

I Connect Sunday School Class 4/18/2021

Praises and Concerns

Genesis 3

Verses 1-5

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

This is how Wesley writes about the Fall:

1. Unbelief begot pride – Eve thinks she is wiser than God.
2. Pride begot self-will – Eve is determined to do her will and not God's.
3. Self-will begot foolish desires – Eve sins outwardly by taking the fruit and eating. (Wesley's sermon on this subject is entitled: "The End of Christ's Coming.")

God's glory departs, and the human moral image is lost, rendering humankind no longer "capable of God," that is, able to know, love, and obey God as we were made to do. Our refusal to return God's love is at the heart of Wesley's description of the fall of humanity into sin.

Questions:

- Does God tempt us? If not, where does temptation come from?
- How do we return to knowing, loving and obeying God as we are made to do?

A WIP!!!

Verses 6-8

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

The misdeed is infectious and communal; the guilt is shared by both. Once their eyes are opened, their innocence is irreversibly lost. Wesley says that their misdeed shows a determination to seek happiness not “in God but in the world, in the works of his (sic) hands.” The death spoken of here is therefore a spiritual death, “the loss of the life and image of God,” so that the humans “become unholy as well as unhappy.”

Question: Have we lost the image of God?

Verse 9

And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

The sound of the Lord God in the garden signals **unexpected grace**. The loving call “Where are you?” graciously beckons them to return, “who would otherwise have eternally fled from God.”

Verse 10

And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

The man’s initial explanation, truthful though feeble, is followed immediately by two penetrating questions intended to explore the contours of the deed.

Verses 11-13

And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? The man said, “The woman you gave me, she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate.” And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

The self-defense of both is full of recrimination and deflection of blame, as has been the first response of guilty humans ever since.

Question: Are we guilty of the same self-defense at times? If so, how do we avoid it?

Verses 14-15

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

That a promise of victory over the serpent occurs in the midst of judgment shows that **God remembers mercy**. From the beginning of the world, God connects “the grand promise of salvation with the very sentence of condemnation.” Early Christians interpreted this promise as a prophecy of Christ’s victory over Satan, the woman’s seed crushing the serpent’s head, as the “first good news.” Wesley agrees, but also speaks more generally of this enmity as representing “a continual struggle between the wicked and the good...”

Comment: ...which we see continually today.

Question: How should we define “wicked”?

Verse 16

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

For ancient Israelites, the punishment explains the close association between sexual pleasure and the pain of childbirth. These are the unfortunate consequences of the garden rebellion.

Question: Thoughts about how this verse is used in some other religions in our society?

Verse 17

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife — He excused the fault, by laying it on his wife, but God doth not admit the excuse; tho' it was her fault to persuade him to eat it, it was his fault to hearken to her.

Verse 19

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

...the Lord God banishes the humans from Eden as an act of grace and mercy. God’s punishment might have been more severe, but Wesley writes, humanity “was only sent to a place of toil, not to a place of torment.”

Comment: What are the implications of “till thou return unto the ground”?

Verses 22-24

And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil — See what he has got, what advantages, by eating forbidden fruit! This is said to humble them, and to bring them to a sense of their sin and folly, that seeing themselves thus wretchedly deceived by following the devil's counsel, **they might henceforth pursue the happiness God offers**, in the way he prescribes.

Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Question: Who created evil?

Genesis 4

Verse 1

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

Adam and Eve had many sons and daughters, [Genesis 5:4](#). But Cain and Abel seem to have been the two eldest. **Cain signifies possession**; for Eve when she bare him said with joy and thankfulness, and great expectation, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

Verse 2

And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

The occupations of Cain and Abel, tiller of soil and shepherd, may reflect strife between social groups in early human civilization, or more simply the need for a division of labor and cooperation because of the harsh new realities of life outside the garden of Eden.

Verses 3-5

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

We are not told why God favored Abel's offering above Cain's. Yet the text implies the dissatisfaction was found within Cain himself rather than in a flaw in his sacrifice.

Verse 7

If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door ready to strike. It will entice you, but you must rule over it.

The Bible's first occurrence of the word sin is here portrayed as a wild beast waiting at the door. The problem in the garden of Eden follows the humans outside the garden and threatens their lives, for they carry it within themselves. Yet this is an invitation to Cain to "do the right thing" that he might "be accepted." Wesley observes, "See how early the gospel was preached, and the benefit of it here offered even to one of the 'chief of sinners.'" The appeal "you must rule over it" works only because Cain has freedom to master his own impulses. If he fails to overcome them, he will suffer the same consequences as his parents, or worse.

God's acceptance of Abel's offering did not transfer the birth-right to him, (which Cain was jealous of) nor put upon him that dignity, and power, which is said to belong to it, [Genesis 49:3](#).

Questions:

- If sin can entice, does it have life?
- If so, did God create it?

Verse 8

And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

A premeditated and malicious act of murder. Transgression against the word of God by the man and woman in the garden of Eden continues in a more disturbing way among their children. Cain is driven even further from tillable soil, away from "the Lord's presence," further east of Eden.

Verse 9

And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

God knew him to be guilty; yet he asks him, that he might draw from him a confession of his crime; for those who would be justified before God, must accuse themselves.

(Therefore, since we have been justified [that is, acquitted of sin, declared blameless before God] by faith, [let us grasp the fact that] we have peace with God [and the joy of reconciliation with Him])

Thus in Cain, the devil was both a murderer, and a liar from the beginning. Am I my Brother's keeper? - Sure he is old enough to take care of himself, nor did I ever take charge of him. Art not Thou his keeper? If he be missing, on thee be the blame, and not on me, who never undertook to keep him.

