

Genesis 3:20-24

Last time we concluded our discussion of the Adamic Covenant. The Adamic covenant was the unilateral series of judgements placed by God on all the participants in the fall of man. These judgments are listed in Gen 3:14-19.

1. Verse 14 details the judgement on the serpent.
2. Verse 15 details the judgement on Satan.
3. Verse 16 details the judgment on the woman.
4. Verses 17 and 19 details the judgement on the man.
5. Verse 18 details the judgment on creation.

Last time we saw the fourfold judgement on man. We noted,

1. The ground is cursed (vs 17 and 18) since the man and the woman had dominion over the earth, now everything under their authority is cursed. Whereas the ground readily produced fruits and vegetables, it now readily produces thorns and thistles.
2. The man will have to work hard for his food (vs 17 and 19). He will have to toil and sweat.
3. The man will eat of what he produces in the field.
4. The man will physically age, die, and return to dust (vs 19).

The Results of the Fall

Today we will look at the results of the fall as detailed in verses 20-24.

Adam^[a] named his wife Eve, ^[a] because she would become the mother of all the living.²¹ The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. ²² And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." ²³ So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴ After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side^[e] of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Verses 20-24 describe three main results of the fall,

1. Adam names his wife, Eve, vs 20.
2. God clothes Adam and Eve with animal skins, vs 21.
3. The expulsion from the Garden, vs 22-24.

Adam names his wife, Eve, vs 20.

Vs 20a, Adam^[a] named his wife Eve,

The first result of the fall is that Adam names his wife. Before the fall she was called woman. In Hebrew the word for woman is isha, whereas the name for man is ish. This was to emphasize that the woman was taken from the man as noted in Gen 2:23, "At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from man (NLT). Now Adam names his wife, Eve, which in Hebrew is the word chavah, which means life. Note this is the first act of Adam's headship. With authority comes the right to name.

Vs 20b because *she would become the mother of all the living*.

The reason Adam called her “life,” was she would become the *mother of all the living*. Remember, Adam and Eve had not yet had any children and God had commanded them to *multiply and fill the earth* (Gen 1:28). Adam understood this command was still in effect. Adam also remembered God had just told him he would return to dust. So, Adam names his wife Life, understanding she would be the vehicle for propagating and continuing life through childbearing even though all would now die.

God clothes Adam and Eve with animal skins, vs 21.

Vs 21, *The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them*.

The second result of the fall is that God clothes Adam and Eve with animal skins. In Gen 3:7, Adam and Eve had initially made garments of fig leaves to cover their nakedness (see Gen 3:7). Now in verse 21 God provides *garments of skin* for them made from animals God had created and now killed. The coats required the shedding of blood. It was the first blood sacrifice, an example of grace in the context of judgment. We don’t know whether Adam and Eve witnessed this slaughter but to receive these coats was their first introduction as to what physical death meant, and wearing them every day would remind them of their own mortality.

Note the phrase at the end of the verse, God *clothed them*. The physical provision of the garment, it’s fitting, and it’s placement upon them, was entirely God’s doing. It is also a picture of what God did spiritually for them. God killed an innocent animal. It’s blood was shed. God covered the sin of Adam and Eve as symbolized by their nakedness, by the shed blood and the skin of the animal. This is the first example of atonement.

Atonement means reparation for a wrong. It is taking action to correct previous wrongdoing. It is doing something right for having done something wrong. In theological terms, because as human beings we cannot make adequate reparation for our sin; it is God who comes to our aid, and says, “I can make it right.” In this instance God kills innocent animals to cover Adam and Eve’s sin.

Several years later it will be God himself becoming man to substitute himself and take on our rightful punishment by dying on a cross. I In 2:2, *he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins*. Rms 3:25, *God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement-through the shedding of his blood-to be received by faith*.

Note some spiritual lessons here,

1. To come to God one must have a proper covering. When you came to faith God covered you with his righteousness. Is 61:10, *I delight greatly in Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of His righteousness*. Gal 3:27, *for all you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ*.
2. The covering made by Adam and Eve (and hence any man made covering) is not acceptable. Is 64:6 says *all our righteousness*, in other words all of our human effort to gain favor with God, *are as filthy rags*.
3. God himself must provide the covering. Rms 3:25, *God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement-through the shedding of his blood-to be received by faith*.

4. The proper covering required the shedding of blood. Heb 9:11-14, *But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, ^[a] he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. ¹² He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining ^[a] eternal redemption. ¹³ The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, ^[a] so that we may serve the living God!*
5. God's grace provided the covering. For the covering was given before the expulsion from the Garden. Eph 2:8-9, *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.*

The expulsion from the Garden, vs 22-24.

Vs 22a, *And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.*

Verse 22a gives the reason as to why God expelled them from the Garden, *the man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil.* Note God uses the word *man* to describe both Adam and Eve. God recognizes Adam as the representative head of Eve, and thus addresses Adam although God is talking to both of them.

