
The World We All Want - Perversion

Genesis 3:1-24

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Last week we scaled a mountain range to stare at an ever-expanding vista of the wonder and beauty of *The World We All Want*. We saw something humans could never say or even imagine on their own. We gazed at *New Heaven and New Earth*; the consummation of God's master plan of the universe found in Rev.21:1-8. This was picture #1 to put into the photo album as we work through the Bible this month.

This picture pictured a perfect place, a place of peace and safety, a place of newness and beauty. We noticed also perfect people, people rid of all sin, people anticipating the most exquisite unending joy, people who persevered through trials and temptations, people living together in perfect peace. And we noticed that Christ's unending presence made all this beauty matchless and unending. Jesus is the center of God's master plan for the world. Those who conquer through the victory of Jesus Christ will inherit *The World We All Want*.

Now that was last week's message. And though our hearts soared to see and soak in the beauty of NHNE, we this morning come back to Earth with one question, "What on Earth happened"? Last week we imagined through revelation *The World We All Want*. Now we lift our eyes off of the Bible and look around. <animate slide>

What on Earth happened?

1. We see wars and hear rumors of wars.
2. We watch as the dead pile up and we cry out for it to stop

What on Earth happened?

3. We watch as children are orphaned...
4. And become skeletons.
5. We are aware of frightening mental breakdowns
6. And ladies crying in the night as anxiety and loneliness fill their room.
7. We try to escape the reality of the world we all experience...
8. But to no avail.

What on Earth happened?

9. We sit alone trying to figure out this world.
10. With our own hands we hold our heads up as the weight of devastation crash upon us
11. Laboring to reverse the inevitable, wearing and tearing continue.
12. All that we love is breaking down...
13. And all that we love is breaking up.

Oh, what on Earth happened?

[summarize last wks message to show the heart-breaking contrast of this wks message]

Today's question "What on earth went wrong"? guides us to an awful part in the Bible. Today is not a pretty sight. Today will not be easy to take in. But I ask you to trust God and His Word as we walk around and take in the sights of the origin of sin, when Adam the representative of humanity stopped being committed to God and reflecting His image and started holding in the highest regard something/one else. Oh, the awful and profound effect of original sin upon the world we all want.

To understand why *The World We All Want* is not the world we all experience we must understand what went wrong.

To do this we will need to pay close attention to the characters in the Bible's storyline. We will be introduced to the lying actions of the Serpent, the liable actions of the Couple and then we will end with the loving actions of the LORD. <pray>

(NOTE: John 8:47 – "Anyone whose Father is God listens gladly to the words of God")

The lying actions of the Serpent

v1-5

Tracing the unfolding storyline of the Bible as it unfolds for us we look at what on earth went wrong by first noticing the lying actions of the Serpent. Listen as I read v1-5.

In Genesis 1-2 we have the creation account. It is a perfect place with perfect people. The garden is temple-like where God and his people dwell. God as the Creator creates by the spoken word a lush and plush place in which the couple freely enjoys God and His goodness.

Moreover, Adam was assigned the priestly task to faithfully guard the garden/temple from any intruders that would tear down and desecrate the image of God. Adam was to multiply and spread out over the earth the very image of God making the earth a garden-like dwelling of God. God's glory preserved and promoted was the God's commission for Adam and Eve. Creation sang. All is healthy. All is lovely. All is good. And then it happened.

In chapter three it is as though the camera swings away from the happiness and nakedness and innocence of Adam and Eve and focuses on a crafty, contemptible serpent. This movement marks an awful turn in the story. This is where we see the head of the human race (i.e. Adam) rebelling against His Creator and thrusting all humanity into depravity and death itself (see Romans 5:12-19).

The Serpent's character

To understand why the world we all want is not the world we all experience first notice the serpent. Much could be said here. But to simply get a glimpse at the ghastly one, notice verse one. "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other best of the field that the Lord God made".

Moses, the writer of Genesis, did not give much information at this point. As we start to read about God's arch-enemy, we are left with many questions. But the author is not trying to answer our questions. He wants us to ponder only what he put before us.

First we see that the LORD God is his creator. God is the creator of all creation. That has not changed since chapters 1-2. He is the all-powerful and all-glorious One of a kind. Nobody can seriously vie for His position. He is in control of the universe. He

made it. He knows what he is doing. He is never caught off guard. His master plan demonstrated in the creation account may appear to be threatened but never in jeopardy.

