

Old Testament Core Seminar



2

GENESIS 3-11

Introduction

Good morning. Last week we looked at Genesis 1-2. In those chapters we saw God's perfect and pristine creation. We saw the LORD God exercising complete sovereignty and care over a people living in perfect fellowship with God and each other. These people were stewards of the earth as kings and priests, and enjoyed rest and peace as they displayed God's glory! Look at **Genesis 1:31**. [READ] When God surveyed this Kingdom, looking particularly at the humans who He created in His image, He called it "very good." But...turn over to **chapter 6**, and look at **verse 5**. [READ] And look at **verses 11 & 12**. [READ] Whoa! What happened? What happened to create such a radical reversal of all that was good, and true, and beautiful to such wickedness, evil (v. 5), corruption, and violence (v. 11)? And maybe the greater questions are: What's God doing about it? And what are we to do about it? Well, Genesis 3-11 is going to give us a lot of answers to these and other questions.

[PRAY]

Context

The **historical context** is still the same as it was last week. Moses is still the writer and he knows these things because God has revealed them to him sometime while Moses was a prophet to the nation of Israel. Most likely, it was during Israel's 40 years of wondering in the wilderness – but let's not get ahead of ourselves. Each week I'll briefly explain this context. It basically has to do with who the author is, why he wrote, and what was going on around him in space and time.

The **textual/literary context** is, as I just mentioned, that Genesis 1 & 2 describe God's perfect creation as it was originally intended. As we turn to Genesis 3 we'll see how and why the radical change took place, that has plunged us into the world we now know: a world of death and disease and broken relationships – a world of sin.

And each week I'm going to introduce you to something called the "**redemptive-historical**" context. What I mean by that is that the Bible is one book telling one story. Yes, it is made up of many books with many, many stories; but the whole of those many books and many stories are tied together to make one unified whole. The one story that is holding the Bible together is God's work in history to redeem, to rescue, to save a people by His grace and for His glory. So, since it is God's work of *redemption* in the course of *history*, we have this very clever name "redemptive-history." Basically it means "the unified story in the Bible of the true history of God saving His people." So each week, before we can dive into any book of the Bible, we need to know where we are on that story line. What has God been up to, what has He accomplished in His "redemptive-historical" plan so far, up to the point where we are studying in the Bible. It will become more clear what we mean by this as we go along.

Obviously, we are at the very beginning of history itself here in the opening chapters of Genesis. But as we turn to Genesis 3, we will see the beginning of “God’s work of *redemption* in the course of *history*,” the beginning of “redemptive-history.” No sooner do our first parents plunge us into sin and ruin, does God have a plan – and begins effecting that plan – to save many a man, woman, and child out of that sin and ruin. Each week we’ll be keeping tabs on how far along God is in His plan, and what it means for us and our place in redemptive-history.

[Take Questions]

Theme

Well, enough of that for now. Let’s now get into Genesis 3-11. A thematic statement to summarize these chapters might sound like this:

Mankind’s first parents decided to set themselves up as equals to God, and have disobeyed Him. In doing so they have incurred the just wrath of God and have been expelled from that pristine created order, where they will no longer enjoy that perfect fellowship with Him nor each other, nor rest and peace on the earth. However, this is not the complete wrath that they deserve, for God has already established a way by which the curse of sin will be overturned and the universe re-created to its original state!

I know that’s a lot – and usually through this course the thematic summaries will be more concise – but these chapters are just that chocka-block full. So let’s go to the text.

[This outline does not need to be gone over. The class only needs to be told that it is printed in their handouts so that they could have a little guide for their own study.]

Outline w/ Pivotal Texts

- I. Genesis 2:4-4:26*
The Dawn of Humanity – 2 Seeds
- II. Genesis 5:1-6:8
The Descendants of Adam and Their Sin
- III. Genesis 6:9-9:29
The Punishment for Sin: UnCreating the Universe...
and Grace: ReCreating the Universe
- IV. Genesis 10:1-11:9
Humanity after the Flood: Still Sinful
- V. Genesis 11:10-26
The Seed of the Woman Continues On

*These divisions are not arbitrary, but textually determined. Notice that each section begins with the phrase “This is the account of...” This repetition shows a nature break in Moses’ writing.

