

EXILED FROM EDEN

Genesis 3:20-24

INTRODUCTION

- Banishment or exile has been used as a form of punishment for thousands of years, both for individuals and for nations.
- But where did this idea begin? Can we trace the history to find the first instance in human history where a sentence banishment was pronounced on a person?
- It is first found in Genesis 3, where the first man and woman, for their crime of eating the forbidden fruit, were banished by God from the garden of Eden
- For Adam and Eve, this was a most bitter punishment, exiled from their first home, from the abundance of provision there, from the tree of life, into a hostile world, under sin's curse, thorns and thistles and many dangers to face
- But it was not all darkness and despair – there was hope
 - ✓ Hope of life and fruitfulness
 - ✓ Hope of God's continued care and provision for them
 - ✓ Hope of a coming Messiah, the seed of the woman, who would bruise the serpent's head
- This chapter is vital and foundational to the Gospel, and to God's entire plan of redemption
- This is the key chapter in the study of sin – here we learn of its origin, its nature, its consequences, and its cure
- Previous sermons from this chapter:
 - ✓ The Serpent
 - ✓ The Temptation
 - ✓ The Fall
 - ✓ Original Sin
 - ✓ The Curse
- God has just concluded his declaration of the curse and its awful effects, closing with these words to Adam: “for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (v.19)

- Adam, the king of the earth, crowned with glory and honour, now deposed, his crown stripped from him by the serpent, now he is simply dust
- Now in the closing verses of Genesis 3 are recorded the final events of the fall and the curse: the naming of Eve, the clothing of Adam and Eve, and their expulsion from Eden

I. THE DESIGNATION OF EVE (20)

A. Adam's confidence for the future

1. It is noteworthy the timing of this incident – God had just pronounced the curse on creation, addressing the serpent, the woman, and the man
2. Yet in this bleak scene, Adam does not throw himself on the ground, head in his hands, in despair and desolation
3. He turns to his wife and gives her a name, a most beautiful and significant name
4. Adam was not going to let his failure define him and his family; he was not going to give up; he was going to pick himself up and press on, despite his fall
5. Note also in naming his wife, he is again asserting his authority over her
 - a. To name something or someone is an expression of authority over it (cf. 2:20,23)
 - b. The dominion mandate (1:28) has not been annulled because of the fall
 - c. Man must continue to fill, subdue and have dominion over the earth, but this task has become hard labour due to the curse
6. Up to this point, Adam's wife has been called "female" (1:27); a "help meet" (2:18); "wife" (2:24-25; 3:8,17, 20-21); and "woman" (2:22-23; 3:1-2,4,6,12-13,15-16)
 - a. The word "woman" (*ishah*) is simply the word for "man" (*ish*) with a feminine termination
 - b. The name "Eve" means "Life" and comes from the Hebrew *Chavvah*, via the Latin *Heva* (cf. Greek *Zoe*)

B. Adam's love for Eve

1. Adam was not resentful towards his wife (cf. 3:12)
2. Think of all the nasty names he might have chosen to name her as a reminder of her being deceived and giving Adam the fruit to eat – but he didn't
3. Love covers sins
 - a. Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins. (Proverbs 10:12)
 - b. He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends. (Proverbs 17:9)
 - c. Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, (1 Corinthians 13:4)
 - d. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. (1 Peter 4:8)
4. "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." (Colossians 3:19)

C. This shows Adam's faith in God

1. Faith in a posterity
 - a. Adam had sinned and thereby brought death upon himself (2:17) and yet he trusted God that his wife would bear children and be the mother of all living
 - b. When God pronounced the effects of the curse on the woman, there was the promise that she would bring forth children (3:15-16)
 - c. He also promised that she would beget a seed in contrast to the serpent's seed, thus describing a godly generation of saints (believers), as opposed to the ungodly
2. Faith in promised Saviour
 - a. More than physical life would come from Eve, but eternal life through the Seed that would come from her and bruise the serpent's head
 - b. This Saviour is "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25), he is "the life" (John 14:6), he brings "life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10)

- c. As Eve in the Greek is *Zoe*, so Jesus Christ is called *Zoe* in the New Testament (John 14:6)
- 3. Contrast this faith with their actions in the first part of the chapter (vv. 1-6) – there they disbelieved and disobeyed God’s word, but here they believe and obey
- 4. Here is evidence of genuine contrition for sin, repentance from sin, and faith in God’s mercy and trust in God’s word

II. THE DRESSING OF THE EXPOSED (21)

- A. Nakedness and the need of clothing since the fall
 - 1. In their original state of righteousness and innocence, “they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” (Genesis 2:25)
 - 2. But after they sinned, they knew they were naked (3:7), and were ashamed of their nakedness (3:10-11), and attempted to cover their nakedness (3:7)
 - 3. Their efforts to cover themselves were insufficient, therefore God clothed them with coats of skins, presumably slaying one or more animals in order to clothe them
 - a. The shame of nakedness is a proper feeling that we should be careful to maintain
 - b. All attempts to normalise nakedness in society and culture are acts of rebellion against God’s design
 - c. God demonstrates here his concern that the human body be properly and adequately covered – a theme that is consistent throughout the Scriptures
 - 5. God showed Adam and Eve that though they had sinned against him, and though they would be banished from paradise, he would not fail to care for them and provide for them (cf. Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:1)
 - 6. This incident is a vivid picture of the spiritual nakedness of sinful man, and the only clothing that will cover it
- B. Sinful man is naked before God, his guilt and shame exposed to divine wrath (2 Corinthians 5:3; Revelation 3:17; 16:15)
- C. Man’s attempts to cover his sin are insufficient and futile