Next we see that the Serpent is “more crafty than any other beast in the field”. His character is coming out. He is elevated above every other “beast of the field”. This comment undoubtedly tips us off to his evil disposition.

As the first readers of this passage heard this, they would have thought about “wild beasts”. This was (and is) threatening. Moreover, as the story of the Bible unfolds, we come to other parts of the Bible that talk about “wild beasts”. For example, in Ezekiel the prophet says how a flock of sheep without a shepherd could become “meat to every beast of the field”. As the Israelites listen to the creation account read, as we listen to the inspired writing of Genesis read we are hear a menacing melody and sense pending danger.

Furthermore, we come to a quote from the Serpent. This sets off the Serpent even more as something unique. Animals don’t normally talk (cf. Num.22:27-31). These observations coupled with the Serpent’s words to Eve subtly communicating that it knows better than God tips us off that we are looking at a haughty and haunting character in the Bible (and in the world – 1Pet.5:8). What does he say and why does he say it is found in v1b-5

The Serpent’s strategy

Having seen the Serpent’s character as being vile, now let’s notice together his strategy.

He talks to Eve. The text introduces us to a competing voice with God’s. Here we have another counselor talking with Eve to help her rethink God’s Word. The Serpent desires to have Eve look at life different from the way God has taught her. The Serpent begins his attack of her by attacking the clarity and sufficiency of God’s Word.

By questioning God’s Word

v1b-3

In v1 we hear the Serpent say, “Did God actually say...”. By framing his question thus he wants Eve to rethink the accuracy of God’s Word. When Eve’s confidence in the trustworthiness and truth of God’s Word wavers, she is ready to make the next step toward rebellion.

(talk about this strategy as it relates to today’s listeners – cf. 2Cor.11:2ff)

We sense that his strategy works as we notice how Eve responds. In v2-3 we notice that she misquotes what God said to her. By taking away from God’s Word and by adding to it, she demonstrates that her view of God has changed. She now views him inaccurately. God is not as gracious as she originally thought Him to be (note the words “freely” and “all”. God is more restrictive than she originally thought Him to be (“neither touch it”). God is less serious over sin than she originally thought Him to be (“Surely...”).

All these observations are Moses’ way of communicating that the vile one is making progress with Eve. He is tempting her to question God’s Word. And in doing so he assists her in questioning God’s character.

Now the crafty one is ready to deal the death blow to Eve.

By challenging God's Word

v4-5

Notice how v4 begins. The contrast communicates that the Serpent knows he needs to go the next step. And the next step he takes.

The Serpent amasses an assault on God and His Word by challenging God's integrity. He wants Eve to conclude that God lied! God does not have her best interest at heart. He is stingy. He is unloving. He will keep you under His oppressive rule if you let him.

It's apparent now that the Serpent lusts for God's position. Not merely to be like God but to be god is the essence of Satan and the essence of sin (Think "knowledge of good and evil as a level of independence with ability to make autonomous decisions over what's best for oneself, a kind of self-sufficient ability to reason and relate to the world around with self-reliance and self-made wisdom; cf. Deut.1:39; 2Sam.19:35).

Should Eve change her belief about God and His Word she will move freely toward ridding herself from His reign.

And that is precisely what she does as seen in v6-8.

The liable actions of the Couple

v6-8

As we move our thoughts off of the lying actions of Satan, we come to the liable actions of the Couple. We began to understand why the world we all want is not the world we all experience. Here we notice how Satan's influencing temptations shaped the couple's thoughts and wants. They are vulnerable. They are weakened. And they are liable. The "devil made me do it" will not hold up in the court of heaven. They are responsible for their belief and behavior. Notice the course of action sin takes by noticing the verbs associated with the couple.

Saw/Desired

v6a

The first set of verbs that allow us to see the course of action sin takes is found in v6a: "saw/desired". Having their belief in God's word weakened and altered their desires began to move toward forbidden objects. Eve saw that the tree was good and desirable for food and wisdom. Her judgment had changed over the tree thus allowing her to rethink the benefits of the tree. She now wanted to break from God's rule. She now thought that if she did not shift allegiance she would be missing out on something good.