Theme texts

2:15-17

Turn to **Chapter 2:15-17**. [READ] Part of man's responsibility as kings, only under God's greater Kingship, is to obey God. And here we read that they are told to work, and not to eat of a particular tree in the garden, the "**tree of the knowledge of good and evil.**" If they do eat of it, what will happen? [WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO ANSWER] They will "surely die."

Now this tree was not a magical tree, such that once they ate of the magical fruit they would suddenly know what good is and what evil is, whereas before they were just kind of morally unaware, living in a state of blissful ignorance. Nor are we to think of it as some kind of cruel tease, placed there by God as a way of tempting Adam and Eve. Rather the tree is symbol. It was placed right there in full sight, to remind Adam and Eve that, although they are given great privilege and many freedoms (in fact, freedom to eat of every other tree as much as their little hearts desire), they are nonetheless *not God*. They are not the High King. They are still creatures, not creators. They are not the final authority in the universe; they don't determine what is good and what is evil; they are still under the authority of God Almighty.

This is actually what it means, in this context, to "know" good and evil. It doesn't mean to simply be informed about, but to take the prerogative to *determine* what is good and evil: the right to become the judge and to have the final say on what is good and what is evil.

Appropriately, then, is this symbol of man's creatureliness called the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil." With this tree God is saying to Adam and Eve, "I alone have the right to determine what is good and what is evil, what is right and what is wrong in my universe. Remember that my children, or there will be dire consequences."

[Take Questions]

3:1-24

Well, turn now to **chapter 3**, and let's look at this little by little. Look at **verses 1-5**. [READ] What a lie! The serpent of course is the devil (see Revelation 12:9), a created angel in rebellion against God. And that serpent would have us think, "I am like God. I know what's good and what's evil. What's worthy and unworthy. What's a valuable way to spend my time, and what's not. Who is worth loving and who is not. What's worth worshipping and what's not. What's weighty and of great consequence and what's not." It's arrogant. It's idolatrous. It's insane.

And notice that Eve's confusion about what God has said – for she misquotes Him. And the serpent's ability to create confusion about what God has said will be her downfall. Ignorance of, lack of clarity about, and disbelief in God's word is always a dangerous recipe.

Look at **verse 6**. [READ] Adam and Eve *both* fell for it. The idea of becoming like God lodged in their hearts, and by eating the fruit of the tree they tried to supplant God and take their own seat at the head of the universe. This is real treachery; it's mutiny.

However, it didn't work. The very next verses show that. Look at **verses 7-8**. [READ] Immediately they are not behaving like gods, but like people ashamed of what they've done. It's as though they immediately realize their great folly and evil. And suddenly that perfect fellowship, and love, and openness, and trust is gone. They now hide from each other in verse 7, and they hide from God in verse 8. The death that was promised as a consequence in 2:17 has begun.

Let's jump ahead now to see what God is going to do to deal with these treasonous rebels. All are culpable here: the serpent, Eve, and Adam. God will address each of them in turn. We are going to look at them a little out of order though. Look at **verse 16**. [READ] No longer will childbearing be restful and peaceful, but painful. And women's relationship with her husband will have difficulties and strife. But notice the grace. Eve is not destroyed on the spot. The marriage life and motherhood will to be ideal, but it will still be.

And for Adam, look at **verses 17-19**. His work will also no longer be restful or peaceful. And no longer will he be able to control the environment. Instead, his work will be in pain, and by the sweat of his face as the earth fights against him and makes life difficult. But again, notice the grace. Adam and Eve will still get to live on the earth. They are not blotted out entirely. Sure, the earth will be full of tornados, and droughts, and floods, and their work will be hard. Verses 23 and 24 say that he is driven out of the presence of God, but physical life *still* continues.

