



10 | GENESIS 3:14-24

JESUS, THE CURSE, AND THE COVENANT

Even in man's fall into sin, God is absolutely sovereign. In all the ruin of sin, God is good, rescuing man in unrelenting covenantal love.

Outline

1. THE CURSE OF SIN (3:14-19)

The Curse Involved War

A Battle is Prophesied

A Birth is Prophesied

A Bruising is Prophesied

The Curse Involved Woe

The Curse Involved Weariness

2. THE COVENANT OF CHRIST (3:20-21)

Adam's Faith

Adam's Righteousness

3. THE CALAMITY OF EXILE (3:22-24)

The Exile of Depravity

The Exile of Death

The Exile of Depletion

The Exile of Deportation

Exile No More!

Call to Worship

“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”—Revelation 4:11

Songs

Is He Worthy?

His Mercy is More

Jesus, Thank You

I Will Glory in My Redeemer

Good Good Father

Announcements

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet if you are visiting with us.

Introduction

One little tike's apparent misunderstanding of the term broken home prompted this admonition from his father: "I don't care if the basement wall is cracking. Please stop telling everyone you come from a broken home."¹

Happy Father's Day! Praise God for a perfect heavenly Father. We all have difficulties in family relationships. Even the best of fathers are mere men. They are imperfect. But there is no flaw in our Father in heaven. He's given us eternal life and a forever family. He gives us what we don't deserve.

We are in Genesis 3 this morning, and we find that God has to go chasing after Adam. God has to work with Adam and bring him faith and new life. He gives him garments from animals, pointing to the ultimate sacrifice, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). God gave his only Son for you and me! What a Father of mercies, and the God of all grace.

LINCOLN'S SON

The story is told in Lincoln's biography that after the **surrender of Robert E. Lee**, at the end of the Civil war, **Abraham Lincoln spoke to a large crowd** from the balcony of the White House. He told them about the considerate policy he had in mind for the South. At the end of Lincoln's speech, Senator Harlan asked, "**What shall we do with the rebels?**" The vindictive crowd shouted back, "**Hang them!**"

Lincoln's precious son, little Tad then turned to his father and said, "**No, no, Papa. Not hang them. Hang on to them!**" "That's it!" replied **Lincoln joyfully to the crowd**. "Tad has it. We must **hang on to them!**" At the time, Tad was only eleven. What compassionate words from a young boy.²

I'm so glad we as believers never get what we deserve. "There's **no condemnation** for those who are in Christ" (Rom 8:1). **I'm always doing better than I deserve. That's mercy.** That's the story of the gospel we see way back in the first book of the Bible, in Genesis.

Key thought: Even in man's fall into sin, God is absolutely sovereign. In all the ruin of sin, God is good, rescuing man in unrelenting covenantal love.

As we see the gospel up close in Genesis 3, we first see the tragic consequences of sin. God curses the earth and mankind because of Adam's sin.

1. THE CURSE OF SIN (3:14-19)

God pronounces **a curse and prophesies a war of the serpent's spiritual offspring and the woman's offspring**. It's Satan versus the Promised Seed, the Son of God. We see this all-out war in the following pages of Genesis between the seed of Cain and the seed of Seth, from which comes the Messiah.

¹ Guy Klarfeld, "Think Grin," Boys' Life, June 1993, 65.

² Stefan Lorant, *Lincoln, A Picture Story of His Life* (New York: Harper, 1952), 220.

THE CURSE INVOLVED WAR

Here we have the ultimate spiritual warfare, but it's not Adam vs. the Satan. It's **the promised Seed vs. the serpent**. They are in no way equal. All Satan can do is bruise the heel of Christ. But Jesus will crush the serpent's head.

Genesis 3:14-15 | The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

God curses the serpent and says, "You're going to bite the dust" pronouncing judgment upon the serpent. There is no hope for the serpent. There is no redemption for the devil. And the Bible tells us in Matthew, that hell is a place "**prepared for the devil and his angels**" (Mt 25:41). He's ultimately cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10).

A Battle is Prophesied

Genesis 3:15 | "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

God says, "I'm going to put enmity [or warfare] between your seed and the seed of the woman." **God is declaring war on the devil** and declaring **war on sin**. That invisible war is raging on American soil, and that battle is being fought in this congregation. The only way to victory is surrender to Jesus Christ.

A Birth is Prophesied

Genesis 3:15 | "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

The one who will defeat the serpent is born from the woman. What's our Lord talking about? At the dawn of human history we see the virgin birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Isaiah talks about it.

