

The sermon

Intro

An abundance of truth in 11 verses. I'm going to try to connect the dots.

READ PASSAGE

Body

Point 1: Hostility between offspring; the defeat of Satan (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. – 3:14

Satan instigated the fall.

"cursed are you"

When God curses he declares punishment upon someone.

"above all livestock and above all beasts of the field"

The serpent's actions brought judgment on all animal life, not just serpents. Much like Adam's sin affected all humans after him. Animal life has been cursed like the serpent, but not to the same degree.

On the belly, eating dust indicate Satan will be grounded/brought low = humiliated and defeated. Elsewhere in Scripture, eating dust is humiliation and defeat language.

As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt, I will show them marvelous things. ¹⁶ The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might; they shall lay their hands on their mouths; their ears shall be deaf; ¹⁷ they shall lick the dust like a serpent, like the crawling things of the earth; they shall come trembling out of their strongholds; they shall turn in dread to the LORD our God, and they shall be in fear of you. – Micah 7:15-17

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." – 3:15

"enmity" = means hostility, hatred. Hostility between Satan's offspring and Eve's offspring. Satan's offspring are those who don't believe.

2 Corinthians 4:4, speaking of Satan, says *"the god of this world has blinded the mind of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ."* Every one of us comes into this world blinded by Satan and, therefore, his children.

Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ¹⁰ By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. – 1 John 3:8-10

The apostle John says we're one or the other, children of God or children of Satan. Jesus came to destroy Satan's works by rescuing us from Satan's rule. Revelation 12 speaks of a woman that Satan opposes.

And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. ⁴ His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood

before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. ⁵ She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron, but her child was caught up to God and to his throne, –

Revelation 12:3-5

The dragon is Satan (Rev 12:9). There's disagreement about the identity of the woman (e.g., Mary, Israel, true Israel). There's no disagreement on the identity of her son = Jesus Christ. In the future, Jesus will *"rule all the nations with a rod of iron."* Today, Jesus is reigning at the right hand of the Father in heaven. Satan wanted to devour the newborn Christ. Satan failed. Revelation 12 speaks of the woman's other offspring, whom Satan makes war on.

Then the dragon became furious with the woman and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus. And he stood on the sand of the sea. – Revelation 12:17

The offspring Satan opposes are *"those who keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus"* = believers. Satan makes war on the faithful. Often through his children. Eve's offspring are those faithful to God. Thus, we have ongoing hostility between Satan's children and God's children until the day when Jesus rules *"all the nations with a rod of iron."*

"he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel"

"he" and *"his"* indicates one single offspring of Eve = Jesus. Eve has both a multiplied offspring (believers) and a single offspring (Jesus). Jesus will bruise Satan's head. Satan will bruise Jesus' heel. Jesus suffers a crippling blow, but not fatal. Satan suffers a fatal blow at the hands of Jesus.

The verb translated ***"bruise"*** is elsewhere translated strike or crush. The ultimate defeat of Satan is revealed in **Revelation 20:10**:

and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Application

Curses are being established, but that's not the end of the story. Satan's reign of destruction isn't forever! The good news is Jesus will emerge victorious. And his offspring will reign with him. Forever and ever.

The good news today is that Jesus is rescuing sinners, transferring them from Satan's kingdom into the kingdom of God. Jesus is presently reigning in the hearts of his people, overturning Satan's work by making us new creations in Christ, rescuing us from the penalty and power of sin. Through his death on the cross.

Practical question: in what ways is Jesus overturning Satan's works in my life?

Point 2: Pain in pregnancy; conflict in marriage (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." – 3:16

Two consequences for Eve.

First, pain in childbearing is multiplied. Multiplied pain indicates there would have been some form of pain in childbearing if there was no fall, but now the pain is much worse. The pain comes during labor and the pregnancy process in general.

Second, wives will want to rule over their husbands, but they won't get what they want.

Wives will have a desire towards their husband, but that desire won't be realized. Some suggest wives will have a sexual desire or a desire to be loved, but instead they'll get the husband's rule. A similar phrase, found in Genesis 4:7, "*sin is crouching at your door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it*" suggests the idea is desire to dominate. Like sin desires to dominate/rule over Cain, wives will desire to dominate/rule over their husbands. The second half of the phrase, "***but he shall rule over you,***" indicates the wife's desire involves rule.

Because of the fall, wives will resist the natural order established by God pre-fall (male headship), which will result in enmity between wives and husbands. Like the fall created discord between the serpent's offspring and Eve's offspring, the fall creates discord within the one flesh relationship. New desires emerge because the sinful nature has come into human hearts, resulting in marital discord.

Paul appealed to male headship on the basis of Eve being made from Adam (1 Cor 11:8), woman being created for man (1 Cor 11:9), and man being formed first (1 Tim 2:13). Why do women want to be the head of the home? Because the fall happened. Previously Eve didn't resent Adam's leadership.

The fall had physical and relational consequences.

Practical question: what did the fall do to marriage?

Point 3: Painful farming; death (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;" – 3:17

Adam listened to Eve instead of God. She must have verbally advised eating the forbidden fruit.

