undo what we have done.**
 - We could summarize God's plans by the word "grace" – "undeserved kindness" – because *we totally don't deserve it*.
 - Ultimately, this will be accomplished through Jesus Christ. But here in Genesis, we get only the first *hint* of what was to come.
 - Though we don't deserve it, God offers to restore *meaning* to life. *But it is only possible with a renewed focus on the true God.*

Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the duty of all mankind.
For God will bring every deed into judgment,
including every hidden thing,
whether it is good or evil.

Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (NIV)

10

- ✓ **HOW could God do this, and still be righteous?**
 - For God to *ignore* their sin would *itself* be sin – a contradiction to God's very being! *Sin has to be paid for!*
 - But God said he would provide a way to do so. He didn't immediately reveal all the details; but he provided *sacrifices* as a temporary "covering," until the final sacrifice would be provided.
 - Today, we know that this final sacrifice was Jesus Christ, who died on the cross and was then raised back to life.*

This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us
and sent his Son as **an atoning sacrifice for our sins.**

1 John 4:10 (NIV)

- It would be thousands of years before all the details were known. But here, in Genesis, God gives us the first hints of hope for the future. And he says it *before* he pronounces the judgment that must also occur.

11

So the LORD God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and every beast of the field! On your belly will you go, and dust you will eat, all the days of your life.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

To the woman He said: "I will sharply increase your pain in childbirth; in pain you will bring forth children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

And to Adam He said: "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat, cursed is the ground because of you; through toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it will yield for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your bread, until you return to the ground— because out of it were you taken. For dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

Genesis 3:14-19 (BSB)

12

What does this mean?

This is the judgment on the *spiritual* entity that brought about the fall. (The *previous* verse focuses on the *physical* animal.)

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

Genesis 3:15 (BSB)

- This passage is *not* referring to a fear of snakes! It refers to something much greater and deeper in significance – the spiritual entity that empowered the serpent, the *source* of the temptation.
- The emphasis is on *hostility* between two "seeds" – offspring or descendants. The word "seed" can refer to a single individual or a collective group. Here, *both* are referred to (in different sections of the verse).

13

①⇒ "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed."
 ②⇒
 ③⇒ He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."
 Genesis 3:15 (BSB)

- ❖ **Line ①:** This verse transitions from the physical participants to the spiritual realities behind what happened – one represented by the serpent, one represented by the woman.
- ❖ **Line ②:** There is a "cosmic battle" between Satan and God. It will play itself out in this world – between the wicked and the righteous.
- ❖ **Line ③:** God will have complete victory over the serpent and his seed (the wicked); but he will do so in a way that brings new hope to both people and creation. The end result will be more glorious than the original creation ever was.

14

ENMITY – animosity or hatred of an enemy; intense hostility, often mutual.

> Note that this hostility is put there by God. <

❖ **Line ①:** Between the serpent [spiritual entity] and the woman (= two individuals).

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, ..."
 Genesis 3:15a (BSB)

- This focuses on **the original participants** – the woman and the serpent [spiritual entity].
- Before this, the serpent [spiritual entity] and the woman were on the *same* side, *united* in opposition against God. It will never be that way again.

15

❖ **Line ②:** Between the serpent's offspring and the woman's offspring (= two groups).

"... and between your seed and her seed."
 Genesis 3:15b (BSB)

- There will be an *ongoing* enmity between two groups, the spiritual offspring of the original two.
- Throughout the book of Genesis (starting in the very next chapter), we read about conflict between **the righteous and the wicked** – the woman's seed and the serpent's seed. This theme continues, in one way or another, throughout the rest of the Bible – and on to the very last battle.

CAIN AND ABEL – TWO "SEEDS." Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were **evil** and his brother's were **righteous**.
 1 John 3:12 (NIV)

16

❖ **Line ③:** Between a specific individual ("he") and the serpent [spiritual entity] (= two individuals).

"He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."
 Genesis 3:15c (BSB)

- The focus now changes to a specific offspring of the woman ("he") and the original serpent [spiritual entity]. This offspring of the woman will destroy the serpent, but will be wounded in the process.
- Now, at the end of thousands of years of prophecy, we can recognize the individual as being Christ Jesus. He was "wounded" (Isaiah 53:5) on the cross, but has "crushed" the serpent [spiritual entity]: At the cross, its "death sentence" was pronounced; and at his return, its "death sentence" will be fully accomplished.

... the dragon, **that ancient serpent** who is the devil and Satan, ...
 Revelation 20:2b (BSB); see also Revelation 12:9.

17

This is GRACE –

pure, undeserved kindness from God!

- It all started *here*, in Genesis 3! And it's the *only* reason people can be saved.
- God introduced *grace* to Adam and Eve, *before he pronounced the necessary judgment on them!* So, even when hearing the words of judgment, they didn't have to totally despair!

1. Judgment on the tempter (physical/spiritual) – vs. 14-15.
2. "There will be hope (for the humans), even in judgment" – v. 16.
3. Judgment on the woman and man (and on creation) – vs. 17-19.

{ There is no offer of hope to the tempter. }

18

All this is possible for those who repent and trust Jesus, BECAUSE ...

JUST AS → **WE WERE IN ADAM**
... with all the consequences.

SO ALSO → **WE ARE IN CHRIST**
... with all the consequences.

For if, by the trespass of the one man, **death** reigned through that one man,

★ how much more will those who receive an abundance of **grace** and of the gift of righteousness reign in **life** through the one man, Jesus Christ!
Romans 5:17 (BSB)

For as **in Adam** all **die**, so **in Christ** all will be made **alive**.
1 Corinthians 15:22 (BSB)

{ We have to be "in Christ." }

25

The offer is for all... even you and me.
But we must be willing to be "in Christ."

... **we were by nature children of wrath.**

But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us **alive** with Christ even when we were **dead** in our trespasses.

It is by grace you have been saved!
Ephesians 2:3b-5 (BSB)

God re-creates us – enabling us to live the way we were originally created to live... and it is **all by grace!**

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves; it is the gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast.

For we are God's workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus to do good works**, which God prepared in advance as our way of life.
Ephesians 2:8-10 (BSB)

26

BACK TO TODAY... **Are you willing?**

You were there, in Adam, biologically and spiritually. His choices were **yours**.

- Every time **you** sin, **you** affirm the choice that he/**you** made in the garden.
- The result? **You stand condemned by a righteous God.**

God offers you the opportunity to be in Christ.

- **If you are willing** to repent and trust him, then **his** righteousness will be seen as though it had been **yours**. **You will be justified, instead of condemned.**
- In God's eyes, it will be as though **you were there, in Christ,** on the cross... and at **his** resurrection.
- **You** will be a **NEW** creation.

27

★ **Make this your MISSION!** (pick one) ★

Surrender to God... become a new creation!

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is **a new creation**. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come!
2 Corinthians 5:17 (BSB)

Encourage others to surrender to God!

We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become **the righteousness of God**.
2 Corinthians 5:20b-21 (BSB)

In the world's darkest moment, God offered us the brightest hope.
This is GRACE!

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Credits (1)

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Credits (2)

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