Isaiah 7:14 | Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Here, the triune God in heaven looks down at the war, and he prophesies how he's going to win the war. He'll send our mighty Champion, Jesus Christ to be born of a virgin. This is the one that will destroy the devil and all his works. Jesus will live a perfect human life for those he comes to redeem. Paul says the Messiah comes to fulfill the law for his people.

Galatians 4:4-5 | When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

God adopts us as his children on the basis of the righteousness of his son who fulfills the law. Our great Champion will undo all the sin of Adam and the human race by fulfilling the perfect law of God himself.

A Bruising is Prophesied

Genesis 3:15 | “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

What is the bruising God is talking about? Where does the serpent strike? Right there in the **heel**. This withering, slithering, vile serpent **reaches out with his fangs** and fastens those fangs upon the Lord Jesus Christ and **injects the bitter, burning venom of sin**. And the old serpent strikes at Jesus and bruises his heel. It’s just as Isaiah said.

Isaiah 53:5 | He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.

Our precious, perfect Savior took that terrible, vile, awful venom of sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21, NKJV | He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

Hallelujah! What a Savior! Jesus won the victory. He took the bruising. It was a mortal wound, but Christ defeated death by death and is the reigning King of all kings, our great Champion!

THE CURSE INVOLVED WOE

The effects of the curse of sin upon the woman are twofold. One has to do with the pain of childbirth in **motherhood** and the other with the difficulty of **marriage**.

Genesis 3:16 | To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.”

Motherhood. The sentence on Eve blighted her calling as **mother**. To be a joyful mother of children was the hope of every Old Testament woman (30:1; Psa 113:9), but **the pain of childbirth was a constant reminder of the first mother’s sin**.

Marriage. Furthermore, instead of **marriage** being a relationship of mutual care, tension was often to characterize it. *Your desire* may be a desire for intimate relations or for independence, but ultimately the husband’s headship will prevail.³ The authority of both man and woman has been given over to the wicked one, so now they will be harassed by the devil unless they walk by faith in the LORD.

Weakness. The word for “pain” (עֲצֻבָה) may not be limited to physical suffering in the process of childbirth but **can be applied to emotional** as well **as physical pain**. The

³ Gordon J. Wenham, “Genesis,” in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 63.

woman's susceptibility to the emotional and physical pain associated with childbearing is also addressed by Peter in his description of the wife as a "**weaker vessel**" (1 Pet 3:7).⁴

Yet let me announce loud and clear that for believers in Jesus Christ, **our life in the Spirit removes the sting of the curse**, so that a much more harmonious and loving relationship is envisioned.⁵ We as men can help our wives enjoy a joyful motherhood, a delightful marriage, and protect the woman as a weaker vessel.

THE CURSE INVOLVED WEARINESS

Now comes the curse of sin and its consequences to the man. Adam was to subdue the earth and cultivate the ground. He was to bring human flourishing by having the land work for him. Now work would bring weariness and be a frustrating, painful process culminating in death.⁶

Genesis 3:17-19 | And to Adam he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; ¹⁸thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Man must seek his livelihood henceforth in a frustrating natural realm. Only hard work will make the ground productive. "Thorns and thistles," weeds, will fight against his work, and the life-giving plants, fruits and vegetables and herbs would require additional work and cultivation (3:18). Yet those **thorns remind us of the crown of thorns placed upon Jesus' head**. For the Romans and the Jews, it was a mockery, but for us that crown of thorns is a wonderful picture of salvation.

Hard work, evidenced by "the sweat of your face," will be necessary to produce food. And finally, after all that, what is man's reward for sin (Rom 6:23)? **Death** will take back man's body into the ground: "for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (3:19). Man, created in the image of God, returns to dust because of his horrific fall into sin.⁷ You work frustratingly hard, and then you die. Work of course is not a result of the curse. Work was part of God's very good creation. But work now would be wearisome and hard because of the consequences of sin.

2. THE COVENANT OF CHRIST (3:20-21)

All the covenants in the Bible find their fulfillment in Christ. The Abrahamic covenant gave us faith, and all who put their faith in Abraham's Seed, Jesus Christ, shall be blessed!

⁴ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 146.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁶ Meredith G. Kline, *Genesis: A New Commentary*, ed. Jonathan G. Kline (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2016), 23.

⁷ Rousas John Rushdoony, *Commentaries on the Pentateuch: Genesis* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2002), 39–40.

ADAM'S FAITH

Interestingly, since Eve doesn't have human parents, Adam gets to name her. His name for her is actually an act of faith.