God then says, they have *become like one of us*. The Hebrew word for us is echad, which indicates a compound oneness. In other words, there is both oneness and plurality mentioned in one word (I suppose an equivalent today would be H₂O, for water, ice, and steam). This word, coupled with how God uses the word God and Spirit of himself in Gen 1:2, plus the use of the word *our* in Gen 1:25, is convincing evidence of God's triune nature expressed at the very beginning of the Biblical narrative.

Then God notes how they had become like Him, they *knew good and evil*. Though Adam and Eve now knew good and evil experientially, they did not have the power to choose good nor the ability to overcome evil. As Fructenbaum says, "They once only knew God's goodness, now man also knows the evil inherent in the rejection of God's word. Therefore their desire to be like God, led to something far less than godhood."

Vs 22b, *He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.*

Verse 22b states the danger of leaving the man and woman in the garden, they would *take from the tree of life and live forever*. In other words, they would eat of the tree of life and become immortal in their now physical state of sinfulness. The expulsion was therefore a merciful act, for God could now save them, otherwise they would be like the fallen angels, who are eternally unredeemable.

Vs 23, *So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.*

In verse 23 God now expels Adam and Eve from the Garden. There is a play on words here in the Hebrew that is worth noting. When Adam and Eve sinned, they put forth their hands to grasp the forbidden fruit. The word banish has the same Hebrew root. Now God is putting them forth out of the Garden. The word literally means to drive out. It is a forceful, physical expulsion.

But there is also a spiritual expulsion that is occurring here. No longer will Adam and Eve experience the pleasure of walking with the Lord in the Garden. No longer will they bask in the Shekinah glory of His presence.

The purpose of their expulsion is then stated, *to work the ground from which he had been taken*. Adam is banished to begin the curse placed on him in verse 17 and 19, which is to toil and sweat to grow the food he is to eat.

Vs 24, *After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side^[e] of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.*

In verse 24 God places two guards to protect the entrance to the Garden to make sure man could not enter and eat of the tree of life. Note the only entrance to the Garden was on its east side. There must have been physical barriers about it so that only from the east could it be easily entered.

The first guard was a Cherubim. Cherubim are God's guardian angels associated with God's Glory protecting His throne and holiness (see Ex 25:17-22, Ex 26:1, 1 K 6:23-26, Ez 1, Ez 10, Rev 4).

The second guard was a flaming sword. This sword was a manifestation of God's Shekinah Glory (see Ex 13:21-22, Rev 1:16, 19:15). Note it *flashes back and forth*, to keep man out of the Garden.

Some have speculated that it was here, at the east entrance to the Garden where the presence of God was seen, is where man first brought his sacrifices to God (i.e. Cain and Abel in Gen 4). It is also of note that later, the entry to the tabernacle was set up on the east side where the altar stood.

To conclude, there are two NT passages that are built on Gen 3. The first is Rm 5:12-21 which contrasts Adam's sin with Christ's perfection. In Adam all sin and die, but in Christ all receive his righteousness. Rm 5:12 brings out four facts about sin.

1. Sin entered the world through Adam, *(Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man)*.
2. Death came because of sin, *(and death through sin)*.
3. Death spread to all humanity *(and in this way death came to all people)*.
4. Because humanity was in Adam, sin was imputed to all his posterity *(because all die-see also 1 Cor 15:22, For as in Adam all die)*.

Rm 5:15-21 brings out the following regarding Christ.

1. Through one death came, now through one comes grace (vs 15, *But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!*)
2. The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift of Christ followed many sins and brought justification (vs 16, *Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one*

man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification).

3. If by the sin of one, death reigned, now though the obedience of one, we receive grace, righteousness, and life (vs 17, *For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!*).
4. As one sin caused all to be condemned, now one righteous act results in justification and life for all (vs 18, *Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people*).
5. Through the disobedience of one the many became sinners, through the obedience of one, the many became righteous (vs 19, *For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous*).
6. Where sin increased (by the giving of the law), grace increased through Christ (vs 20, *The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more*).
7. As sin reigned in death, grace now reigns in righteousness to bring eternal life (vs 21, *so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*).

The second passage is 1 Cor 15:21-22, and 15:45-49. In 15:21 there is a link between what Adam did and what Christ did -in Adam all die, and in Christ all will be made alive.

Then in 1 Cor 15:45-49, Paul makes a contrast between Adam and Christ.

1. The first Adam was a man who brought death, the last Adam, Christ, is a life giving spirit (vs 45, So it is written: *"The first man Adam became a living being"^[1]; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit*). Then in verses 46-48 there are four contrasts; as to order, origin, followers, and image.
2. The order of Adam is physical, whereas the order of Christ is spiritual (vs 46, *The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual*).
3. The origin of Adam was the earth, whereas the origin of Christ is heaven (vs 47, *The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven*).
4. The followers of Adam are earthly, whereas the followers of Christ are of heaven (vs 48, *As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven*). Lastly in verse 49, there is a contrast of image.
5. Just as the earthly man bears the image of Adam, so we as believers will also bear the image of Christ (vs 49, *and just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we^[2] bear the image of the heavenly man*).