1. Adam and Eve carefully constructed their clothes, taking fig leaves, sewing them together into aprons
 2. By man's standards, they had done enough to cover themselves, but not by God's standard
 3. Multitudes think that by their good works and their religious exercises they will be saved, yet such self-righteousness cannot meet God's standard of perfection (Isaiah 64:6)
- D. God himself must clothe us if we are to be delivered from sin and made acceptable to him
1. Note that it was God who saw man's need, took the initiative and made provision
 - a. It was not at man's request or even at man's recognition of his need
 - b. God is the initiator of salvation, not man
 - c. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8)
 - d. When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son (Romans 5:10)
 - e. He first loved us (1 John 4:10,19)
 - f. We do not first seek after God, he seeks us
 - g. God sought for sinful Adam in the Garden (3:8-9), so he seeks us by his grace
 - h. He seeks us as the shepherd seeks the lost sheep, as the woman seeks the lost coin, and as the father seeks the lost son (Luke 15)
 - i. It is only by his grace working in us that we seek the Lord, in repentance turn to him, and trust in him for our salvation (John 6:44)
 2. Adam and Eve did not assist God in his clothing of them – it was all of his doing
 - a. "Salvation is of the LORD." (Jonah 2:9)
 - b. We contribute nothing for our salvation except the sin that made it necessary

3. By the bloody death of this animal on man's behalf, God establishes the pattern of the substitutionary sacrifice as the atonement for man's sin
 - a. Note that God had told Adam that "the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (2:17), yet they lived for centuries after
 - b. There was, however, a death on that day, perhaps the first death that ever occurred – an innocent animal in the place of sinful man
 - c. From this point onwards, the sacrifice of animals was understood as God's accepted means of atonement for sin (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22)
 - d. All these sacrifices could only provide a temporary covering for sin, but could never remove it
 - e. Christ is the ultimate and final sacrifices that all these other sacrifices typify – He is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29)
 - f. The Romans stripped Christ naked before they crucified him, and there he took our nakedness and bore our shame that we might be clothed with his righteousness (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21)
4. To be justified is to have Christ's righteousness imputed to us, to be "clothed with the garments of salvation" and "covered with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10; cf. Zechariah 3:3-4)

III. THE DEPORTATION FROM EDEN (22-24)

- A. Cast out of paradise
 1. Note the plural pronoun "us" (cf. 1:28) – a council within the Triune Godhead
 2. Man, by means of the forbidden tree, came to a knowledge of good and evil
 - a. Not, as God intended, by obedience to God and refusing to eat of it
 - b. But in the worst possible way – by disobedience, and the bitter experience of sin and its fatal consequences
 3. God removed Adam and Eve's access to the tree of life
 - a. Evidently, the fruit of the tree of life (and its leaves - Revelation 22:2) has power to inhibit decay and enable people to continue indefinitely in perfect health

- b. God's intent for man is not that he live forever in his sinful, miserable state
 - c. God's intent for man is that he live forever in a righteous, blessed state
 - d. So yes, man *will* eat of the tree of life, and *will* live forever, but not until the regeneration
 - e. When the curse is finally removed, man will be finally granted access to the tree of life (Revelation 2:7; 22:2)
4. God "sent forth" (v.23) and "drove out" (v.24) Adam with his wife from the garden – perhaps indicating their reluctance to leave

B. The way to paradise shut

1. The word for east (*mikkedem*) has the meaning of "front" and "before" and is understood to refer to the entrance or gate of the garden
2. The cherubim are a special class of angel
 - a. They stand in the immediate presence of God and his glory, surrounding his throne (Ezekiel 1:25-28)
 - b. They are always associated with God's most holy presence (Psalm 80:1; Psalm 99:1)
 - c. They have a role as mediators of God's presence in the world (Ezekiel 1:20, 24; Psalm 18:10)
 - d. They are associated with God in mercy (Exodus 25:22; Exodus 37:9)
 - e. They are associated with God's judgment upon man (Genesis 3:24)
3. The flaming sword further blocked man's return into the garden
 - a. This may indicate more than a sword, but a manifestation of God's presence
 - b. While Eden remained, offerings would be brought there to be presented to the Lord

CONCLUSION

1. Though Adam fell, and he would suffer the consequences of that fall, yet he did not wallow in his misery – he looked to God faith, and trusted in God's promises
2. "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again: but the wicked shall fall into mischief." (Proverbs 24:16)
3. Perhaps you have failures are weighing you down and hindering you from fulfilling God's will for your life
4. Cast them upon the Lord, trusting in his blood for healing, and knowing that his grace is able to restore us from our failure
5. There are multitudes who are naked in their sins and on the day of judgment will be cast into hell (Matthew 22:9-14)
6. Are you clothed in Christ's righteousness? Have you repented and trusted him for your salvation?
7. Since man was banished from paradise 6000 years ago, God has been working out his plan of redemption to open the way and restore us again to paradise
8. On the cross, Jesus said to the penitent thief, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)
9. What love, mercy and grace, that God would provide sinful rebels as we are the way to eternal life, even through the death of his own beloved Son!
10. "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."