Genesis 3:20 | The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

“Eve” means “life” or “life-giver.” Adam named his wife *Life* because she would become the mother of all the living! More importantly, he named Eve “life” because he was believing God. It was a name that revealed **Adam's faith in Christ**. God had promised that the head of the serpent should be crushed by the Seed of the woman, so he called her by a name implying life.⁸ He knew that his wife's pain in childbearing meant that the Messiah would one day be born from his wife.⁹

Adam had first pleaded victimhood. “It's the woman's fault! It's God's fault!” But now he exercises his faith and repentance. He needs the Messiah.

Adam believes God by naming his wife “life” since the Messiah will come through her.¹⁰ It's like Adam is saying, “The Messiah is coming. I trust God will send the Messianic Seed—he's the way, the truth, and the life.”

ADAM'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

Genesis 3:21 offers itself as the moment of revelation: that animals must die if sinners are to be “covered”.¹¹

Genesis 3:21 | And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

The clothing of Adam and Eve confirms that they have sinned against God and that no longer can they walk before deity in innocence (2:25).¹² **The coats of skins in verse 21 are pictures of the salvation we have in Christ.** There must be the shedding of blood, the offering of innocent life for the guilty.¹³ Garments in the Bible are often a picture of justification. Remember Isaiah's amazing praise for “the garments of salvation” (cf Zech 3:3-5).

Isaiah 61:10 | I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Jesus takes Adam's rags of sin and gives him the robes of righteousness. We preach a gospel is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. We call this the doctrine of justification. In justification **the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the sinner**

⁸ John Calvin and John King, *Commentary on the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*, vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 180–181.

⁹ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 94.

¹⁰ Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 148.

¹¹ Motyer, *Look to the Rock*, 127.

¹² K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 254.

¹³ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993), Ge 3:20–24.

and makes righteous in the sight of God (Isa 61:10; Rom 3:21–22; 4:3; 5:19; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21).¹⁴ This means not only that he removes our sins, but that he positively adds to us the perfect righteousness of Christ. So our **legal status is not just not-guilty**, not neutral, but we are “**declared righteous**” before a holy God based on Christ’s righteousness.¹⁵

Jesus is the ultimate covering for our sin. He is “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). He is the covering for our guilt and shame. He is the sacrifice for our sin.¹⁶

Romans 5:17 | For if by the transgression of the one [Adam], death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

3. THE CALAMITY OF EXILE (3:22-24)

Sin has terrible consequences which cannot be fully comprehended on this earth. They can only be calculated in eternity. Adam and Eve sinned against God and were exiled not only from the Garden of Eden, but from the tree of life. How could they ever recover?

THE EXILE OF DEPRAVITY

First, we see the consequence of disobedience is **a radical nature change**. Adam and Eve had been innocent, with uninterrupted fellowship with God. Now their hearts were fallen, corrupted, and depraved.

Adam and Eve “took and ate” what was forbidden and became depraved, knowing good in his conscience but doing evil in his mind and in his body.

Genesis 3:22a | Then the LORD God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil.”

The man has achieved God’s wisdom unlawfully and, in the process, has corrupted himself, destroyed his own innocence, and is now corrupted by sin.¹⁷ **Adam chose autonomy from God** and in return was not at all autonomous, but **a slave to his fallen nature, to Satan, and to the world** (Eph 2:1-3). Theologians call this “total depravity.” This does not mean that Adam had become “as thoroughly depraved as he can possibly become.” He does not “indulge in every form of sin.”¹⁸ What it does mean is that **the corruption of sin “extends to every part of man’s nature**, to all the faculties and powers of both soul and body.”¹⁹

Now that the fall has effected man’s nature, he is **totally unable** to please God or come to God in his own power since his desire for fellowship with God have been corrupted. He now wants to **run from God** because he is **guilty and ashamed**. The

¹⁴ John Miley, *Systematic Theology*, 2 vols (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1893), 2:310.

¹⁵ John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 968.

¹⁶ Kurt Strassner, *Opening up Genesis*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2009), 38.

¹⁷ K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, vol. 1A, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 256.

¹⁸ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*: Fourth Enlarged and Revised Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 246.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 247.

state of man because of the fall is radically altered. Systematic theologian **Louis Berkhof** defines total inability this way.

When we speak of man's corruption as total inability, we mean two things: (1) that the unrenewed sinner cannot do any act, however insignificant, which *fundamentally* meets with God's approval and answers to the demands of God's holy law; and (2) that he cannot change his fundamental preference for sin and self to love for God, nor even make an approach to such a change. In a word, he is unable to do any spiritual good.²⁰

Jesus as the “last Adam” is the only human being now that is sinless and incapable of sin. As the “ultimate Adam,” lived the perfect life on our behalf and has given us the way back to God (*cf* Jn 14:6).