Here the ground experiences alteration.

thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. – 3:18

Thorns are sharp and can slice skin. Thistles are also prickly. Thistles often come with weeds that compete with crops and they're hard to remove. The picture is annoying, sharp weeds that hinder vegetation, sting the hands (pain), and irritate the hands (e.g., itchy rashes).

By 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." – 3:19

Eating will require hard, painful labor. Not like plucking an apple from a tree.

Returning to dust = death. Adam's sin brought death into the world.

Death

What do we mean by death? Both physical and spiritual death. Spiritual death came immediately. Physical death wasn't immediate.

What's spiritual death?

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience- ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. – Ephesians 2:1-3

Spiritual death is bondage to sin. Being blinded by Satan. Following Satan and the evil world system he's inspired. To be spiritually dead is to be enslaved by passions and desires contrary to God. Spiritual death is broken by being born again, whereby God indwells us and creates new desires within.

Physical death

- 1) Death is cessation of breath.

The physical body is no longer alive. Organs cease to function. Temperature lowers. Rigor mortis sets in. Skin color changes.

- 2) Separation/division of the soul and body which was previously unified.

The unity of soul and body is broken by death.

- 3) Death involves the relocation of the soul.

For the believer, the soul enters God's presence in heaven (2 Cor 5:8). For the non-Christian, the soul goes to a place of torment called Hades (Luke 16:22-23).

- 4) Death is altered existence, not the end of existence.

The soul lives on after Adam returns to the dust.

The process of physical death began with God's curse. Adam didn't die immediately, but death was set in motion. With the fall came what Paul calls "*bondage to corruption*" (Rom 8:21) = bondage to decay = the breakdown of matter = the breakdown of the physical body.

Fall

Note the comprehensive nature of the fall.

- 1) Affects animal life.
- 2) Affects the ground.
- 3) Affects human relationships.
- 4) Affects the human body.

Note the fall is God's verdict. By virtue of creation belonging to him, God can do whatever he chooses. If everything God does is good and just and right, these curses are good and just and right.

Note who's responsible for the curses: Satan, Eve, Adam. Not God. The Bible never directly addresses questions like why did God establish a scenario where the fall would happen? The Bible never apologizes for these curses. The Bible affirms human responsibility.

Note the fall is accompanied by hope: God rescues sinners from the curse through the snake-crusher, Jesus Christ.

Application

Why is life so painful? Why are relationships hard? Why does the body decay? Why does death happen? Because the serpent deceived. Because Eve and Adam sinned. Because God held them responsible.

Satan deceives. People fall for it. God holds them accountable. God rescues those who believe through Jesus' death on the cross. That's how it works.

Practical question: what is the root of every form of suffering I experience in this life?

Point 4: Evicted from the garden; barred from the tree of life (3:20-24)

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

Eve's formally named. Eve means life, living one. From Eve's body will flow the spread of human life throughout the earth.

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

Cover nakedness suggests removal of shame. Clothing equips for post-garden life. Some see foreshadowing of animal sacrifice/atonement.

Skins from animals. Here we have the first animal death. Death didn't exist because of harmonious relations between animals, and between animals and humans. The new creation envisions a return to harmonious relationships between animals, and between animals and humans (Isa 11:6-9; 65:25). No death because fruit and plants were given for food. No death because was no decay (Rom 8:21).

Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever-" ²³ therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. – 3:22-23

God's being merciful. If Adam were to partake of the tree of life in his sinful state, he would have lived forever in a state of spiritual death. So Adam had to be separated from the tree of life.

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. – 3:24

God stations angelic cherubim (more than one) to prevent access to the tree of life. Additionally, God places a fiery sword that moves back and forth to prevent entry.

The one who was tasked to guard the garden (2:15 – "keep it" = same verb) is now guarded from the garden (3:24).

What about immortality?

By immortal I mean unable to die.

- 1) God alone is immortal (1 Tim 6:16).
- 2) Adam and Eve weren't created immortal.
- 3) Adam would have become immortal had he eaten from the tree of life.

The scenario is no death because no decay. No immortality because no feeding from the tree of life.

- 4) Evidently Adam didn't have time to eat from the tree of life.
- 5) Would Adam have to eat from the tree of life over and over again to maintain immortality, or would one bite suffice?

One feeding. Much like one bite from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had permanent affects. They didn't have to keep eating from the forbidden tree to remain ashamed of nakedness.

- 6) The picture is, if Adam successfully obeyed, he would have had access to the tree of life. And there would be immortality before death.

God was never going to allow a scenario where they attained immortality in a sinful state.

7) Immortality is conferred upon those who believe at the last trumpet (1 Cor 15:50-54).

I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." – 1 Corinthians 15:50-54

Immortality is conferred through salvation, not through creation. Immortality happens at the end of time, not the beginning of time.

The curses will be lifted in the new heavens and new earth.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." – Revelation 21:1-4

Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. – Revelation 22:14-15

“those who wash their robes” = those who turn to Jesus in faith and repentance “have the right to the tree of life” = have the right to immortality and access to the heavenly city. Because “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” immortality must be conferred before entry. Those who don’t believe won’t attain this immortality. They’ll be outside the city.

Restriction from the tree of the life is temporary. Those who turn to the snake crusher (Jesus) for rescue will have access to the tree when Jesus comes to rule the nations.

Practical question: will I possess immortality at the last trumpet?