However, life will not continue forever. At the end of verse 19 we read that mankind will return to the dust from which he was taken. It's as though in dying the creation of man is reversed. And thus, he dies. He dies in a sense when he is alienated from God by his sin, and in the full meaning of the word when his soul is rent from his body, and his body goes back into the ground.

So there is a very tragic end to man and to the creation. It all ends, someday, in death. Everything dies, and that's a fact. But praise God, that's not the end of the story. Look back now at **verses 14 and 15**. There we read God's words to the serpent, to the devil. And there we see the ultimate solution to our plight, for in verse 15 we see the beginning of the gospel...the beginning of God's plan of redemption. Let's read these verses. [READ VERSES 14-15]

God says that He is putting enmity, that is "hostility to the point of killing each other," between certain persons. There are three levels of enmity here. The first, it says, is **enmity between the devil and the woman**. What does that mean? Well, it means that Satan and the human race are enemies. It may not sound like such a great plan of redemption to us if the first thing God does is make us enemies to Satan. But...consider the alternative. The alternative would be to be friends with Satan and therefore *permanent* enemies of God. So what God is saying here is that humanity still belongs to Him. Satan cannot steal away His image bearing creatures. He can deceive and lead astray, but can not own. Satan will not rule them or determine their final destination. They still belong to God. So enmity with God's enemy is a good thing.

The second level of **enmity**, it says is where? [WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO ANSWER] God says it's **between the woman's offspring** (literally "seed"), **and the serpent's offspring** (or "seed"). Does that mean that children and snakes will always hate each other? No, it is actually a pronouncement that humanity will be divided into two camps. One is called the "seed of the woman." And that other is called the "seed of the serpent." While all, of course, will *physically* be descendents of the woman Eve (since she is the first mother of everyone), nonetheless some of those physical offspring of Eve will *spiritually* be the "seed of the serpent." That means that they will, like Satan, not obey God, but will throughout their lives fall for the deceits of the devil, just as Adam and Eve did this one time. Jesus teaches this kind of spiritual fatherhood in **John 8:44** when He confronts some of His contemporaries with these words: "You are of your father, the devil, and your will is to do your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." John says it more

succinctly in **1 John 3:8**, “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning.”

Those who, as a lifestyle, posture themselves against God and live intentionally sin-filled lives, are the “seed of the serpent.” The “seed of the woman,” then, from verse 15, are the rest of humanity. They are those who through faith and repentance, attempt, at least as much as one can in this fallen world, to follow and obey God. And this verse is saying that these two groups are irreconcilable. Those who hate God will make war against those who seek to obey Him. Again, Jesus put it like this in **John 15:19**, “If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.” And in **1 John 3:13** we are told “Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.”

Now, the third level of enmity is the most crucial. Look again in verse 15. It ends by saying “*he* will crush your head, and you will strike *his* heel.” Suddenly God is not talking about a group of people, a line of descendants. Instead He is speaking about **one descendent who will deliver the fatal blow** to the devil, and end the enmity. Do you see that there? He is using singular pronouns: “he” and “him.” So out of the larger group of faithful, God obeying people will arise one man who will crush the head of Satan, and end the enmity, thereby ridding the creation of the deceiver that initiated this whole mess. However this One Seed will not come out of the battle unscathed. His heel will be struck. Not a fatal wound, like that to the head, but still a real wound nonetheless.

So who is this One Seed *par excellence* who will be wounded in His victorious battle over evil in the universe? [WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO ANSWER] He is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. A moment ago I read to you from **1 John 3:8**, but I did not read the entire verse. The entire verse is this: “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.” This victory over the devil and his works was accomplished on the cross.

John 12:31-33 ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³ He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

Colossians 2:13-15 ¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

Hebrews 2:14-15 ¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

The problem in the universe is sin, which Adam and Eve opened the door to. And the result of that sin is death. So for the universe to be set right again, sin and death need to be eradicated. By His death on the cross Jesus Christ bore the wrath of God for the sins of His people, and purchased forgiveness for them. Thus the legal demands of God’s justice are met and His people are given eternal life. Now, Christ’s people await His second coming when He’ll

destroy the devil completely and renew the creation to its original state! In the first coming of Christ He overcame sin for us, in His second coming He'll give us the final victory over death.

