

Paradise Lost

Long Beach Alliance Church • April 2nd, 2006 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**“AND I WILL PUT ENMITY
BETWEEN YOU AND THE WOMAN,
AND BETWEEN YOUR SEED
AND HER SEED;
HE SHALL BRUISE YOU
ON THE HEAD,
AND YOU SHALL BRUISE HIM
ON THE HEEL.”
~GENESIS 3:15 (NASB)**

1) Exposed & Exiled

- A) The Bible's first sin is recorded with only eight words in Hebrew. While brief, it is written in a distinctive manner with several tough-to-pronounce double consonants. The painfully difficult construction "forces a merciless concentration on each word" (J.T. Walsh).

- B) Rather than experience an epiphany of wisdom, Adam and Eve are stripped of their innocence (3:7ff). With their knowledge comes an "adolescence" of self-realization and isolation from one another and God (3:9-13).

- C) God's judgment is immediate (3:14-24). The serpent is to eat dust. The woman is to have pain in childbirth, subject to her husband. The man must toil in cursed soil for food.

* The author does not mean to imply that these genealogies represent consecutive life spans.

+ Terah was the father of Abraham, Nahor, and Haran.

From John H. Walton's *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*.

D) Simultaneously, there is promise for each of the "fallen." For the serpent, that he will continue to have life. For the woman, that she will have children with her husband. For the man, that he will be able to eat food from the earth.

E) God, seeing that Adam & Eve could be in a worse state, expels them from the Garden of Eden (3:22-24), and a cherubim angel with a flaming sword is stationed to police the garden. Paradise has been lost and forfeited.

2) What Was Lost In The Fall?

A) The famous 18th century philosopher Immanuel Kant praised the choice of Adam as a transition from "merely animal to the state of humanity, from bondage to rational control -- in a word, from the tutelage of nature to the state of freedom."

B) However, the biblical narrative paints a much different story than a celebration of freedom. Rather, mankind is not transformed into a free and independent being. In fact, the text indicates that man never lacked free choice!

C) If man had lacked an ability to choose, why would God prohibit eating from the tree of good and evil in the first place? Abstinence is never required unless someone has the capacity to partake.

D) Adam & Eve always had the ability to make their own choices. What they had sacrificed was the ability to make right choices, to make the righteous choice. Instead they made a choice for self, outside the range of righteousness.

E) Adam & Eve actually lost their control to choose what was right. They still had the capacity to choose, but now, there was no control over the consequences. Freedom of choice is now gone, Adam and all of his offspring are in bondage.

3) The Aftershocks Of Sin

A) Adam & Eve have two sons, Cain and Abel (4:1-2). Abel works with livestock, and Cain works with crops. Both want to honor God with their sacrifices of first fruits (4:3-5).

B) Cain attempts to worship God in a way which God is not to be worshipped (4:5-6), and Cain becomes very angry. God warns Cain to be very careful, because in Cain's emotional state, sin could capture him and destroy him (4:7).

C) Cain, unable to conquer his emotions, kills his brother (4:8), and then denies his sin to God in one of the more famous biblical responses ("Am I my brother's keeper?" -- 4:9).

D) God judges Cain and casts him away from the family, to live a nomadic life of wandering (4:12-15). Cain and his wife (sister) are driven away by God, settling far away (4:16ff).

E) Remarkably, it is Seth's lineage which becomes important (note 5:4), only because Seth's line eventually produces one of the great men of the Bible, Noah (5:32).