Took/Ate

v6b

In this condition it was an easy move for her to reach out, take of the forbidden fruit and eat. She had a change in preference in the first part of v6. Now she acted upon that preference and made the sin of her heart go public. She disobeyed and assisted Adam in his disobedience (Notice Adam the head of the human race – standing there allowing his wife to be beguiled, standing around passively with no counter argument, standing around passively waiting to follow his wife into sin. He was totally guilty of dereliction of duty as a priest/king of the garden).

Covered/Ran away

v7-8

The guilty couple loaded down now with shame attempt to make life work apart from God. They first cover up. They made for themselves coverings from fig leaves to hide their nakedness. They then ran for cover as they sensed God's presence.

Here is the basic strategy of sinners, a self-atoning practice in order to deal with sin. They cover up. They run away. As the sound of the LORD God walking was heard, they did not take delight in but took flight from him. The steady characteristic of the guilty is run and hide! What does God do with all this? His glory has been desecrated. His integrity besmirched. The goodness of his character dishonored. The LORD God is uppermost in His own glory. He will not be indifferent toward treason. He will not look the other way when a coup attempts to throw Him off His throne. What do you suppose He will do?

In trying to understand why the world we all want is not the world we all experience, we have read the first 8 verses of Genesis 3. Adam's rebellion has plunged the human race into depravity and has ruined the world. His sin trampled down God's glory. Certainly, we have seen the malicious, wicked and crafty enemy shape and sway the couple. But the blame lands squarely upon them. The cause of all the devastation and division and death is found in the human heart, namely sin. The world we all want is not the world we all experience due to our sin, our rebellion against God whose holiness will be defended by him, whose goodness we doubt, whose justice will be served. So how will He do these things?

The loving actions of the LORD

9-24

The third and final observation we make over Genesis 3 to understand what on earth has happened is seen in v9-24. Listen in as I read and observe the actions of the LORD – how he responds. <read text>

Pursuing

v8

Sin destroys relationship with God. It breaks fellowship. It devastates closeness. It ruins oneness. It is anti-God. It seeks to promote self. It yearns to tear down God's master plan and erect self-centered plan. It blinds us to our blindness. Our agenda has nothing of God in it. Our MO is to flee from rather than follow God.

We see God doing something in v8 that ought to stun us. He pursues the sinner. He walks toward not away from the rebel.

Probing

v9-13

And as God arrives on the scene, He comes not with weapons but with questions¹. In v9-13 we hear God ask four questions. These questions are examination questions to expose Adam and Eve in order to help them.

¹ I'm indebted to Pastor Russ Kennedy for this insight into the categories of questions we see in this passage. For his good work on this passage cf. his message on Genesis 3 found on Clearcreek Chapel's website.

Question #1 – Where are you?

V9-10

This question centers on relationship. Sin severs relationship and drives in the direction of alienation. The Lord's question is to expose the distance between God and his people allowing Adam and Eve to see the results of their rebellion.

Question #2 – Who told you that you were naked?

V11a

This question focuses on guilt. Sin brings guilt. The Lord's question is to expose the folly of their behavior allowing Adam and Eve to see the insanity of sin.

Question #3 – Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?

V11b-12

This question hinges on specific disobedience. Sin is not theoretical. We never sin in abstract. We always sin with specific words and in specific ways at actual places at a particular time. The Lord's question is to expose the facts of sin allowing Adam and Eve to see their responsibility and stop with their blame-game.

Question #4 – What is this that you have done?

V13

This question points to acknowledgment. No longer are they to be in denial. The Lord's question is to expose the need for confession allowing Adam and Eve to admit their sin.

Punishing

v14-19

This set of questioning reveals the heart of God. It shows a God who is full of compassion and slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness. But lest we underplay the demand of His righteous justice v14-19 show God's actions not only pursuing and probing but now in punishing.

Satan

v14-15

Because of the love for his own glory, God had to punish and oppose those who scorned his goodness. He starts with Satan in v14-15. God announces the curse upon Satan. Taking away the lofty position he once had, Satan now has been utterly demoted. Though the Bible says he "roams around looking for those he may devour", he has been assigned to eat dust and crawl under the might of God. He roams indeed but in this God-made prison and under God's rule. In the end, as we see here and other places in the Bible, Satan will be crushed – utterly defeated for all eternity.

