

## **Subject: *Grace in God's Garden***

### **Scripture: *Genesis 3:14-24***

At first, the Garden of Eden was a perfect paradise, but it soon became a battlefield. The enemy of God and the first family was the Devil, and he launched a successful attack in tempting Adam and Eve to sin against God. As a result, the awful consequences of sin came upon them, upon the serpent who tempted them, and upon the whole world.

This is the dark reality of sin and judgment in this world. At the same time God showed mercy on Adam and Eve and all mankind. Genesis 3 is the story of sin and judgment, but it is also the story of God's grace and plan of redemption.

Why did God allow sin in the world? He allowed it for one purpose...to reveal His grace and mercy, and so ultimately He allowed sin in the world to reveal His glory.

#### **1. GOD'S PUNISHMENT (Gen. 3:14, 16-19)**

- A. God's curse upon the serpent – He had to crawl on the ground. It is implied that the serpent did not crawl when it was created, but that came now as God's punishment. Why did God curse the snake? One reason was to remind us of the first temptation and the sin of Adam and Eve. Every time you see a snake crawling it's a reminder of the fall of man, the curse, and Satan himself. As the great song says, "For still the ancient foe doth seek to work us woe; his wrath and power are great, and armed with cruel hate; on earth is not his equal" (*A Mighty Fortress is Our God*, Martin Luther).
- B. God's curse upon Eve – She would have sorrow (pain) in childbirth. She would have a struggle with her husband. She would be in subjection to her husband as a reminder of her act of independence in the temptation and fall.
- C. God's curse upon Adam – He would suffer hard work. The ground would produce thorns and thistles, and he would have to earn a living by the sweat of his brow. The ground was under a curse, and it has been under a curse until now. Paul refers to creation groaning under this curse in Romans 8, waiting until God removes the curse.

**Romans 8:22** *We know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now.*

One of our favorite Christmas carols is "Joy to the World." The third verse of that song says: *No more let sin and sorrow grow, nor thorns infest the ground. He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.*

Christ came into this world to save us and to reverse the curse.

#### **2. GOD'S PROMISE (Gen. 3:15)**

In the midst of God's curses there is a message of hope. This verse is referred to as the first gospel or *protoevangelium*. It is a promise of what is going to transpire in the future. This is a simple statement, but we need to look carefully who this is referring to.

- A. The serpent and his seed refers to Satan and those who belong to him
- B. The woman and her seed refers to Christ and those belong to Him

- C. There will be conflict (enmity) between Satan (and those who belong to him) and Christ (and those who belong to Him)
- D. Satan will bruise Christ's heel (cause Him to suffer) and Christ will bruise Satan's head (destroy him)

This is a promise of Christ's ultimate victory over Satan. Christ won the victory over Satan through His death and resurrection, and we share in that victory. Paul refers to this in his letter to the church at Rome and his first letter to the church at Corinth.

**Romans 16:20** *And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

**1 Corinthians 15:57** *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

### **3. GOD'S PROVISION (Gen. 3:21)**

At first Adam and Eve made a covering out of fig leaves, but that was not enough. When God came to them in the garden they hid themselves. They needed a better covering, and so He made them coats of skin and covered them. The first deaths recorded in the Bible were the animals killed to provide their covering. Adam and Eve should have died, but God provided a substitute. This was a picture of what God would do for us. The precious blood of Christ would be shed for our sin so that sinners might be clothed with His righteousness.

**Isaiah 64:6** *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

**Isaiah 61:10** *I will greatly 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, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

One of our great songs, "The Solid Rock" captures the truth of what God does in salvation:

*When He shall come with trumpet sound / O may I then in Him be found / dressed in His righteousness alone / faultless to stand before the throne.*

### **4. GOD'S PROTECTION (Gen. 3:22-24)**

At this point God moved to protect the first couple. He drove Adam and Eve out of the garden not as a punishment, but for their protection. If they continue to live in the garden they might have eaten from the tree of life and lived forever in a cursed condition. This was an act of God's mercy. From then on they were barred from God's garden. It was guarded by the cherubim and the flaming sword, which reminded them of God's presence and His holiness. And ever since then we have been separated from God's presence by sin.

This is how the story of redemption begins to unfold: paradise; paradise lost; and finally paradise regained. What does Genesis 3 teach us about God? He is good, sovereign, patient, righteous, and merciful. Genesis 3 teaches us about sin and all the trouble we see in the world. How can the sin of Adam have such terrible consequences on the whole human race...is that really fair that one person could bring such a curse on the world? There is an answer to that.

**Romans 5:18-21**