THE EXILE OF DEATH

The most devastating consequence of the fall is Adam and Eve are cut off from the tree of life.

Genesis 3:22b | Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever—therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden.

No more tree of life. No more eternal life. Adam and Eve were sentenced to death. Their **life outside the garden would be a shadow** of the fulness of life inside Eden, where they had enjoyed intimate fellowship with God.²¹

Adam and Eve were barred from the Garden of Eden so that they could not eat from the “tree of life” and live forever. **Jesus died on a “tree” so that we could live forever.** The cross is the Christian's “tree of life.” God turned **the guilty pair out of Eden** and put them beyond the possibility of tampering with the tree of life.²²

By cutting mankind from access to the tree of life, by barring access to it, men could then be prepared to receive the true tree of life, Jesus Christ. They could now be engrafted into the true vine (Jn 15:1–8).²³

To remain in God's presence and eat of the tree of life would have resulted in them becoming immortal, thus thwarting the penalty for their transgression (2:17). Cut off from God's presence, immortality was unavailable—they would eventually die.²⁴ Their only hope would be in the conquering Seed of the woman who would crush Satan's head. He would come to “destroy the works of the devil” (1 Jn 3:8).

THE EXILE OF DEPLETION

Before the fall, Adam had an unlimited supply of energy. Now he would work the ground he had come from through his own exhaustion. Eviction for the man also meant he **must work the “ground”** (3:23) in order to sustain life. Whereas before he was the

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Wenham, *Genesis*, 63.

²² Phillips, *Exploring Genesis*, Ge 3:20–24.

²³ Rousas John Rushdoony, *Commentaries on the Pentateuch: Genesis* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2002), 42.

²⁴ John D. Barry, Douglas Mangum, Derek R. Brown, et al., *Faithlife Study Bible* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Ge 3:22.

cultivator of a specially prepared habitat, now he must develop his own garden by working the ground, which is under divine curse.²⁵

Genesis 3:23 | Therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.

Because of sin, the ground was cursed with thorns. But now we as Christians, when we think of thorns, we think of the crown of thorns put on Jesus. **Jesus had a crude crown of thorns** pressed onto his head and then the soldiers beat him with the reed they had placed in his hand.

THE EXILE OF DEPORTATION

It's proper that in the hands of the cherubim are flaming swords since fire is a very common motif for the presence of Yahweh.²⁶

Genesis 3:24 | He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

The couple were exiled forever from the garden. Cherubim were stationed at the east side of the garden. A flaming sword, representing the justice and holiness of God at work in his judgments, flashed to and fro.²⁷ Imagine those two cherubim with flaming swords placed at the entrance of the garden. Adam and Eve were deported from Eden. Immediately exiled. Yet their coats of animal skin point to the Savior who would bring them home again.

When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple that kept people from entering the place where God dwells was torn in two from top to bottom. That's God saying, "**Welcome home sinner!** Your sins are forgiven! You are loved!" We can now "with confidence **draw near to the throne of grace**, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:16).

EXILE NO MORE!

Because of what Jesus Christ has done, we are adopted, welcomed and rejoiced over.

Ephesians 2:17-18 | He [Christ] came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.¹⁸ For through him we both have access in one

We are all like the wandering, prodigal son. We deserve to be shamed, but he gives us a robe, and a ring, and a wonderful bar-b-que. We now have a Father in heaven who says, "Welcome home my child!" Can you imagine what it will be like to be welcomed by the Father?

²⁵ Mathews, *Genesis*, 257.

²⁶ Barry, *Faithlife Study Bible*, Ge 3:24.

²⁷ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 96.

Conclusion

In a story about some of the worst **Mother's Day gifts** ever given, the Houston Chronicle reported a story about a foolish husband **giving his wife an iron**. He got the message when she outdid herself and gave him an **ironing board for Father's Day**.²⁸

Perhaps, Dad, you'll get an ironing board for Father's Day! But the greatest gift for us was given by our heavenly Father when he gave his one and only Son to be a sacrifice in our place. God is so good! Happy Father's Day!

Benediction

Ephesians 6:23-24 – Peace be to the brothers, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love incorruptible.

²⁸ Alyson Ward, "Mother's Day Gifts Gone Awry," *Houston Chronicle*, May 7, 2013, <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/article/Mother-s-Day-gifts-gone-awry-4487023.php>.