Though v14-15 are said of Satan, there is a promise we mustn't miss. The verse that prophecies defeat for Satan also prophecies hope for sinners. As enmity grows and hatred increases against God and His people, Satan will cause a "heel bruise" for Someone. But in doing so, this Someone whose "heel" was injured will crush the head of Satan.

This prophecy is none other than the Cross of Christ. <preach what is central in Scripture> cf. Gal.4:4; Gal.3:13

Woman

v16

Having spoken of a future and decisive victory over Satan and sin and suffering and sickness, God turns to the woman. The curse for her disobedience is terrible but not

without hope (as we just saw). She will suffer in bearing children. The pain both felt by the woman and witness by all is meant to remind us of the horror of sin and its devastating consequences.

Secondly, she will struggle in her own home. I say it this way due to the phrase “you shall desire your husband...but he shall rule...” This does not mean a sexual desire. This is not referring to something lovely. According to Genesis 4:7, we see this phrase interpreted for us. The curse upon woman is that she will want to master her husband (and in general men). Through various ways women now will due to the curse chafe under submission, desire liberation and want be in command of their world. Nothing will reverse this curse apart from faith in Christ’s work on the cross to defeat Satan and become the curse for the woman.

Man

v17-19

Finally we witness God’s response to rebellion in punishing Adam. Since Adam “listened to the voice of his wife” (an indication of his idolatry), he was assigned the toil and pain of working the land. Sweat, misery, wearisome, frustration, cuts, bruises, and eventually death are to remind man of the curse and his rebellion. Nothing will reverse this curse apart from faith in Christ’s work on the cross to defeat Satan and become the curse for the man.

In addition, we see how the whole earth is cursed. According to Rom.8, it groans under the weight of the curse until the glorious NHNE burst upon the scene. All creation until then is in the process of dying and returning to dust.

But v15, the first sign of the Gospel, gives help and hope to the couple as they bear children in pain and work the land in pain and work through the friction and fighting and division and disappointments found in their marriage. The gospel of grace is their only hope. And hope they received as we notice v20-24.

Providing

v20-24

As we make our way to the end of the chapter, we come to hope. If God does not provide what the first couple cannot provide they are hopeless. If God does not do for us what we can not do for ourselves, we stay under the curse, stay within punishment and stay that way for all eternity.

But God provides hope and Adam picked up on it as we see in v20. By naming his wife Eve, he is gladly witnessing to God’s promise of life. She will be the mother of all the living. In life there is much pain and frustration and even death. But through the generations leading up to the 1st century God protected His promise and brought through the virgin Mary the promised seed (Jesus) who would deal the enemy a deadly blow on the Cross and escort into this fallen world the new creation. Here in v20 we see hope.

We also see hope in v21 as we notice how God took an animal, killed it and covered the guilty couple. This text is not clear over what type of animal it was. But as you read throughout the OT you find lambs and sheep slaughtered on behalf of sin. The sins under the Old Covenant could not be cleansed through animal sacrifice. The sacrifices stood for a better sacrifice, the slaughter of the Christ on the Cross. V21 is another picture of the final lamb who comes and completes the work of redemption.

All this in v20-21 bring about much help and hope for the guilty couple.

In addition to these indicators that God is providing hope for the sinners, we come to v22-24 and witness the expulsion of the couple from the garden. Banishment out of the garden and into the wilderness is awful. It is a sign of alienation and hopelessness. But let us not miss the obvious in this act. If God would have turned the other way and allowed the couple to stay they would have reached out and took of the tree of life. This would have meant that they would have lived forever in this broken condition and under the curse. God “drove them out” to keep them from this plight. He set up cherubim at the gate so that they could not access the tree. They were to stay outside the garden, outside the holy of holies, until someone provided a way to the tree and eternal life. This someone is Jesus Christ who went into the flaming swords of the wrath of God on the cross in order become the gate to the garden and provide access to the holy of holies. The way is open now due to Christ’s death. There is hope for sinners. There is access to the holy One by Him who became the curse for us so that we could escape the curse against us.

What a Savior!

In conclusion, let me press the point of this message home by saying:

- 🌐 Understand why the world is the way it is
 - 🌐 What’s going on around me?
- 🌐 Recognize why you do what you do
 - 🌐 What’s going on with me?
- 🌐 Be aware of what you need
 - 🌐 What do I need?
- 🌐 Appreciate the gospel and live