Verses 10-14

And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.

And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand;

When you farm the fertile land, it will no longer grow anything for you, and you will become a roving nomad on the earth.

Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Now that you have driven me away from the fertile land and I am hidden from your presence, I'm about to become a roving nomad on the earth, and anyone who finds me will kill me."

Like his parents, Cain learns he must bear responsibility for his own actions.

Verse 15

And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain so that no one who found him would assault him.

What the mark was, God has not told us; nor do we know how others were to recognize the mark.

Verse 16

And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

Somewhere distant from the place where Adam and his religious family resided: distinguishing himself and his accursed generation from the holy seed; in the land of Nod - That is, of shaking or trembling, because of the continual restlessness of his spirit. Those that depart from God cannot find rest anywhere else. When Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, he never rested after.

Question:

- Do you find peace in the Lord? How?
- Is the land of Nod as a mental state available today to those who turn their backs on the Lord.

Verse 17

And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.

And here begins an account of his posterity, at least the heirs of his family, for seven generations. His son was Enoch, of the same name, but not of the same character with that holy man that walked with God. The names of more of his posterity are mentioned and are numbered in haste, as not valued or delighted in, in comparison with God's children (not removed from the garden).

Verse 25

And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew.

This third birth announcement of the chapter introduces another son for Adam and Eve. Seth means **set, settled or placed**, because in his seed mankind should continue to the end of time. Seth's line is important for its contributions to worship. His ascendancy also illustrates the Bible's surprising pattern of focusing on younger sons rather than the firstborn, ascribing less privilege to birth order or rank than is typical of the Near East. The heroes of Genesis, as elsewhere in the Bible, are notable for their character and deeds rather than an encoded social status.

Verse 26

And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

Enos is the general name for all men.

Now Cain and those that had deserted religion had built a city, and begun to declare for irreligion, and called themselves the sons of men. Those that adhered to God began to declare for him and his worship, and called themselves the sons of God.

Genesis 5

Verse 1

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him;

The first words of the chapter represent the content of the whole chapter; it is the book of the generations of Adam - It is the list or catalogue of the posterity of Adam, not of all, but only of the holy seed, **and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came**; the names, ages, and deaths of those that were the successors of the **first Adam** in the custody of the promise, and the ancestors of the **second Adam**.

Questions:

- What does the first underlined and bolded excerpt above mean?
- Who is the second Adam?

Verse 2

Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

He gave this name both to the man and the woman. Being at first one by nature, and afterwards one by marriage; it was fit they should both have the same name, in token of their union.

Verse 3

And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:

He was conceived and born in sin, [Psalm 51:5](#). This was Adam's own likeness, the reverse of that Divine likeness in which Adam was made; but having lost it himself he could not convey it to his seed.

Verse 5

And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

In the day Adam ate forbidden fruit, he became mortal, he began to die; his whole life after was but a forfeited condemned life, nay it was a wasting dying life; he was not only like a criminal sentenced, but as one already crucified, that dies slowly and by degrees.

Question: This description is pretty raw and troubling. Is it accurate?

Verses 6-19

And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos: And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died. And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan: And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died. And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel: And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died. And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared: And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died. And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch: And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

We have here all that the Holy Ghost thought fit to leave upon record concerning five of the patriarchs before the flood, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, and Jared. There is nothing observable concerning any of those particularly, tho' we have reason to think they were men of eminency, both for prudence and piety: But in general, observe how their generations are recorded. We are told how long they lived that lived in God's fear, and when they died, that died in his favour; but as for others it is no matter: the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot. That which is especially observable, is, that they all lived very long; not one of them died 'till he had seen the revolution of almost eight hundred years, and some of them much longer; a great while for an immortal soul to be imprisoned in an house of clay.. All the patriarchs here (except Noah) were born before Adam died, so that from him they might receive a full account of the creation, paradise, the

fall, the promise, and those divine precepts which concerned religious worship and a religious life: and if any mistake arose, they might have recourse to him while he lived, as to an oracle, for the rectifying of it, and after his death to Methuselah, and others that had conversed with him; so great was the care of Almighty God to preserve in his church the knowledge of his will, and the purity of his worship.

Verse 22

And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters:

And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah — To walk with God, is to set God always before us, and to act as those that are always under his eye. It is to live a life of communion with God; it is to make God's word our rule, and his glory our end, in all our actions; it is to make it our constant care and endeavour in everything to please God, and in nothing to offend him; it is to comply with his will, to concur with his designs, and to be workers together with him. He walked with God after he begat Methuselah, which intimates, that he did not begin to be eminent for piety 'till about that time.

Verse 24

And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.

That is, as it is explained, [Hebrews 11:5](#), he was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him. But why did God take him so soon? Because his work was done, and done the sooner for his minding it so closely.

So, death is not inevitable!

Verse 25

And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech:

There is a sending forth of the deluge, which came the very year that Methuselah died. The Jewish writers say seven days before, referring to [Genesis 7:10](#), and that he was taken away from the evil to come.

Verses 28-29

When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son and he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed.

Very probably there were some prophecies that went before of him, as a person that should be wonderfully serviceable to his generation.

Verse 32

And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

What has thus far been a linear list of descendants splits at the tenth generation into three sons – Shem, Ham, and Japhet. Jesus descends from Shem.

Prayer:

The Lord bless us and keep us;

the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us;

the Lord lift up his countenance upon us and give us peace.