[TAKE QUESTIONS]

4:8, 25-26

Well, the **rest of the Bible** now is an outworking of this very verse, Genesis 3:15 – the three levels of enmity being played out in history. Satan is always trying to destroy God's image bearer. And more specifically, he is using his own spiritual seed to corrupt or destroy the godly descendents of Eve, with the goal of preventing the One Seed, the Champion, from coming into the world and crushing him.

In the very next chapter we see Cain killing Abel. Look at **Genesis 4:8**. [READ] So has the serpent won? Is the godly line ended? Well, no. In **verses 25 and 26** Adam and Eve have another son to carry forward the line that will someday birth the savior. [READ VV. 25-26]

But as the story through the Bible continues we are again and again brought to wonder *Will Satan win at snuffing out the line? Or will the promises of God be fulfilled?* Often times it looks bleak for the people of God, and as though surely Satan has finally won the decisive battle, but, as we just saw at the end of Genesis 4, God will always provide a way (sometimes quite narrowly). Consider the flood. Was Satan able to corrupt humanity so badly that God would destroy them all? No, one family delivered by grace. Will the promises to Abraham, through whom the Seed will come, fall to the ground because his wife is barren? No, God will miraculously provide a son. Will the descendents of Abraham be snuff out by a famine? No, God will send a savior-of-sorts ahead of them to Egypt in their brother Joseph, to gather food and stay off the famine. Will the Pharaoh and his "seed-of-the-serpent-army" extinguish the children of Abraham when they get too numerous in Egypt? No, God rescues them through Moses. Next, the One Seed is promised to come through David's line, which is always in danger, be it from Goliath or a Babylonian captivity. Nonetheless, God always, miraculously, preserves the line. Then finally, once the Seed is born Satan tries to kill him, through King Herod, and tries to tempt Him, in the wilderness. And finally, it looks as though the devil has won when Jesus is dying on the cross. But therein is actually Christ's *victory*, not his defeat, for there He defeated sin. And He defeated death when He rose three days later. And now He reigns until His final and complete victory over Satan when He returns. Until then, Satan is a defeated enemy still raging, until Christ returns to crush His head once and for all. You can read about this in Revelation 12!

We will address these things in more depth as we go through the class.

[Take Questions]

5:1-32

Well, as we continue in Genesis, we really see the outworkings of this enmity between the godly and ungodly lines. **Chapter 5** lists out the godly line as it descends from Adam, through Seth. Seth, you'll remember is the one who replaced Abel at the end chapter 4, after Abel was murdered. So chapter 5 is really more than just a genealogy. It's a record of God's faithfulness to His promises. Notice one thing though: sin and death linger and loom like the very real menace they are. Verses 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 27, and 31 all end with the same phrase: "and then he died." That refrain is like a constant drum beat, boom boom boom over and over

again, to pound into us the dreadful certainty of what awaits sinners in this world, even those who are of the “seed of the woman” and mean to be obedient to God. For, godly though they may be to some extent, they are still sinners.

6:1-9:17

In chapter 6 we see more of mankind’s further and further descent into depravity and evil. In chapter 3 rebellion against God took on the form of trespassing and stealing. In chapter 4 man’s rebellion became violent murder. Man continues more and more to be very rotten divine image bearers until we read in **chapter 6** the indictment I read to you at the beginning of the class today. Look at **verses 5-7**. [READ] The wickedness and treachery and rebellion and dishonoring (not glorifying) of God has become so great that His patience has run out. And did you notice there in verse 7, that the judgment coming will take on the form of reversing the creative acts which He did in chapters 1 and 2? The animals, and mankind in particular, will no longer teem on the earth, but will all be destroyed. And how will the destruction come? [WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO ANSWER] Of course, this is the story of the flood.

That this judgment and flood is meant to be understood as an un-creating of the universe can be seen most clearly in **chapter 7**. Look at **verses 11-12**. [READ] In chapter 1, verses 6 and 7, we read about how God separated the waters below from the waters above (that is to say in the clouds in the atmosphere), and in verses 9 and 10, about how He separated the waters of the sea to make room for dry land. Well now, in this flood account, the sea is bursting forth to swallow up the land, and the skies are dumping all their rain.

Let’s also read **7:19-22**. [READ] Much of the phraseology here is taken right out of Genesis 1 and 2 to help us see that judgment for sin is here experienced in the form of creation being undone.

Well, we have a problem here don’t we? How can God’s promised Seed ever come to crush the head of the serpent, if everyone is dead? [WAIT FOR SOMEONE TO ANSWER] Right, God’s judgment and wrath are again mixed with grace and mercy. Look at **6:8**. [READ] And look at **6:17-20**. [READ] In the midst of God’s wrath, God has Himself provided a way of escape. And so we see that the recession of the flood waters are pictured as a type of re-creation. Look at **8:1-2** [READ] and **8:16-17**. [READ] Again, the language here is plucked right out of Genesis 1 and 2 such that we would see God starting over again, the old promises of Genesis 3:15 still in tact. Now the earth remains such that it might be the stage upon which God will carry out his plan of redemption. Look at **8:21-22**. [READ]

Okay, so man has become exceedingly sinful. And God has judged him for it. Yet all the while God has still had grace on mankind, and He’s still faithful to His promises. But why did we need to go into all that detail about **judgment taking on the form of un-creation, and grace taking on the form of re-creation**?

Well, I want to introduce you to something called **typology**. Typology is this: God, in His providence and sovereignty, has done things in the Old Testament – caused events, created institutions, used people – to foreshadow something greater in the future, usually things about His Son Jesus Christ. In other words, all of the Old Testament has some sort of organic relationship to Christ. God has carried His plan of redemption forward in the Old Testament in such a way to prefigure and foreshadow Christ. We talked a little about this last week when I said that the Old Testament sets the context such that Christ could come into the world, and the

things He'd do and say would have been all the more clearly understood in a profound way against the backdrop of the Old Testament context. Again, like the phrase "redemptive-history," this idea will become more clear as we move forward.

Suffice it for now to say this: the flood narrative in Genesis, the un-creating and the re-creating, is a picture of a future, greater, cataclysmic undoing and redoing of the universe, not by water this time, but by fire. At the end of time, Christ will come a second time, and will overturn and recreate the universe through the purging effect of fire. The flood was a real historical event, whereby God demonstrated His wrath upon sin, and grace in re-creation. The next time will be a far more terrible judgment, and the re-creation will be far a return to paradise – for at that second coming of Christ sin will be eradicated for good. Turn to **2 Peter 3** for a moment. Look at **verses 5-7**, [READ] and **verses 11-13**. So Noah's flood, a real judgment as it was, was a picture of a greater and final judgment and re-creation at the end of time. And just as Noah was saved because He was righteous in the eyes of God, only those who are clothed in the righteousness of Christ will escape this greater disaster.

As we move through the Scriptures we will again and again see this theme of judgment being described in terms of the created order being destroyed, and grace in terms of a new creation. And we'll also see a lot of other Old Testament events, institutions, and persons prefiguring Christ's work like this – what we call typology.

[TAKE QUESTIONS]

11:1-9

Well, we need to look at one last major theme from **Genesis 11**. In verses 1-9 mankind is again rebelling against God, and God will once more execute judgment on them, but again that judgment will be mixed with grace. Look at **verse 4**. [READ] Here man wants a name for themselves. But weren't they supposed to be about the business of promoting God's name, and God's glory, not their own? And furthermore, they don't want to be scattered over the earth. But weren't they commanded to multiply and fill the earth, by spreading out? Once again we see mankind ignoring God's right to rule and foolishly determining his own agenda in the world. Well, as expected, God will not allow such mutiny. Look at **verses 7-8**. [READ] Their plans are halted, and one of the greatest attributes that comes from being created in the image of God, the gift of communication, is frustrated.

When we come to the New Testament, we once *again* see that the troubles brought on by man's sin can only be reversed by Christ. When Christ pours out His Holy Spirit in Acts 2 the confusion caused by different languages is in a small way overcome as various peoples of various tongues are all able to hear the apostles declare the good news about Jesus Christ. But it is only when that new creation is complete, like we just read about in 2 Peter, will we finally see all the people of God again using language in unison to glorify God.

Conclusion

What we are seeing here in these crucial chapters of Genesis is what happens when sinful man rubs with a holy God. There is just consequence for sinners' actions. But there is also a patient and gracious response from a loving God. Redemptive-history has begun. God has set out on His course to redeem fallen humanity and the corrupted universe. He is out to restore the pristine environment and perfect peace, love, and fellowship that existed in the original creation.

To do this He will deal with sin and conquer death, through keeping the promise which He made the woman that one of her descendents will triumph over the enmity of Satan. That's where we're going as we continue through the Bible.

Application

Finally, before we conclude we need to think about some application for this.

1. What we are struck with here is the real horror of sin. We have all thought far too slightly of sin. We have not considered the complete and utter evilness of our rebellion against God. We dance around it and call it by names that soften the blow of it. But we need to call it what it is: treason!

Think about it. You have the all powerful, all creative, self-sufficient God on the one hand. He designed the whole system. Everything, all the way down to the level of atoms and quarks. And then you have his creatures, completely dependent on him, made from dust, assigned with the task of imaging his moral perfection, beauty, and love; assigned with bringing his justice and rule to the world; *created with the purpose of pointing to him*; but putting their hand up to him and saying "no thank you. I'm as good as you. I'll do it my way. I'll *rule* my life and the world around me how *I* please." Do you realize that when you get up in the morning, and decide to get out of bed, brush your teeth, eat breakfast, and plan your day without any consideration of God's rule over your life, you are saying "I am like god. I know good and evil." I'll feel this morning the way I want to feel. I respond to my parents or my spouse the way I want to respond. I'll think what I want to think about this church service. I am like god. I know what's good and what's evil. God? Who needs Him? I have me!"

Well, we need to remember that we are to be referential creatures, not pointing-to-ourselves, look-at-us look at us creatures. We were made for Another, to display the glory of Another. And every time we insist on our own autonomy we are committing the same treachery and sedition that we read about today.

Even after the fall into sin, man still bears God's image. So the problem is not that man no longer bears God's image. The problem is that man bears a perversion of God's image. He does not fill the earth with God's righteous glory. He misrepresents, dishonors, lies about, distorts the truth of who God is. Like a carnival mirror, its reflection is twisted and wrong.

Think about what this means: If nothing is more important than God's glory, then nothing is more evil than trying to deny God the glory that is his. Therefore, nothing is more important than God vindicating his righteous glory by punishing sin and destroying those who mis-bear it.

2. And that leads us to our second point of application. Do you remember what we read when we were looking at **2 Peter**? "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people out you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming." Knowing God will hold us accountable for our actions should serve as a motivator toward holiness. And we as a church members need to open up our lives to each other, and be involved in each other's lives, not to be busy bodies, but in order to help each other fight this nemesis within: sin.

3. But thirdly, no matter how righteous a life we lead relative to some worldly standard, we will never live up to God's standard of holiness. We are sinners all. Our situation is desperate. Our righteousness is really dirty rags. We all stand in need of Someone else's righteousness

imputed to us. And so our application is this: but your whole and entire confidence in Christ. Believe in Him. Repent of your sins and trust that His death and resurrection are sufficient to atone for your sins and give you eternal life. Let no other trust intrude...throw the whole of yourself on Christ.

4. And lastly we need to follow Christ by hearing and obeying the Word of God. You see, the fall originated in the same place that all sin originates: in ignorance of and confusion about the Word of God. So we need to be blood earnest about learning and internalizing and memorizing the Word of God.

[TAKE QUESTIONS]

[PRAY]